Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan: A case study of Limpopo Department of Education

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Declaration

This research has not been previously accepted for any degree and is not being currently considered for any other degree at any other university.

I declare that this Dissertation contains my own work except where specifically acknowledged

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Signed……..

Date 01 August 2016

Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the key success factors for implementing a workplace skills plan (WSP). To obtain the perspective of department managers regarding the key success factors for implemention of a WSP in the Limpopo Department of Education, a quantitative research approach was used. A probability sample of 75 managers was drawn from the Limpopo DoE with a population size of 1019 managers. The sample was composed comprise 51% males and 49%. Of the sample, 74% of the participating managers were members of the skills development committee, and the remaining 26% were not.

The managers were chosen to participate in this study because the majority of them were members of the skills development committee. The data was gathered through the use of structured questionnaire which were developed by the researcher. The study revealed various key success factors for WSP implementation that were determined by managers, which included aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP, and aspects of reporting on an implemented WSP.

The study also revealed that these key success factors for WSP implementation were not executed appropriately in the Limpopo DoE. The study provides insights for organisations in implementing a WSP according to the determined key success factors, identifies obstacles that may hinder the implementation, and recommends strategies that can be employed to overcome such challenges.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATR	annual training report.
CEO	chief executive officer.
CFO	chief financial officer.
DPRU	Development Policy Research Unit.
DoE	Department of Education.
DOHET	Department of Higher Education and Training.
DHA	Department of Home Affairs.
DoL	Department of Labour.
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry.
EE	employment equity.
EETC	employment equity training committee.
ESP	environmental skills plan.
ETDP SETA	Education Training and Development SETA.
FET	further education and training.
HRU&CD	Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development.
HR	human resources.
HRD	human resource development.
HRDS III	Human Resource Development Strategy III.
HRDS-SA	Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa.
KSFs	key success factors.
LDOE	Limpopo DoE.
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework.
MINCOM	Ministerial Committee.
NESPF	National Environmental Skills Planning Forum.
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy.
OFO	organising framework.
PALAMA	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy.
PSETA	Public Sector Education and Training Authority.
RPL	recognition of prior learning.
SAMDI	South African Management Development Institute.
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority.
SDF	skills development facilitator.
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority.
SMMEs	small medium and micro enterprises.
SPC	skills planning committee.
SSP	Sector Skills Plan.
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa.
WTC	workplace training committee.
WSP	workplace skills plan

Chapter 1
ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

During the implementation of a workplace skills plan (WSP) – skills development facilitators in South Africa encounter a variety of challenges (Hattingh, 2004; Meyer, 2002; Hattingh, 2003; Paterson, 2008; Van Der Waldt, 2004; Regenesys, 2010; Hattingh & Van Der Walt, 2004). In this regard, the Limpopo DoE is no exception. With this in mind the present research set out to determine and address key success factors for WSP implementation in South African organisations. These factors include aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, and aspects of implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on an implemented WSP.

The above-mentioned aspects can help organisations, skills development facilitators and human resource management and development departments to establish an accurate and well-informed WSP for the development of employees. Unless line management and employees fully understand the significance of planning for skills development they are likely to give less than full support to a WSP, and its processes are likely to lack engagement and representevity. Skills development and training processes need to be seen as a strategic priority of the organisation, with full support and buy-in from senior management. Challenges in this regard, and lack of knowledge regarding the implementation of a WSP, prompted the researcher to undertake a study on skills planning processes within the organisation.

One step commonly taken by an organisation is to institute a quality management system for its skills planning and development of employees (van der Waldt, 2004). This can help in order to identify and address skills needs inside the organisation. Van Der Waldt (2004) states that a WSP must accord with the performance management system, together with other human resource management practices, systems and procedures of the organisation, and that

this requires sound information management to collect relevant information for skills planning (e.g. academic qualifications of employees, profile of work experience, etc.). Organisations are encouraged to use WSPs from previous years as baseline for building up such an information system. Job descriptions that are plainly defined and linked to the priorities of the organization enable it to identify skills needs that can accommodate change, organisational development and skills needs for the future.

Determining key success factors for WSP implementation enables organisations and skills development facilitators to develop a specific WSP. This WSP goes beyond just basic workplace skills needs which may include training for computer skills, report writing, financial management and so on. In the case of the Limpopo DoE, rather than being seen simply as an instrument for strengthening compliance, a developed WSP thus needs to identify and address critical and scarce skills linked to key technical and functional areas within the Department.

1.2 Research background

Each year the Limpopo DoE spends millions of rands on skills development training programmes for its employees based on an annually compiled workplace skills plan (WSP). A WSP, as described by Hattingh (2004) is a skills planning document indicating all the skills development programmes that an organisation needs to implement within a particular financial year. Its purpose is therefore to give strategic direction to skills enhancement so that employees play an optimally effective and efficient role in the work of the organisation.

Various concerns have been raised by stakeholders concerning the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE and the steps to be followed in developing and implementing a WSP in the organisation. The consequence is that the employer has been unable to obtain return on investment from the WSP, while human resource officials have been accused of lack of competence.

According to Crook et al. (2011), human resources (HR) practitioners initially focused on areas including, but not limited to recruitment and selection processes, Personnel management and administration, as well as the terms and conditions which gave an employer control over the workforce, with less attention given to the training and development of employees. When an insufficiently skilled workforce hindered production of goods and services and maximisation of profit the result would often be that employers decided to cut labour as their cost-recovery strategy, while employees chose to resign rather than wait for retrenchment (Crook et al., 2011).

The problem of skills shortages led to the establishment of human resource development (HRD) units to address lack of skills among employees and develop their capacity to contribute more productively within the organisation (Crook et al., 2011). This component in an organisation may be referred to variously as skills development, training and development, or human capital development (Crook et al., 2011). In the Limpopo DoE, the human resource development component is called Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development (HRU&CD).

According to Meyer (2002) these differences in terminology do not alter the primary responsibility of this component, which is to provide services of training and education of the human capital of the organisation and enhance their performance. Van der Waldt (2004) states that the role of human resource development is to increase the effectiveness and

efficiency of employees in carrying out their work responsibilities, which leads in turn to organisational improvement and the attainment of both personal and organisational goals.

The task of Human Resource Development as a division is to enhance the employees of an organization with values, knowledge and skills by providing them with appropriate education and training (van der Waldt, 2004). This action enables employees to make relevant and valuable contributions within the organisation. Van der Waldt (2004) states in addition that the objective of training and development is to grow the capabilities of personnel within the organisation – also referred to as human capital, which signifies the knowledge, experience, skills, creativity, social and personality attributes and constituting ability to execute labour to yield economic value.

The Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development unit in the Limpopo DoE is tasked with similar responsibilities. It is a common tendency in both the public sector and the private sector for organisations not only to neglect the development of their human resources but also to re-allocate training budgets every financial year (Scarbrough 2002, p. 11-12), so that minimal skills development takes place. Lack of skills, as Scarbrough (2002) points out, results in poor performance of work-responsibilities, lack of inspiration, resignations by employees – as well as job loses their retrenchment. From the perspective of employers, the delivery of services becomes poor and competent human capital leave their jobs. According to Ziderman (1997, p. 352), lack of attention to human capital development is one of the various factors that retards a country's economic growth. Institutions which lack skilled and competent employees often spend more money on external service providers and private consultancies to do their work.

Government departments and private sector organisations in South Africa, and consequently also the Limpopo DoE (LDOE), are mandated to provide skills development opportunities to their employees in terms of the Skills Development Act no. 97 of 1998, the Skills Development Act no. 31 of 2003 as amended), and the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act 9 of 1999). Government departments are anticipated to implement skills development programmes as a tool to empower their own employees with skills, values and knowledge that enable them to respond effectively to the demands of service delivery (South African Government, 2001).

All employers need to understand that skills development is crucial for upgrading employee performance (Regenesys, 2010). Whereas investment in human capital skills development

has been a key feature globally of fast growing organisations. With regard to national investment in human resources, South Africa is rated 5 times less as compared to other countries such as Korea or Taiwan and Malaysia (Regenesys, 2010).

The Skills Development Act No. 31 of 2003 as amended instructs all organizations in both the public and private sector employers to develop the capacities of their employees through skills development (South African Government, 2001). However, this research had its main focus on the key success factors for WSP implementation using the Limpopo DoE as a case study. According to Hattingh (2003), a WSP is a planning document setting out skills development programmes that an organisation intends to implement for developing the skills and competencies of its employees. Hatting (2004) notes in addition that compliance with skills development legislation requires all registered organisations (such as the Limpopo DoE) to prepare and submit their WSPs to their respective SETAs by 30 June each year (Hattingh, 2004).

1.3 Rationale for the research

The researcher works as a training officer in the Limpopo DoE where he became aware of a critical need for a study on the key success factors for WSP implementation. Hattingh (2003) states that inadequate understanding of the key success factors for WSP implementation has meant that most skills development facilitators are unable to correctly complete a WSP form as required by their respective SETAs, with complaints that the form demands a lot of information, is complicated, or lacks relevance. All these complaints reflect lack of understanding and poor planning for skills development programmes by the skills development facilitators (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004).

Similar problems face the Limpopo Department of Education regarding WSP implementation. Even though each financial year closes with the budget for skills development being exhausted, and with training certificates having been issued to employees who are found competent, lack of skills remains a problem in the public sector. With this in mind, the researcher accordingly decided to conduct a study in order to determine the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE. The study has significance for all relevant stakeholders and focusses on aspects of the following key success factors:

- information gathering to inform a WSP
- skills auditing

- compiling and submitting a WSP to the relevant SETA
- monitoring, implementing and evaluating actions of a WSP
- reporting on a WSP

The envisaged beneficiaries of the study are outlined in the next set of subsections.

1.3.1 The Limpopo DoE

In response to a letter to the relevant gatekeepers requesting permission to conduct this research, the researcher received a positive response subject to certain conditions, one of which was that the outcomes of the research must be shared with the Limpopo DoE. In this regard, the Limpopo DoE therefore can be regarded as the organisation having the initial opportunity to compare its WSP implementation against the recommendations of this research.

The study identified 5 key success factors for WSP implementation, together with details of implementation on each aspect. From this, the Limpopo DoE can gain extensive knowledge and answers regarding the extent which the development of skills in an organisation should be planned. Based on this study, the senior management can influence the relevant unit (HRU&CD) regarding proper implementation of a WSP, thereby enabling the organisation and the relevant stakeholders to understand how the training budget is spent (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004). This study was also conducted in order to contribute insight on the monitoring of human resources development by the department, and to achieve the targeted outcomes of the department, namely to provide quality services of education and training across the province of Limpopo (Paterson, 2008).

This research was therefore conducted in line with the Limpopo Department of Education's vision that is "To be a catalyst for human development, providing innovative and inspiring quality life-long education". In addition, this research will benefit the Limpopo DoE because if the WSP is planned and implemented properly, the organisation will qualify for the mandatory grant from the ETDP SETA, amounting to 50% of the skills levy paid in that year.

1.3.2 The Human Resource Development division

Another aim of the study was to benefit the Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development unit (HRU&CD) with relevant knowledge, skills and experience regarding the implementation of a WSP. The HRU&CD, as the unit established to plan and implement the

WSP within the organisation, can link the WSP with the provincial skills development priorities and the national skills development strategies.

This research empowers the unit of Human Resource Development with a meaningful tool for developing a quality WSP and submitting it to SETA before the 30 June deadline. In addition, it enables the HRU&CD division to comply with its mandates and with the expectations of the organisation: namely, to develop a WSP that will lead to high-impact learning together with other skills development programmes for performance improvement of staff and of the organisation. According to Regenesys (2010), this kind of intervention action will potentially add value insofar as the development and implementation of WSP will address lack of skills and competencies within the Limpopo DoE. They note that WSPs are a vital part of the work of the HRD practitioners, indicating therefore that this research will provide the practitioners with significant knowledge, skills and experience regarding their work.

1.3.3 The employees of Limpopo DoE

Employees who participate in skills programmes emanating from an appropriately developed, compiled, implemented, monitored and evaluated WSP can be regarded as direct beneficiaries of a WSP (Meyer, 2002) in that the programmes develop the knowledge and skills in regard to their everyday jobs. Hattingh (2003) stresses that proper implementation of a WSP will mean that employees of the organisation benefit from knowledge and skills that will enable them to carry out their work functions more effectively and efficiently. Limpopo DoE employees will benefit from a WSP integrated with other performance improvement processes (such as talent management, succession planning and retention of scarce skills) for developing human capital in line with departmental goals and objectives.

According to Meyer (2002) a WSP relating to the training needs of employees is a powerful tool for motivating employees to contribute at their level best in their organisation. Human resources at the Limpopo Department of Education will therefore benefit from wide-ranging knowledge concerning skills development programmes, on the essential aims of the Human Resource Development section, as well as on its primary goals and objectives through delivering its services to its employees. Human resources benefits from a WSP cited by Hattingh (2003) are, firstly, that it enables accurate indication of learning needs in analysis of training needs, and secondly, that it enables employees to provide feedback on relevance to

their own work role of completed learning programmes that can be used in evaluating the quality and the relevance of such programmes.

1.3.4 HRD officials and skills development facilitators

This study also sought to benefit skills development facilitators (SDFs) and HRD practitioners by providing knowledge and experience of WSP planning and implementation that will help them to direct skills planning more precisely to the skills the organisation needs in pursuit of current and future strategic objectives. In close consultation with managers and SDFs the HRD officials in the Limpopo DoE will align the WSP with the strategic priorities of the organisation, and in consultation with the HR manager and other senior officials will organise and oversee the nomination, selection and capacity building of the SDF and Training Committee to see that they have the necessary competence to perform these functions.

Aguinis (2014) indicates that the HRD practitioners are the vehicle by which recommendations such as those preceding from this research can be implemented in the Limpopo DoE and other organisations. Skills development facilitators and HRD practitioners will thus act as agents of change in WSP implementation, as well as gaining additional experience and competences in planning and implementing skills development for employees. The study will furthermore provide HRD practitioners with new opportunities to develop their knowledge and competences regarding the key points in WSP implementation, and to re-examine their instruments and techniques for WSP implementation, thereby making them more effective and motivated. In this regard, Regenesys (2010) argues that “education and training develop the skills and competences of employees and enable them to work more effectively and efficiently” because they feel empowered and important in the organisation; they also benefit from skills and knowledge that equip them to compete in the job-market.

1.3.5 The researcher

This study is important to the researcher because it provides him with first-hand knowledge and techniques regarding key success factors for WSP implementation, extending his job-knowledge as the Training Officer in the Limpopo DoE. This will bring about improvement in key areas relating to WSP implementation by the Department, thereby also improving the quality of the work done in the Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development unit. The study was also intended to assist the researcher in addressing some of the challenges

faced by the organisation in its WSP implementation. Lastly, this study will also enable the researcher to demonstrate his competence in a research field.

1.3.6 The students

This study has significance for students who intend pursuing related research on WSP implementation in the workplace, providing them with relevant findings and recommendations, as well as identifying applicable existing information sources as explored and analysed in the in-depth literature review.

1.4 The theoretical framework

1.4.1 Introduction

This section discusses systems theory and how it underpins the research on the key success factors for WSP implementation. Other relevant theories and theorists highlighted in this research include dynamic skill theory, baseline theory, Abraham Maslow, Frederick Hertzberg, Douglas McGregor and David Keirsey.

1.4.2 Systems theory

Following the account of systems theory given by Jones et al. (2013), the Limpopo DoE constitutes an open system made up of various subsystems, and operating in and interacting with a greater system which is the external environment. According to Nadler and Tushman (1999), systems theory stresses the need for congruence within and between all systems interrelated with the organisation. This means that the Limpopo DoE must continue to optimal congruence between the internal task and the general environment.

A system is a set of various components put together in order to serve a common objective or purpose (Regenesys, 2010). These various components are known as subsystems of a unified system (such as the education system). The Limpopo DoE can be regarded as a system that comprises other subsystems that work together to deliver the education services in the province. These interrelated subsystems are the 5 branches of the organisation: Curriculum, Finance, Corporate Services, Governance, and Quality Assurance. A WSP can thus be regarded as another subsystem, and its implementation can affect the functioning of the other parts of the whole system (organisation).

The key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE which this research sought to determine can thus be regarded as subsystems that can affect the implementation of a system called the WSP. The key success factors may be listed as follows: aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, skills auditing, compiling and submitting a WSP, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP, and aspects of reporting on an organisation's WSP. These key success factors are interconnected as subsystems in that every activity that happens in one of them affects the whole implementation of a WSP. According to Robbins (2009), if change is only implemented in one subsystem (e.g. of the Limpopo DoE) without addressing the rest of the subsystems, the collective stability of the subsystems in which change has not been realised is likely to invalidate the change.

Noting that 'system' is a frequent everyday term used in reference to educational systems, computer systems, etc., Robbins (2009) distinguishes between three different senses of the word:

- a system as "a way of doing things: an organisation of resources and procedures"
- "a computer or information system"
- "a conceptual organisation of resources and procedures defined according to systems theory"

Checkland's "formal systems model" (Regenesys, 2010) identifies 9 properties as those most often associated with human activity systems, as set out in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Properties often associated with human activity systems

Formal systems model	Example – Limpopo DoE
A system has a purpose - it exists for a reason and achieves some change, or 'transformation'	The Limpopo DoE educates, train and promotes learning
Its performance can be measured, and it can be shown to be more, or less efficient	Learners, educators and staff ratios, pass rates
There is a mechanism for control - a decision-making process	Management structure
It has components - which can themselves be taken to be systems	Branches, departments
Its components are related, and interact	Senior management meetings, shared subjects and training courses
It exists as part of a wider system or systems - its environment, with which it must interact	Education system, community
It has a boundary - which defines what is, and what is not part of the system	The head of department is part of the Limpopo DoE, the mayor is not, the MEC's building is, the city hall is not
It has its own resources	Staff, buildings, finance
It has an expectation of continuity, and can be expected to adapt to, or recover from disturbances	The Limpopo DoE expects to exist in ten years' time, though it may have to accommodate government spending cuts

(Source: Regenesys, 2010).

According to Aguinis (2014), the field of systems theory is regarded as a major innovation in understanding the complex world of organisations such as the Limpopo DoE. This field studies systems from the viewpoint of the whole system, its several subsystems, and the recurrent patterns in the relationships between the subsystems. Aguinis notes also that systems theory has a significant influence on how organisations are understood and changed. Following Regenesys (2010), implementation of a WSP for the employees of the Limpopo DoE would constitute an education system which includes a variety of other subsystems that exist as part of the big system.

Regenesys (2010) highlights the following as some of the basic principles of systems thinking as applied to management and leadership:

- System thinking is a management discipline that views the Limpopo DoE as a unified system. It examines the linkages and interactions between the components that comprise the entirety of education as a defined system.
- The whole system is a systems thinking view of the Limpopo DoE as a complete organisation in relation to its both internal and external environment. It provides a means of understanding, analysing and talking about the construction and design of the organisation as a unified, multifaceted composition of several interrelated systems that require working together for the successful functioning of the whole system.
- The Limpopo DoE as a whole system is composed of a variety of entities such as processes, policies, practices and human resources, which may also be broken down into further subsystems.
- Systems may be thought of as having clear external boundaries or having links with their environment.
- Boundaries of a whole system can be selected and defined at a level appropriate for the particular purpose under consideration – for example, the education system or a complete school system.
- Systems can also be selected and defined at different levels, and can function together with each other and hierarchically. For example, the WSP system, the finance system, the system of making decisions and the accountability system.

Aguinis (2014) further argues that it is possible for an organisation, like the Limpopo DoE as an entity, to suffer systemic failure. This may take place in the whole system where there is a

failure in the interconnected system elements that need to function as a unit for overall success.

Factors in systemic failure may include unrelated goals and objectives of a WSP, weak system-wide understanding, unsound gathering of information and compiling of a WSP, poor cooperation of relevant stakeholders, insufficient training feedback, lack of accountability on the side of skills development facilitator, skills development committee members, etc.

Whole system failure may co-exist with functional success. The leadership of silos may individually be effective but not be adequately incorporated into the whole system owing to an inadequacy of systems design, understanding or management. A whole system can only be a success if managers (e.g. of the Limpopo DoE) work together within and across all existing functional systems. As a whole system, the Limpopo DoE can only fail if leadership at the level of the whole system fails, and where a number of senior managers of the organisation are involved. Such failure may be considered as a systemic failure of leadership.

In instances of systemic failure, employees operating at a lower subsystem level may be not held responsible. They may fairly argue that it was the broader system that failed. They may also claim that they were disappointed by those particular systems that incorporate with their own work.

The basic principles of systems thinking highlighted above show how the management of the Limpopo DoE can use the system to implement the key success factors for WSP implementation. Against this background, it is important to note that systems theory and systems thinking are not necessarily the same as being systematic (Aguinis, 2014). With reference to the implementation of a WSP, being systematic is about setting goals the organisation wants to achieve through a WSP, collecting and analysing feedback about status of achievement of such goals, then adjusting activities of each key success factor to achieve the WSP goals more effectively.

1.4.3 Dynamic skill theory

According to Yan et al. (2000), dynamic skill theory is a theory developed in the 1960s with its focus subsequently evolving in three phases: in the 1960s, it focused on “examining complex variations in the [organisation’ of action and thought, including systematic change”; in the 1970s, the attention was on analysing systematic change in the organisation of action

and thought; and in the 1980s the focus was more on "explaining the constructive dynamics underlying complex [variants] in learning, development and emotional state".

Lewis (2000) argues that skill theory encourages organisations to predict skills needs of their employees. This view suggests a critical need for development and implementation of a WSP in the Limpopo DoE and also for information gathering to inform a WSP. Granott et al. (2002) state that researchers have proven that skill theory provides a tool to analyse specific patterns of skills organisation and adaptation. They stress the need to analysed the skills of employees in an organisation; hence the relevance of skills auditing as one of the KSFs for implementing a WSP.

This point is also supported by Fischer et al. (2000), who suggest that organisations must take it upon themselves to have appropriate tools to gather the required skills-related information, analyse it and come up with necessary tools, programmes and projects for developing knowledge and competencies of the workforce. They further argue that employees in the organisation do not have a "single fixed competence like the capacity of a drinking glass"; instead they have "a dynamic range of competences". It is therefore essential for skills development facilitators and managers to bear in mind that the activities of employees broadly differ from moment to moment up and down a developmental complexity scale depending on the tasks at hand. Fischer et al. (2000) maintain that when employees are appropriately supported within an organisation their performance level changes because the competence or the "upper limit on performance varies directly with support". In this way, modern dynamic systems theory provides significant tools for analysing and understanding the complex organisation and variation in human capital development.

Lewis (2000) confirms that there is a strong linkage between dynamic systems theory and systems theory, and that both theories support the development of employees' skills. Skill theory involves dynamic analysis of development and learning of employees, while dynamic systems theory incorporates some powerful tools for analysis of variation and complex growth patterns (Lewis, 2000). Lewis also argues that the dynamic systems theory brings together a system for analysing change in skill organisation.

1.4.4 Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation

Clark (2000) argues that the theory of motivation proposed in 1954 by Abraham Maslow forms a "relationship between training and motivation". This theory maintains that employees

can satisfy a variety of their needs in the framework of their work, including needs such as security, physiological, self-esteem, social needs and self-actualisation needs.

This theory categorises these needs according to set of levels. Physiological needs are the first level of needs and it includes basic needs. An example of this is hunger, sex and thirst. Secondly is safety needs and it comprises stability, protection and security. The next levels of needs are needs for love and belongingness. These include the need to be loved and to belong. The forth level of needs are called the needs of self-esteem. These include self-respect, as well as the respect for others.

The fifth and last level of needs is called self-actualisation needs. According to Clark (2000), these include a need to fulfil one's potential.

The theory of motivation argues that low-order needs must be satisfied ahead of satisfying the second order needs. Thus, employees must start by having a meal in order to be able to do the work; satisfying a low-order need motivates employees to satisfy the next level of needs. However, this is also an indication that people are motivated by satisfaction of their needs. With reference to the theory of motivation, skills development programmes bring forth an opportunity that employers provide to motivate employees. Employers do this by providing new skills and knowledge, which also create opportunities for professional and personal development among employees. Hence the relevance of self-actualisation needs as outlined above. According to this theory, all employees of the organization are fascinated by self-actualisation. The theory also assumes that after training, employees will apply their recently acquired knowledge and skills, which will pave them a path towards the organisational hierarchy.

In the work of Harrison (1989), it is stated that sometimes human capital is not motivated to acquire new skills, regardless of skills development opportunities available to them. Furthermore, other organizations have barriers such as an environment that is unable to support employees in their pursuit of self-actualisation.

There is no doubt that the theory of motivation by Abraham Maslow underpins the development of employees within organisations. However, some of its levels, such as the physiological needs (hunger, thirst and sex), are not possible for the Limpopo DoE to satisfy. And whereas the next three levels can somehow be catered for by the Limpopo DoE, they cannot be the responsibility of Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development, or be

included as skills development programmes in a WSP. For example, safety needs (stability, security and protection) may be the responsibility of the security management unit but may also be the responsibility of the HR unit, and may in addition include the intervention of trade unions at a certain level. Where a WSP in the Limpopo DoE can play a critical role is in the level 5 needs – the self-actualisation needs, which include fulfilling one's potential (Clark 2000).

1.4.5 Hertzberg's theory of motivators and hygiene factors

Clark (2000) states that "Hertzberg's theory of motivation and hygiene factors continues from Maslow's theory". It's emphases is on provision of training by employers to motivate their employees and increase their job satisfaction. He goes on to indicate that employers that promote skills development opportunities for their employees often end up with satisfied employees, as some of them enjoy moving up the hierarchical ladder. Clark (2000) argues that structural factors which may have a negative effect on the performance of employees may include working conditions, management style, organisational policies and poor salaries.

This theory will be helpful in ensuring that employees understand what the organisation is trying to achieve through the development and implementation of a WSP. Regenesys (2010) states that motivated employees are often willing to contribute more effectively and efficiently within the organisation, and respond positively to the skills development programmes which they happen to attend. Hatting (2004) argues that proper implementation of a WSP enables a healthy relationship between management, employees and the organisation. Regenesys (2010) maintains that such a relationship creates an alignment between personal goals of individual employees and the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation.

1.4.6 Douglas McGregor's theory of X and Y

Douglas McGregor developed 2 conflicting theories and referred to them as X and Y (Clark, 2000). Employees who fall to the category of Y theory are more dedicated to their work responsibilities. Management of an organization recognises the contributions of these dedicated employees, and encourage them to take advantage of skills development opportunities provided by the organization. They are also motivated to implement the recently gained skills in the work environment. As indicated by Clark (2000), this process

enables employees to develop innovation and creativity for the joint benefit of employer and employee.

Determining the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE, therefore, can play a vital role in growing the competency and motivation levels of such dedicated employees. The HRU&CD unit can ensure that the skills needs of such employees form part of the skills planning process, and that the supervisors of such employees develop a personal development plan (PDP) for each employee in order for their skills to be developed. Paterson (2008) argues that motivated employees in an organisation must be carefully monitored, and that important measures must be taken to ensure that they stay motivated and also motivate their colleagues.

Employees who are classified under theory X often dodge their work responsibilities because they have serious dislike for work (Clark, 2000). These personnel must always be supervised for every work they are expected to do. This type of supervising eventually demotivate other employees. The demotivated employees find it difficult to be effective and obtain skills and knowledge during the skills development sessions (Clark 2000).

The theory of motivation discussed earlier can be used to change the negative attitude of such employees and make them feel important in the organisation. Meyer (2002) argues that employees with negative attitudes are often motivated by skills development programmes that are well-planned, implemented and evaluated to suit their work needs. Aguinis (2014) states that when poor performing employees undergo a skills development programme or any other form of training intervention, they often begin to feel important in the organisation. This action motivates them and gives them confidence to work harder and contribute more effectively in their organisation.

1.4.7 Keirsey Temperaments Sorter

The Keirsey temperaments sorter theory developed by David Keirsey indicates that in the process of developing the skills of human capital, organizations must not completely ignore personalities of their employees. This theory suggests that personalities of employees are classified into four different ways. These may include Dionysian which is also known as artisans, Epithean which is also referred to as guardians, Promethean which is also called rationalists, as well as Apollonian which is also regarded as idealists (Clark, 2000).

Artisan-personality employees will rarely accept control by their supervisers at work (Clark, 2000). They are impulsive, they pursue freedom, treasure values and they act in accordance with what they see as fair and attractive. They do all these things without focusing into goals and results of their actions. They do not like their supervisors, together with their organization's policies and procedures. Not like employees with artisan personality, employees who have guardian characters have a strong sense of affiliation and duty needs, and they are protectors of their cultures and traditions. These employees have very strong ethics of work and contributing towards organisation's goals and objectives makes them feel satisfied. They like complying with procedures, policies and protocols of the organization.

Clark (2000) indicates that they also feel satisfied by being appreciated and recognized by the employer, but they will not ask for such satisfaction. Furthermore, Clark (2000) states that employees who easily understand situations and predict them are regarded as employees with rationalist personalities. They usually become successful in challenges, value capabilities of their colleagues, and they also strive to control work related situations. These are employees with very strong work ethics and they are self-critical as they always seek for perfection. However, they are always dissatisfied with outcomes and achievements. These types of employees (Rationalist personalities) are creative and take pleasure from creating systems for the future and making wide-ranging changes within the organisation. The last ones are the idealist personalities. These are regarded as employees who often set unattainable targets for themselves and their supervisees. These types of employees are also hardworking and are often determined to meet the cause, as they always have their focus on the bigger picture rather than the little details (Clark, 2000).

I concur with this theory that the personalities of employees – one way or another – need to be considered when training and development interventions are to be made. Regenesys (2010) argues that a character of a person is one of the requirements that an interview panel looks at when seeking the best candidate for the job. They emphasise further that every vacancy has its own list of certain personalities that can accommodate the job. Similarly, the skills development phase of employees must take into account the personality of an employee. However, this is not to say that the theory discourages training of certain employees because of their personalities; rather, it means that taking into account the personalities of each employees makes the employee likely to receive a training skill more quickly and effectively.

These personality characteristics have their unique and direct impact on the attitude of employees towards the development of skills (Clark, 2000). Workers with artisan personality stand to havea certain advantage in acquiring knowledge and skills during the training, particularly if it includes group discussion and emphasises employee participation. Epitheans gain more knowledge when the presentation method in the training sessions focuses more on the perspective of applications. This is because Epitheans will want to understand a particular phenomenon in relation to the law, so that they can follow and apply it to the latter. They are less fascinated by debates because they like following rules and procedures without questioning (Clark, 2000). Clark states that the Prometheans are likely to acquire more knowledge and skills in training that focuses on ways to solve problems. This is because they are very inventive and are fascinated by building relevant ideas. Idealists on the other hand are more concerned about broad presentation of wide policy issues, which means that the panel method works fine for them (Clark, 2000).

1.4.8 Synthesis

This section has critically discussed systems thinking as the theory underpinning this research on the key success factors for WSP implementation. The other theories discussed are regarded as important because they are linked to systems thinking, and because they further support the development of employees in the organisations. This scientific study was therefore built theoretically on systems theory, also taking into account the other theories mentioned and discussed in this section. This section on the theoretical framework has highlighted the following:

- The Limpopo DoE is a unified system made up of other subsystems that work together to deliver the education services in the Limpopo province. The basic unit comprises a variety of entities, such as processes, policies, practices and human resources, which may also be broken down into more subsystems.
- Basic principles of systems thinking show how the management of the Limpopo DoE can use the system to incorporate the key success factors for WSP implementation.
- This section has highlighted the importance of dynamic skill theory which focuses on three phases: firstly, examining complex variations in the organisation of action and thought, including systematic change; secondly, focusing on analysing systematic change in the organisation of action and thought; and thirdly, explaining the

constructive dynamics underlying complex variants in learning, development, and emotional state.

- Both the dynamic systems theory and systems theory agree on the development of the skills of the employees in the organisation.
- The theory of motivation by Abraham Maslow (Clark, 2000) supports the development of employees in organisations. However, it also shows that not all levels of needs will fall within the ambit of the unit responsible for the development of human resources in the organisation.
- Hertzberg's Theory of motivation and hygiene factors follows on from Maslow's Theory (Clark, 2000). It adds that employers often provide training that motivates their employees and makes them feel satisfied with their jobs.
- In the X and Y Theories proposed by Douglas McGregor, employees who fall into the Y Theory category are more dedicated and motivated in their work-related duties. The organisation's management encourages such employees to attend sessions of skills development, apply the skills gained from such sessions at work, and contribute more to the growth of the organisation. Determining the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE can play a significant role in growing the competency and motivation levels of such dedicated employees. Employees who fall under theory X often have an inherent dislike for work. This means that they need to be kept under strict supervision for every task they are given at work.

1.5 Concept clarification

Key concepts used throughout the dissertation are outlined and clarify below.

1.5.1 Workplace skills plan

A workplace skills plan (WSP) can be regarded as a skills planning document that specifies all the skills needs of the company or organisation, together with the planned interventions in the form of courses or training programmes and projects necessary to meet such needs (Hattingh, 2004). In South Africa, all legitimate organisations that meet certain requirements are expected to prepare WSPs and submit them to the relevant SETA by 30 June each year. This submission is undertaken by skills development facilitators in their respective organisations. A WSP covers skills development programmes and projects between April 1 - March 30 the following year (Hattingh, 2003).

1.5.2 Sector skills plan

A sector skills plan (SSP) is a skills planning document which indicates skills development programmes and projects which are planned as interventions in each economic sector (Meyer, 2002). An SSP can also comprise a collection of WSPs within an economic sector making it, in effect, an epicentre of skills development (Meyer, 2002). For example, the Limpopo DoE and all other institutions that fall within the education sector submit their WSP to ETDP SETA as their economic sector. According to Meyer (2002), the SSP is a document identifies scarce and critical skills within a particular economic sector.

1.5.3 Human resource development

Human resource development (HRD) can be defined as a section or unit that establishes a necessary agenda to enhance human resources in an organisation, providing all personnel with skills, education and capabilities that provide assistance to the employee and the organisation in the achievement of goals (Watson et al., 1999). According to Aguinis (2014), the human resource development unit is responsible for the growth of knowledge, skills and performance of individual employees in the organisation. This includes organisational improvement in the aspect of delivering or rendering services and in the production of goods and services.

Human resource development refers to an arm for organizations to enhance the performance of human capital (Winstanley et al., 2000). HRD not only enhances the key competencies that support personnel in organisations to better perform current and future work responsibilities, Winstanley et al., (2000) states that it also support a good relationship between the needs of employees and those of the organization. According to Wright (1999), Human Resource Development refers to the organised training programmes and projects that a company arranges in order to develop the skills and capabilities of its workforce to advance production or service delivery and develop the skills of the employees, together with the performance of the organisation.

1.5.4 Training and development

(Hwang, 2003) defines training and development. He calls it “a continuing practise of growing the skills, knowledge and employees’ capacities”. Training is a permanent change in behaviour whereby employees are taught how to perform a particular task (Hwang, 2003). Regenesys (2010), defines training as organised activity intended to impart information to

improve the performance of the recipient, or to help them reach a requisite level of knowledge or skill. Training is more about correcting a specific matter in the subject of performance and answers the question of what happens if (Doyle, 1997). Paul and Anantharaman (2003) define training as a process of developing human capital into effective employees in the performance of their work responsibilities.

Development is a long-term process directed towards the improvement of skills, knowledge and attitude of employees in order to perform more effectively and efficiently in their endeavours to achieve organisational goals and objectives (Hwang, 2003). According to Paterson (2008), development is a process in which an employee's ability to do the work grows and becomes more advanced. Miller (2006) argues that although training pays more attention on the current performance and progress of human capital, development focusses more on addressing their future performance and progress. The above definitions show that both training and development are aimed at improving the skills, knowledge and experiences of personnel, either done for improving their knowledge and skills and enhancing their performance in their current jobs, or for future job responsibilities and performance.

1.5.5 Skills

One can understand a concept of skill as a capacity and ability attained through deliberate, methodical and continued effort to efficiently and adaptively execute work activities concerning people, ideas and things (Aguinis, 2014). With reference to public sector organisations like the Limpopo Department of Education and other various private sector organisations, these skills for employees are planned and implemented through a Workplace Skills Plan document (Regenesys, 2010). This research is therefore aimed at determining the Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan in the Limpopo Department of Education. Aguinis (2014) regards a skill as an ability that has been acquired by an employee through a training programme or thorough observation. He argues that a skill can also be regarded as an ability to produce solutions in some problem scenarios. Collins English Dictionary (2012) defines a skill as an ability to make adjustments.

1.5.6 Aspect

An aspect can be regarded as a distinct feature or element in a research problem, or an important characteristic to be considered in the scientific study (Champathes, 2006). Regenesys (2010) regards an aspect as a distant view of a wide area – one that is pleasant to

look at. For the purpose of the study on the key success factors for WSP implementation, aspects refer to the important areas or key success factors in which the research is focused. These key areas are aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, and aspects of reporting on an implemented WSP.

1.6 The research problem

Employees' attitudes to skills development and their negative comments suggest that these were no longer regarded as opportunities to gain more skills and competences. Employees were no longer excited about completing a training course and coming back to the organisation to apply the skills they had gained during the training. Skills development events were thus treated as simply an opportunity to have a nice time in a hotel, away from the office, or to collect more training certificates to add to one's personal profile. This situation led the researcher to conduct a study to determine the key success factors for WSP implementation. The primary aim of the study was to determine the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE in accordance with the following research objectives.

1.6.1 The research aim and objectives

1. To investigate the extent in which aspects of information gathering inform the WSP
2. To determine the perceived importance of aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP
3. To investigate the extent to which a WSP is implemented, monitored and evaluated
4. To investigate the perceived importance of reporting on the implementation of a WSP to SETA

1.6.2 The research questions

The research questions for the study conducted in the Limpopo DoE on the key success factors for WSP implementation were as follows:

- To what extent does the aspect of information gathering inform the WSP?
- What is the perceived importance of aspects of skills auditing in the Limpopo DoE?
- What is the perceived importance of aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP?
- To what extent is the WSP implemented, monitored and evaluated?
- What is the perceived importance of reporting to SETA on the implementation of a WSP?

1.7 Empirical research

Empirical research was conducted through the literature review and the quantitative study.

1.7.1 The literature review

A literature study was done in order to determine the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE. Subject-related and non-subject-related literature was studied with reference to the following keywords: aspect, WSP, sector skills plan, human resource development, skills, and training and development. Several electronic search engine were used including Google Scholar, Ebsco Host, NEXUS and sabinet.

A literature review can be regarded as a stage whereby relevant sources of information are acknowledged, collected and examined (Regenesys, 2010). The outcome is a combination of the work done by other authors, researchers and experts in the field. The literature review played a key part in this process of research, which also form part of determining the real world problem. Developing the research problem as well as developing the research rationale. Consulting the literature introduced the researcher to the debates and arguments surrounding the topic of 'key success factors for implementing a WSP'.

This fundamental process enabled the researcher to obtain insight into the topic and to determine main subjects that required to be explored. These constitute the key success factors for WSP implementation: aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, and aspects of reporting on a WSP. The researcher accordingly conducted an investigation into the literature related to the topic in the course of which he was able to find sources of information, ascertain their significance, read and thereafter synthesise the information from them, make the well-versed judgements and present a report on the information. The literature review was used to strengthen this study and served the following purposes:

- it demonstrated the researcher's competence in the research field
- it served as a key part in the process of research
- it triggered inventive thinking and fresh ideas
- it helped to verify that a suitable topic of topic has been selected

- it helped to ensure that no repetition of previously conducted research takes place
- it helped to identify research ideas and to refine the research problem
- it ascertained the most broadly acknowledged definitions of crucial concepts in the research field
- it provided depth analysis of the appropriate literature and also identify unnecessary gaps within research and available information in the subject field
- it assisted the researcher regarding the development of the research rationale and the research background
- it helped to determine an appropriate theoretical framework
- it assisted the researcher in explaining the contribution of the research to the research field as well as the research in general
- it helped to ascertain a suitable research design, methods as well as available research instruments
- it identified the most broadly recognised findings
- in the field of study are
- it gathered the relevant work of experts on the topic of research

The literature reviewed in this study included information collected from books, journal articles, etc., focused mainly on the research topic 'Key success factors for implementing a WSP'. This literature review covered important topics such as skills development in South Africa, its background and current status, institutions that play a significant role in the skills arena in South Africa, key aspects which were determined as key success factors for WSP implementation, strategic human resource management, the role of a workplace skills planning and the criteria for a WSP.

1.7.2 Research design

Research design is the plan or blueprint that a researcher devises and employs to conduct investigations. Regenesys (2010) describes research design as a suitable plan or blueprint to investigate the research objectives. It includes information on the researcher's target population and accessible population and on the sampling approaches (sampling methods or plans) to be implemented.

Mouton and Marais (1992) suggest that researchers need to establish guidelines to provide directions to the research study. This action must start before conducting the research.

However, these guidelines are viewed as significant in assisting the researcher to maintain focus in the research enquiry. According to Boikanyo (1998), addressing the planning of scientific inquiry – is the research design. It also designs a plan to describe, explore as well as to explain something. The research design may therefore be referred to as a set of guidelines that a researcher is required to follow to address the research problem accordingly. Regenesys (2010) argues that the research design enables the researcher to determine the research methodology and methods.

1.7.3 Research methodology

A literature study was done and an empirical research study was performed to determine the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE.

1.7.4 Research approaches or paradigms

De Vos (1998) states that scientific researchers may decide to make use of qualitative or quantitative approach to gather research data.

For this study the researcher adopted a quantitative research approach. Creswell (2008) states that one difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative research uses words while quantitative research uses numbers.

This study used a positivist research paradigm, also known as a quantitative research approach, rather than a phenomenological research paradigm, also known as a qualitative research approach (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). The positivist approach was more like means for testing "objective theories by examining the relationship between variables". According to Creswell (2008), these variables can in turn be measured to enable analysis of numerical data through statistical procedures.

1.7.5 Study site

The research on the key success factors for WSP implementation was conducted in the Limpopo DoE, which has 1 provincial office and 5 district offices located in the 5 municipal districts: Capricorn, Sekhukhune, Waterberg, Mopani and Vhembe. The 5 offices of the district independently delivers services of education to a number of "circuit" offices, and these offices of the circuit also cater for the needs of education to all schools of the province.

1.7.6 Sample site

The empirical research for the study on the key success factors for WSP implementation was conducted in August 2015 in Riba-Cross District Office, which is one of the 5 district offices of the Limpopo DoE.

1.7.7 Target population

The study population comprised of the entire staff members of the Limpopo DoE. In April 10th 2013, the PERSAL system of the department specified indicated that the institution had 63 919 staff members which includes 56 917 “education specialists” and 5 948 “office-based employees”. The target population of the study were the 2 788 permanently employed employees stationed at the 5 district offices of the Limpopo DoE. These included both “education specialists and office-based employees”.

1.7.8 Sampling strategies

The researcher drew the sample from the population using probability sampling approach known as simple random sampling. The researcher wrote 5 names of the districts of Limpopo Department of Education and places them in a plastic bag so that they can go through a random selection. In this way, each of the 5 districts had an equal chance of being selected in the sample**.** This random selection was done through one of the techniques of random sampling known as fishbowl technique.

1.7.9 Sample size

The following table shows the sample that was drawn from the population to take part in the study:

Table 1.2 The research sample

Sample size for frequency in a population	
Population size(for finite population correction factor or FPC)(N):	1019
Hypothesised % frequency of outcome factor in the population (p):	50%+/-5
Confidence limits as % of 100(absolute +/- %)(d):	5%
Design effect (for cluster surveys-DEFF):	1
Sample size (n) for various confidence levels	
Confidence Level (%)	Sample size
95%	96
Equation	
Sample size n = [DEFF*Np(1-p)]/ [(d2/Z21-α/2*(N-1)+p*(1-p)]	

1.7.10 The sample

The sample for the study were the 75 permanently employed managers of the Limpopo DoE. This sample size did not include the circuit managers and the school managers (school principals). All managers who formed part of the research sample were given questionnaires to take part in the study. The researcher printed and distributed a total of 95 questionnaires in order to have 75 research participants.

1.7.11 Data-collection method

The data in this quantitative research was collected using structured questionnaires as a research instrument. The overall aim was to determine the key aspects for implementation of the WSP in the Limpopo DoE. According to Gratton and Jones (2004, p. 115), the questionnaire is viewed as a "standard set of questions formulated to obtain information from a subject".

There is a variety of advantages in using this method for collecting data. This includes accessibility, anonymity, potential reduction in bias, structured data as well as increased time for respondents.

The questionnaires were used (i) to investigate the extent in which aspects of information gathering informs the workplace skills planning; (ii) to determine the perceived importance of aspects of skills auditing; (iii) to determine the perceived importance of aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP; (iv) to investigate the extent in which a WSP is implemented, monitored and evaluated; and (v) to investigate the perceived importance of reporting on the implementation of a WSP to SETA. The questionnaires were structured into six sections:

Section A: Biographical information.
Section B: Aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP.
Section C: Aspects of skills auditing.
Section D: Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP.
Section E: Aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP.
Section F: Aspects of reporting on a WSP.

This study used a Likert four-point scale as follows:

- Extent of application: not at all; small extent; some extent; great extent
- Perceived importance: not at all; small extent; some extent; great extent

1.7.12 Data quality control

The data in this research was captured using Microsoft Excel. Two components of validity were considered by the researcher prior to data collection: face validity and content validity. Face validity is concern with the appropriateness regarding what the researcher wants to measure at first glance. According to Gratton and Jones (2004, p. 87), content validity is more about the initial assessment from the expert's point of view.

1.7.13 Data analysis

All the data collected through structured questionnaires in this research was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Powell and Connaway (2004, p. 246) suggest that an expert should assist regarding the calculations and statistical analysis that will be conducted during the research process. The statistical technique in this research was aimed at achieving the following:

- To determine Alpha Cronbach's reliability of aspects researched in the structured questionnaire.
- To determine the means of items in section B and C.
- Percentage importance of items in section B and C where % importance is the mean divided by the maximum response x 100.
- "Percentage application by managers of question items in section C" where % application is the mean divided by the maximum response x 100.
- To determine frequency response of managers who view aspects of reporting to SETA on the implemented WSP as necessary.

- To determine practical significance between the importance and application of items in section B and C by applying Cramer's O.

1.7.14 Ethical consideration

The researcher ensured that all research participants were at liberty to voluntarily take part in the study, and that they were not doing so under any obligation from their superiors. This was done through the letter of consent that was signed by all managers who took part in the study. This ensured that all participants understood that they were freed to participate or withdraw from the project at any time.

All data for this research will be stored in a safe location within the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Graduate School of Business and Leadership). The research participants will received an electronic copy of the research via email, while the gatekeepers (Limpopo Department of Education) will receive the hard-copy of the research on the Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan. These hard-copies of the research will be made available to the office of the Member of the Executive Committee, the Head of the Department as well as the office of the Senior Manager of the Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development.

1.7.15 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to the Limpopo Department of Education. It only focused on employees who are permanently appointed as managers. The study did not include school managers or principals stationed at both primary and secondary schools, managers stationed at head office, or circuit managers of the Limpopo Limpopo Department of Education.

With reference to this research being conducted in the Limpopo Department of Education, this means that it will not include opinions or responses from the Skills Development Facilitators of other organizations as well as skills development practitioners from other public and private sector organisations. The research will also not include institutions that play a critical role in the training and development industry such as the Public Sector Education and Training, Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy, service providers for skills and development training courses, sector for Higher Education and Training and so on.

1.8 Structure of the dissertation

The first chapter provides introduction regarding how the research on the key success factors for WSP implementation was planned and conducted. Chapter 2 gives an account of the development of a WSP, the historical background of skills development, and the current state of skills development in South Africa. The chapter also covers strategic human resource management, the role of the WSP and its criteria.

Chapter 3 of the dissertation identifies 5 key success factors for WSP implementation and elaborates on each of them. These key success factors include: aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP – and the aspects of reporting on an implemented WSP.

Chapter 4 presents the research design, approach and methodology. Chapter 5 provides data analysis. It outlines how the data in this research was collected through structured questionnaires, captured using Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS. The chapter also indicates the key success factors for WSP implementation as indicated by the respondents. Chapter 6 indicates the conclusions and recommendations on each of the key success factors for WSP implementation.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at providing introduction regarding how the research was planned and conducted. It indicated the research background, the rationale and the theoretical framework, which included a range of theories that underpinned the research. The principal critical concepts used in this research were clarified, and the research objectives and questions were also outlined in this chapter.

In this chapter the empirical research, the research design and methodology, the research approach which was used, the study site where the research was conducted and the sample site are all further indicated.

The aim of this chapter was also to indicate the target population, sampling strategies which were used, the sample size, the sample, and the way in which data was collected from the research sample. It also presented how the data in this research was captured and analysed,

indicated the issues of ethical consideration, the limitations of the study, and the structure of the dissertation. Chapter 2, which follows, focuses on the development of the WSP.

Chapter 2
DEVELOPMENT OF A WSP

2.1 Introduction

The relevant literature is reviewed in this chapter. Such literature relates to the key success factors for WSP implementation as conducted in the Limpopo DoE. The core theme of this chapter is the development of the WSP and it covers areas such as the historical perspective of skills development, the current state of skills development in South Africa, strategic human resource development, the role of workplace skills planning, strategic human resource management, and the criteria for workplace skills planning.

Sub-topics included in these areas of focus are critical training institutions such as the South African Management Development Institute, the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy, the Public Sector Education and Training Authority, and other training academies. The chapter will also indicate what has failed in skills development in South Africa, and the challenges facing skills development in this country. The literature will further review how to prepare a workplace for learning, how to set up a training committee, how to make a case for a WSP, the step-by-step processes of strategic human resource management, and the criteria for workplace skills planning.

2.2 Skills development: a historical perspective

According to Akoojee et al, 2007, the history of skills development in South Africa indicates that what shapes policies that caused serious divisions across South Africa are: “economic, social and political” development. These policies economically and educationally benefited only white South Africans at the expense of all other population groups. This action seriously skewed the economy of South Africa, causing unnecessary “capital intensiveness” in high-skill white reserves together with low-skill African labour. Akoojee et al. further argue that the deliberate under-skilling of black Africans proved indefensible over time. The resources

available at the time for education and training were exclusively spent on the development of white South Africans. The logic of apartheid's 'separate development' policies required the "wasteful multiplication of institutions and educational administrations divided alongside racial lines".

The state of the skills base in 1994, as inherited from the 1960s and 1970s, resulted in significant shifts in the labour market as the corporate sector started putting pressure on the government (McGrath, 1996). This process was aimed at improving the skills base of Black African workers in the urban areas to meet their changing needs. According to McGrath (1996), this resulted in more technical education gradually becoming available for black Africans. In addition there was pressure to change the system coming from the rising militancy among black Africans, starting with the Durban strikes in 1973, spreading to the schooling system and culminating in the famous Soweto uprising in 1976 (McGrath, 1996).

According to McGrath (1996), the military campaigns of South Africa into neighbouring countries also compelled big business to rely more on black workers because increasing numbers of whites were being recruited for military duty. According to Kraak (2007), 2 commissions were set up in the aftermath of the emerging political activity of the decade. The first was the Wiehahn Commission which investigated labour and training legislation, followed by the Wiekert Commission which investigated black urbanisation.

These 2 commissions decided to recommend the "streamlining" and rationalising of "labour and training legislation", which ended in the declaration of the 1981 Manpower Training Act (McGrath, 1996). The commissions further suggested that both the National Manpower Commission, as well as the National Training Board be established. According to McGrath (1996), both of these bodies were established to advise the honourable Minister of Manpower regarding issues concerning training and labour. As the first South African democratic elections of 1994 approached, the NTS was rejected by the African National Congress and the Congress of South African Trade Unions and was replaced by a new National Training Strategy Initiative.

2.3 Skills development in South Africa today

The necessity of skills development can be clearly seen by examining the variety of successes discussed below, and by the extent to which the challenges of lack of skills negatively affected and still affect the country and its labour force. According to Regenesys (2010), although there are still many shortfalls in support for skills development interventions in South Africa, the government has since 1994 introduced a range of institutions and legislative measures to promote and enforce investment in training of the South African labour force. Some of these training institutions are noted below.

2.3.1 South African Management Development Institute

The government realised that the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) was not as effective as had been expected in facilitating skills development interventions across government institutions (Public Sector Education and Training Authority, 2010). The following problems were identified by the government:

- It was very inflexible for a training organisation expected to be responsive and be able to provide top-level with the "mainly mid-level offerings at present".
- In their current approach of delivery, SAMDI and the provincial academies only managed to meet with a section of the training outputs still required, corresponding to those made available by departments.
- The method of cost recovery on which SAMDI was operating exacerbated the state of affairs. This resulted in a short-term strategy, as opposed to the long term strategy which would permit for related skills development projects of the design and scale required to produce government institutions that would be able to meet the needs of the people.
- Higher institutions of education, provincial training institutions together with private providers could not self-reliantly make available the required scale and significance of training. A pure framework was needed in order to incorporate their contributions.
- For the reason that SAMDI on its own was a provider of skills related services, it ended up in a competition with other institutions that were providing services of skills. However, SAMDI was expected to coordinate and monitor interventions related to skills training across such institutions (PALAMA, 2010).

2.3.2 Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy

In response to the problems with SAMDI, and based on the recommendations of a Ministerial Committee (MINCOM), cabinet decided in year 2006 November to approve the formation of a public service academy (PSETA, 2010). The Minister (Public Service and Administration) appointed the MINCOM to assess and compile recommendations about the role and responsibilities and the scope, operations and form of SAMDI. This academy was launched in 2008 and was named the "Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy" (PALAMA). The vision of PALAMA was to produce a public service whose members are capable, committed, innovative, and user-oriented (PSETA, 2010)

PSETA (2010) highlights the following as some of the primary objectives of PALAMA:

- To "facilitate the building of a learning, innovative and accountable public sector"
- To "work towards the ultimate self-sustainability of PALAMA through implementation of a realistic cost-recovery strategy in the next three to 5 years"
- To "provide effective training, development and coordination of public service trainers in pursuance of a needs-driven and value-adding service"
- To promote effectiveness in the delivery of services through"
    - leadership management training and development
    - interventions of change management for purposes of transformation
    - building capacity for the Public Administration Leadership And Management Academy to deliver according to the priorities of government

2.3.3 Public Sector Education and Training Authority

The PSETA was established in year 2000 on 20 March by the Department of Labour. This establishment was done based on the Skills Development Act of 1998 (Meyer, 2002). According to Meyer (2002), the primary role of the PSETA was to facilitate the development of skills, quality assurance, and promote "transversal functions and qualifications" across the public sector.

The SETAs "replaced the 33 Industry Training Boards [and] have greater powers and responsibilities" (Meyer, 2002). This is because "they cover every industry and occupation, whereas the Industry Training Boards [only] covered some sectors and focused on apprenticeships" in those sectors. SETAs are concerned with learnerships, internships, learning programme type matrix and unit-based skills programmes. The SETAs were

established after an investigation to determine exactly how the different sectors should be defined and what industries should be linked to each SETA (Meyer, 2002).

The added value of the SETAs is that they have a good understanding on the subject of issues related to labour market in their individual economic and industrial sectors (Meyer, 2002). It is vital for SETAs to ensure that they have enough support from both the employers and the workforce in their sector, and that they are recognised and accepted as a reliable and commanding voice concerning issues of skills. They must be able to create the necessary interventions and form resolutions that address needs of skills within their individual sectors (Meyer, 2002). Meyer further argues that SETAs must also become recognised specialists with regard to the demand of skills in their respective sector.

Regenesys (2010) confirms that Chapter 3 of Section 10 of the Skills Development Act, 1998 sets out the functions and responsibilities of the SETAs. These include contributing to the improvement of existing skills and providing skills training to the already employed, or those wanting to be employed in their sector. The SETAs are required to do this by ensuring that people learn the necessary skills required by employers and communities.

2.3.4 Other training academies

There were effective and efficient training academies in four provinces which the departments would normally use to conduct training for them (PALAMA, 2010). Since most of the provincially determined training needs were offered by these academies and were determined and funded by the office of the Premier, government departments had the opportunity of sending their employees to these training academies. This option would have no cost impact on the departments' training budgets or WSPs (PALAMA, 2010). An example of such a training programme is the 'Re-orientation of Public Servants' programme conducted by the Western Cape Provincial Training Academy (DoE, 2010).

The rest of the skills development programmes offered by these academies are offered based on the WSPs of the various departments (PALAMA, 2010). The academies undertake block training through specific accredited courses with affordable rates, and training sessions are usually conducted by permanent training staff of the academy. In cases where the academy needs to procure the services of external service providers, their rates would be negotiated on behalf of the public service (PALAMA, 2010).

It is important to keep in mind that all registered training institutions in South Africa operate under particular legislation. Mummenthey (2010) lists the following as some of the most important legislative measures contributing to the development of skills within South Africa:

- "South African Qualifications Authority" (SAQA) Act, No. 58 of 1995: intended to establish" a new framework for education and training in South Africa" through creation of a single and unified system for education and training qualifications, including multiple entry, exit and re-entry points, with associated institutions and measures to maintain the quality of such qualifications, in particular the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF); intended to provide a framework governing the quality of all learning, whether the learning occur in the classroom, in the workplace or at home, as well as whether learners are young or matured. As much as education and training are recognised as diverse forms and methods of learning, they consist of similar status and all of them are recognised through national standards and qualifications. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is acknowledgement that skills attained in the context of an informal course, also deserve equal recognition. This action is one of the ways to redress the previous negligence of informal learning. The Act endorses the concept of providing lifelong learning for all South African citizens, as it looks into a future where the development of skills extends throughout the lives of individuals.

Skills Development Act No. 97, 1998; intended to "develop the skills of the South African workforce through increased levels of investment in education and training in the labour market". All employers are required to pay a Skills Development Levy 1% of their payroll to the Receiver of Revenue. These funds are used for the development and implementation of training programmes in the various employment sectors in the country. Another portion of the money is used for the training of unemployed people. According to Regenesys (2010), the statute provides an institutional framework to develop and execute national, sector and workplace strategies for developing the skills of the South African labour force, to integrate such strategies inside the NQF envisaged in SAQA, 1995, to cater for learnerships leading towards a recognised occupational qualifications, to cater for the funding of the development of skills through a levy grant scheme and the National Skills Fund, to provide for - and regulate services of employment, as well as to cater for issues connected therewith (Mummenthey, 2010).

- Skills Development Levies No. 9 of 1999 and the Income Tax No. 58 of 1962. These 2 acts were introduced to fund training and ensure its affordability in South Africa.

Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998 introduced to transform the institutions in South Africa (public and private training institutions) for the delivery of high quality delivery.

- Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act No. 53 of 2003: aimed at ensuring equitable training (Regenesys, 2010).
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997) introduced to bring about formality and also to regulate training (PALAMA, 2010).
- Labour Relations Act (Act No. 66, 1995): intended to ensure a transparent training process across all organisations (PALAMA, 2010).

According to Regenesys (2010), other skills development interventions by South African organisations feature

- commitment to training and development by the organisations
- large quantity of skills development opportunities for employees
- dedicated training budget assigned by both the government and the organisations
- improved staff motivation, raising work output by employees (Regenesys, 2010)

2.3.5 Failures of skills development in South Africa

A study published in 2007 by the "Development Policy Research Unit" (DPRU, 2007) lists a number of important policy documents through which government facilitates skills development. These include the Skills Development Act of 1998), Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, National Skills Development Strategy of 2001 – as well as the Human Resources Development Strategy of 2001. There are still a number of areas where there has been a mismatch between labour demand and supply, poor coordination between relevant institutions and stakeholders, lack of policy coordination, lack of learnerships integration, as well as lack of combination between the lists of scarce skills published recently.

The Development Policy Research Unit (2007) notes the following failures in skills development in South Africa:

- Mismatch between labour demand and supply: demand for particular skills surpasses the supply.
- Labour supplies are those who participate in the labour market with given endowments of human capital; labour demand discusses both private and public institutions needing to employ individual employees who have a certain sets of skills.
- Poor coordination between relevant institutions and stakeholders: some of the failures in skills development result from a lack of effective synchronisation and partnerships between education sector in civil society, as well as providers of training in both sectors (private and public). McGrath (2004) argues that in terms of skills development, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Labour (DoL) and the Department of Education (DoE) have not been effective enough in their efforts to bring about the desired impact of skills development.
- Policy coordination: while policy coordination is necessary, there are also a number of challenges. The DPRU (2007) cites examples of coordination failure. One example is that there are different notions which exist between government departments in terms of the training needs of Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). The DTI historically favoured internships for micro, small and medium enterprises, while the DoL recognized a programme of learnerships as the most suitable tool. There is also a level of incoherence regarding policy between the 2 Departments. This action limits the ability of the country to climb onto a comprehensive skills economy that is on a higher level. Education policy does not appear to regard skills development for enterprise development as a priority and therefore the DoE is not in alignment with the national policies of the DoL. This has undermined the prospect of government creating a coherent strategy on skills development (DPRU 2007).
- Lack of learnerships integration: the framework of broader skills development pulls together the Department of Labour, Department of Education, Department of Trade and Industry, together with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). According to DPRU (2007), the poor level of coordination between the Department of Labour and the Department of Education is perhaps one of the most crucial issues here. “The various organs of state are not doing enough to integrate learnerships with the NQF. Without this, the system becomes sub-optimal. The broader education policy context in South Africa was formulated to allow for programmes such as learnerships to be formally recognised through the NQF” (DPRU, 2007). This allows individuals who are declared

qualified - an important level of transferability associated with their recently obtained skills (DPRU, 2007).

- Lack of synthesis among the lists of scarce skills published recently. In the work of Daniels (2007), it is pointed out that the lack of synthesis between the departments can be clearly witnessed by the lists of scarce skills recently published by the DHA, together with the one recently published by the DoL.

2.3.6 Challenges facing the skills development in South Africa

STATS SA (2008) indicates that in terms of overcoming the skills development legacy of the past, particularly since 1994 – South Africa has made substantial progress. Apart from such progress, deficiency of skills between many of the formerly disadvantaged group and high rate of unemployment still remain a serious challenge and greatest impediments towards achieving the dream of a better future for all. The rate of unemployment among youth is joint with education level which is low and the available skills are unable to meet the employer's needs. Such has resulted to a mismatch of skills and a lack of related experience of work (STATS SA, 2008).

According to (2010), skills shortage not only constrains future economic growth and further development, it is also the greatest impediment to a more equal society. Mummenthey argues that the skills development challenge has been inherited from the restrictive education and training policies of the past, and that in addition to general pressures from globalisation together with the knowledge economy, domestic challenges in the field of skills development faces South Africa.

Skills development in South Africa faces a variety of challenges, among which are the commonly acknowledged high prevalence of HIV and Aids in the labour force and an additional net loss of skilled professionals through emigration (Mummenthey, 2010). The latter is often referred to as skilled emigration or 'brain drain'. Mummenthey (2010) also cites problems in relation to education and skills levels, provision of training and education, industry training, vocational training and education, and the diversity of national languages. In relation to education and skills levels he notes the overwhelming extent of the skills challenge related to general education which faced the incoming government in 1994 which can be seen in figures from a report published in the same year by the Joint Education Trust. The report revealed the following:

- Approximately 7.5 million people between the age of 15 and older were illiterate or undereducated.
- Nearly 3 million of them were totally unschooled, with another 4.5 million having very little primary education which made them to be considered barely literate.
- The figures revealed 20% of an adult illiteracy rate, with 29 present of the total population. The large majority of the population had never been exposed to any type of formal training, or received acknowledgement of their acquired skills or qualifications.

2.3.6.1 Provision of education and training: institutional landscape

With reference to the exclusive type of education and training policy during the apartheid era, the educational system and its delivery institutions such as private and public education and training providers were highly fragmented and often dysfunctional. The educational landscape which existed in 1994 presented the following additional challenges in the public provision of education and training:

- There were 39 different education systems all with their respective regulating laws. In addition there was no "nationally acknowledged and assured qualifications framework", restricting the transfer of qualifications through learning institutions and industry sectors.
- Performance levels were spread between institutions. There were highly resourced education and training institutions in the former white system, while rural colleges in the formerly disadvantaged communities were often dysfunctional with poor quality curricula, teaching, and infrastructure.

2.3.6.2 Industry training: culture and practices

Under apartheid, quality training and education in the workplace were reserved not only for white South Africans but also predominantly for the young. According to the DoL (2001), once people obtain post-school education or training, they have a tendency to stay within the same profession or employer without attaining further levels of qualifications. The training offered by employers was likely to benefit only 20–30% of the formal personnel. The quality and depth of such training was also questionable since it focused more on informal part-time, in-house training sessions of short duration and with a narrow skills focus. Most of courses addressed basic skills including health, safety and the skills of computer, which served the

specific needs of the employer (the immediate use in the workplace) and was not externally accredited (DoL,2001).

Mummenthey (2010) argues that except with regard to the system of apprenticeship, South Africa had no tradition whereby employers served as a recognised partner of training for formal work based training. In the work of Kraak (2003), it is cited that there were little incentives for companies to provide training, and a variety of individuals in this environment were of the view that it was easier to poach skilled staff members externally from others rather than train them internally. This Reflected a creative training culture which was uncertain of the merits of taking part in continuous training and education.

2.3.6.3 **Vocational education and training: history and national recognition**

According to Mummenthey (2010), the only established workplace-based training (VET) system which existed was the "Apprenticeship Act of 1922". It was racially defined type of a training system and it was only reserved for the white minorities of South Africa. The system of apprenticeship was a major pathway for intermediate skills development in South Africa, with the qualification of "white artisans" being focused on major sectors. Mummenthey (2010) notes that artisan apprentices were funded by an employer while still in the apprenticeship programme, with their average duration being 3 to 5 years. They studied in "part-time block release format" at a technical college and were provided with relevant work-experience being supervised by a senior artisan.

The rest of the population was only able to access the past system for white minorities of South Africa well after 1994 (Mummenthey, 2010). As a consequence of reforms suggested by the three state commissions during the late 1970s: "Wiehahn, Riekert and the De Lange Commissions" (1977-1981). According to Mummenthey (2010), introducing the Manpower Training Act in 1981, with the years succeeding the official "de-racialisation" of training, the system began to show little signs that racial distribution in the system was overturning. Ninety percent of the students in higher institutions of learning were rapidly black Africans and they were enrolled for full-time programmes, commonly without any assistance of an employer.

Mummenthey (2010) maintains that as a result, the system started to experience a considerable and non-stop decline. The first sign was the major drop in the number of artisans that were qualified: from 13500 in 1985 to 5145 in 1999. He indicates that there was a clear

decline from the number of recently indentured apprentices: from 10 758 in 1991 to a low of 3 129 in 1999, which signified a 70.91% decrease). Kraak (2003) argues that the system also achieved a low rate of placement after training, which is also estimated to rest around 15% as provided by the Department of Labour (2001) and 33.6% as given by FET college graduates.

Qualified artisans who remained unemployed consist of 69.7% Black Africans and 24.2% of white in South Africa (Kraak, 2003). This was a clear indication that regardless of the legal barriers for inclusion which had already been lifted, the system continued to exclude black Africans from equal opportunities of education and training. Kraak (2003) adds that the historical notion of VET in South Africa was only connected to a "narrow range of sectors", together with "low skills levels of employment" For this reason – it was alleged by many as being of "lower status than general education". According to Kraak (2007), this national prejudice resulted in low rate of registration for FET colleges (the largest intake of post matric enrolments should be in FET colleges) together with higher rates of registration in universities of technology as well as universities. This created an inverted triangular institutional landscape which was unique to South Africa.

2.3.6.4 **Variety of national languages**

Mummenthey (2010) argues that the variety of languages continues to be a challenge in the context of learning and training. He states that with 11 official languages in South Africa, only a minority of the population in the 1996 census data selected English as their home language; the most widely spoken home languages were isiZulu (22.9%) and Xhosa (17.9%), followed by Afrikaans (14.6%) and English (8.6%). According to Webb (2002), it is argued that English was regarded as the main language in terms of its prestige and power and Afrikaans being the language of the South African workplace.

Regenesys (2010) highlights the following as some of the challenges hindering the progress of skills development in both the public and private sector in South Africa:

- limited impact of training on performance improvement
- studies and courses which were not work-related
- lack of strong mentorship processes for employees
- lack of training customisation to institutional environment
- lack of application of gained skills and knowledge in workplace

- lack of alignment between training and appraisal/development of career or performance
- absenteeism due to training which then compromise service delivery
- incoherent training strategy
- ad hoc training initiatives
- the same employees always selected to attend skills development programmes
- problems with the selection process for skills development opportunities
- lack of awareness of the importance of training and education (Regenesys, 2010)

2.3.6.5 **Synthesis**

The research noted above relates to key success factors for WSP implementation: aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP, and aspects of reporting on the implemented WSP. These can be synthesised as follows:

- The Public Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) encourages government organisations to develop WSPs.
- Most of the identified challenges and failures of skills development in South Africa as noted above) relate to aspects of skills auditing, and aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP.
- With reference to aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, SAMDI and PALAMA (as noted above) were tasked with facilitating training and development across all government departments in South Africa.
- The above institutions help government organisations to implement WSPs by providing training on certain skills development programmes.
- One of the objectives of PALAMA was to "provide effective training, development and coordination of public service trainers in pursuance of a needs-driven and value-adding service".
- PSETA provides grants for organisations to implement their WSPs.
- PSETA conducts monitoring and evaluation for the implementation of a WSP by organisations.
- It also does follow-ups on the effective use of both discretionary and mandatory grants.
- With regard to aspects of reporting on a WSP, organisations are expected to submit an annual training report to their relevant SETAs by 30 June each year.

The aim of this section was to present the current state of skills development in South Africa, and to reflect on important institutions that play a critical role in the training and development arena. The section has also indicated the relevance of the role played by SAMDI, PALAMA, PSETA and other training institutions to the identified key success factors for WSP implementation in organisations. Further, it has identified the challenges and failures of skills development in South Africa, together with the country's commitment in solving these challenges through certain relevant legislations. The next section focuses on strategic human resource management and the role of workplace skills planning.

2.4 Strategic HR management and the role of workplace skills planning

Strategy refers to the approaches which companies may adopt to compete, each having their own different perspective, and to how they believe they can become best in their individual industry (Steven et al. 2000). It can also be defined as a process that occurs on three fundamental levels – corporate, single business unit and functional – to give an organisation a competitive edge through appropriate decisions and implementation (Regenesys, 2010).

Management is defined as the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling of human and resources to achieve organisational goals effectively and efficiently (Jones et al. 2013). According to Cook and Hunsaker (2001), management can be defined as a practice which involves directing, organising and developing people, technology and financial resources to provide products and services through organisational systems.

According to Noe (2008, P: 69), strategic management refers to the pattern or plan that integrates the main goals, policies and action sequences of an organisation into a cohesive whole. Millmore et al. (2007) describe it as focusing on the scope and direction of an organisation and often involving dealing with indecision and complexity. Johnson and Scholes (2002), cited in Millmore et al. (2007:4), define strategic management in relation to three key elements: understanding the strategic position of the organisation, exercising 'strategic choice' about possible future strategies to seek competitive advantage, and translating strategy into action.

Strategic human resource management (SHRM), on the other hand, refers to the pattern of prearranged human resource activities and deployments aimed at enabling an organisation to achieve its goals and objectives (Noe et al., 2008, P. 69). This means that it is concerned with

the relationship between the strategic management and the management of human resources in an organisation (Millmore et al. 2007, P: 4). SHRM is concerned with the way in which the management of employees contributes critically to the effectiveness of the organisation (Jones et al. 2013). This also means that while HRM is concerned with the integration of its activities at the horizontal level, SHRM is more concerned with vertically integrating those HRM activities and making sure that they are appropriate to the strategic direction of the organisation (Jones et al. 2013). Figure 2-1 taken from Jones et al. (2013), indicates the mapping of strategy and human resource management territory.

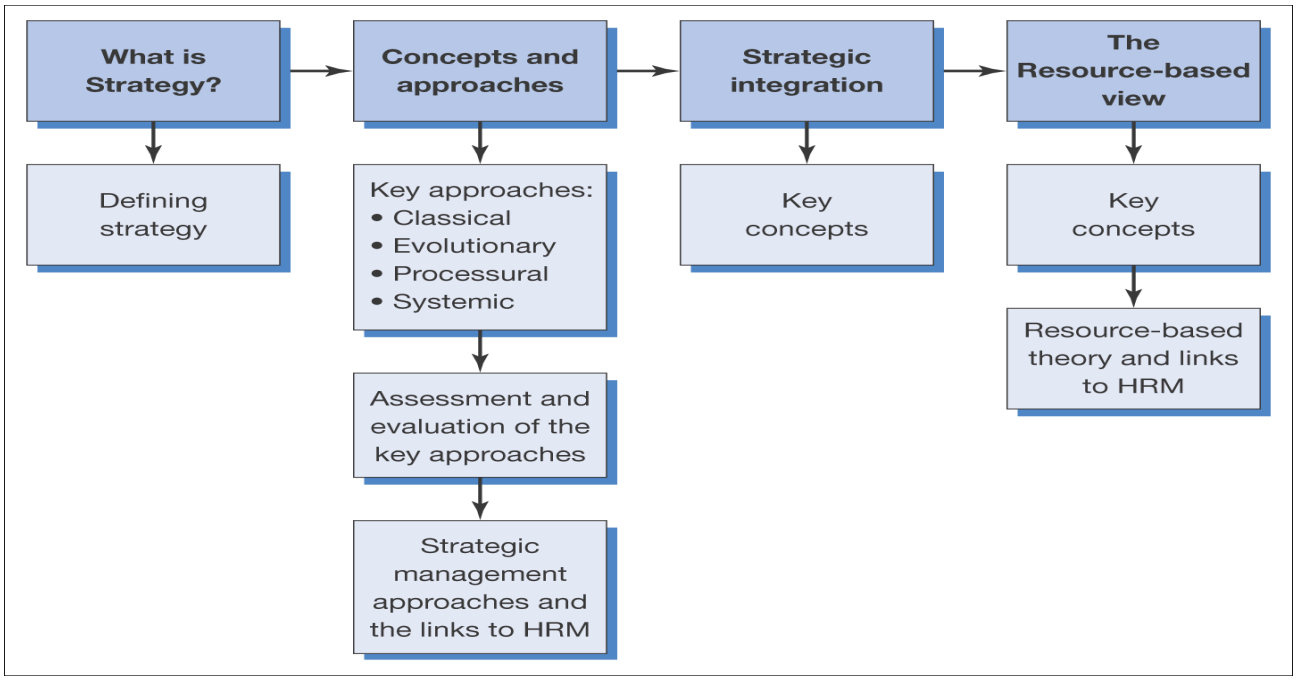


Figure 2-1 Mapping the strategy and human resource management territory
(Source: Jones et al. 2013).

According to Millmore et al. (2007:26), the key principles of SHRM include the following:

- An emphasis on the integration of personnel policies to form a coherent package, and on business planning more generally.
- The locus of responsibility for personnel management residing not with specialist managers, but assumed instead by senior line management.
- A shift of focus from management–trade union relations to management–employee relations: from collectivism to individualism.

- Emphasis on commitment and the exercise of initiative, with managers currently playing the role of enabler, empower and facilitator.

Hendry and Pettigrew (1990:21) identify four principles that best describe SHRM:

- Use of planning.
- Clear method to the "design and management of personnel systems, based on an employment policy and manpower strategy and often underpinned by a 'philosophy'".
- Matching activities of Human Resources Management and policies with particular clear strategy.
- Seeing the organization's Human Resources as an important strategic resource to achieve competitive advantage.

The principles listed above indicate how strategic human resource management may be defined regarding the relation of SHRM to workplace skills planning, Hattingh (2004) states that the role of the WSP is to organise skills interventions so that employees are skilled, knowledgeable and able to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation. The role of Strategic Human Resource Management, therefore, is to make certain that the processes of a WSP are well integrated with the strategic direction of the organisation. In the Limpopo DoE, workplace skills planning is undertaken by the Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development unit (HRU&CD) – or human resource development (HRD) as it is often referred to in other organisations.

Jones et al. (2013) mention that HRD incorporates activities and processes relating to organisational and individual learning. HRD involves prearranged skills interventions in the learning processes for both individual employees and the organisation. Jones et al. note also the systematic approach to HRD, often depicted as a cycle of activities (Figure 2-2) comprised as follows:

- identification of HRD-related needs
- planning and designing HRD interventions to achieve the identified needs
- implementing the planned HRD interventions
- evaluating the outcomes of these interventions

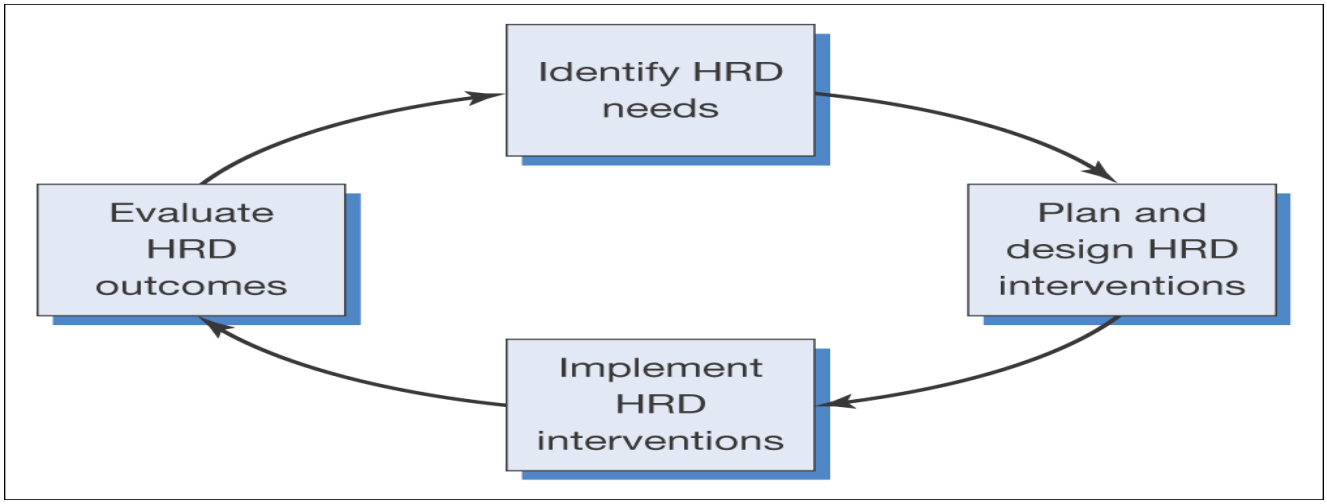


Figure 2-2 The systematic human resource development model

(Source: Jones et al. 2013).

Figure 2-3, taken from Jones et al. (2013), depicts a strategically-oriented cycle of HRD activities in an organisation:

Figure 2-3 Strategically-oriented cycle of HRD activities

(Source: Jones et al. 2013)

Regenesys (2010) notes that with employees regarded as a key element of the organisation, workplace skills planning is aimed primarily at the development of the employee. Success or failure of organisations depends primarily on the performance of the employees (van der Waldt, 2004). According to Elena (2000), employee development is one vital function of HRM within any organization. Thus it refers to development of the skills and competences of individual employees and of the organisation. Hattingh (2004) notes that when organisations want to grow and flourish they normally develop their employees, because organisational growth is often achieved as a result of employee effectiveness. The above suggests a

relationship between the development of employees and the performance thereof (Champathes, 2006). This is because when employees are more developed, they often become more satisfied as they get more committed with the job. This leads to high performance and organisational effectiveness. Hattingh (2003) suggests that a properly developed and implemented WSP that takes into consideration the determined key success factors will still require employees who are willing to be developed. This means that the willingness of employee development should start within employees. She also states that such human capital must have a readiness to take advantage of skills development opportunities created by an organization (Hattingh, 2004). Elena (2000) argues that when human capital of the organization is willing and ready to grow their skills and knowledge, they express interest on the available skills programmes. This action confirms that such personnel are more satisfied with what they do within the organization and this will lead to high performance of employees and growth of work abilities.

Other important areas discussed in this section regarding Strategic Human Resource Management and Workplace Skills Planning are: preparing a workplace for learning; registering a skills development facilitator (skills development facilitator), setting up a training committee, and making the case for workplace skills planning. This section further defines and addresses significant concepts such as the WSP, the sector skills plans, and the environmental skills plan.

Also discussed is the National Skills Development Strategy and how to ensure adequate resources for workplace skills planning.

2.4.1 Preparing the workplace for learning

One of the most important strategic moves, according to Ehlers and Lazenby (2007), is for organisations to prepare for the planning and the development of skills within their internal environment. They argue that this procedure necessitates extensive experience on the development of the WSP. The success of this process would require certain critical steps to be followed, among which Ehlers and Lazenby note the following:

- setting up certain structures in the organisation
- identifying and safeguarding the accessibility of appropriate capacity that can take a lead in the process of workplace skills planning

- securing required support and positive participation from executive committee members, the line management staff and a comprehensive staff complement in the work of Ethlers and Lazenby (2007), it is confirmed that this process includes securing resources (financial and human) and facilitating the development and submissions of the WSP.

2.4.2 Registering the Skills Development Facilitator

Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) state that it is important for all SETAs to nominate and register a skills development facilitator (skills development facilitator). The skills development facilitator acts as a link between an organisation and the SETA regarding matters relating to skills planning and the development of human capital in the organisation. The majority of SETAs register the skills development facilitators using an online system. The skills development facilitator could either be a member of staff within the company, or an external consultant - representing multiple employer organisations

The description of responsibilities noted above indicates that the skills development facilitator must be a person with the extensive knowledge, background experience of skills development and (Meyer, 2002). This must include extensive knowledge of, background in and experience of the various pieces of skills development legislation and other related policies and systems in South Africa. According to PALAMA (2010), the ETDP SETA provides training for individual employees to become accredited skills development facilitators. This training consists of six unit standards which are used to identify competence as an accredited skills development facilitator.

These six unit standards offer a framework whereby the job definition of the skills development facilitator can be profiled (PSETA, 2010). They also help to identify the most suitable person to fulfil the responsibilities of a skills development facilitator. These unit standards also provide a framework useful to develop the capacity of the skills development facilitator in order to meet the skills needs for the organisation. PSETA (2010) highlights the following unit standard registration numbers, together with the title of the unit standard:

Table 2.1 Unit Standards & registration numbers

Unit Standard Registration No.	Title of Unit Standard
114924	Demonstrate an understanding of outcomes-based education in the NQF
15217	Develop an organisational training and development plan
15218	Conduct an analysis to determine the outcome of skills development interventions
15227	Undertake skills development administration
15228	Advise on the establishment and implementation of a quality management system and skills development practices
15232	Coordinate planned skills development interventions

(Source: PSETA, 2010)

Fasset (2010) lists the following as some of the additional responsibilities of the skills development facilitator in the organisation:

- "facilitate the career development of employees in the organisation"
- "identify, evaluate and advise" employees and senior management on both the external and internal skills development strategies
- "set up and manage the skills development committee"
- ensure the alignment of the human resource policies with skills development
- provide effective support on the "development and implementation of a developmental performance management system"
- facilitate recognition of prior learning among employees and formalise their qualifications
- manage skills development programmes such as uptake of learnerships, together with other skills development interventions initiated through the sector-specific SETA

Hattingh (2003) suggests that for a skills development facilitator to be competent and effective in his or her work, the following additional personal and professional attributes are essential:

- organisational authority
- high level of maturity
- strong sense of credibility
- assertiveness
- strong organisational skills
- flexibility
- self-motivation

- extensive skills in problem solving
- strong interpersonal and communications skills
- strong leadership skills
- being supportive and must have an honest interest in human capital development.

Setting up a training committee

The Skills Development Act of 1998 stipulates that the planning of skills and its development should happen with the widest scope of representative activity. It suggests that this process be facilitated through extensive stakeholder consultation and participation in the organisation. The Act also specifies that representative activity and consultation in skills planning must be facilitated through the mechanism known as the training committee, sometimes called the "skills planning committee" (SPC) or the "workplace training committee" (WTC).

The training committee should embrace the interests of the both employer and the employees (South African Government, 2001). According to PSETA (2010), all SETAs recommend inclusion on this training committee of the body that represents employees, as well as representatives of employees that are not under a particular union. SATHS SETA, for example, specifies a training committee consist of at least 5 members: 2 representing management, 2 representing employees, and the fifth member being the skills development facilitator.

According to Fasset (2010), the key role of the committee of training is to collectively establish the organization's training needs, and also to prioritise such training needs to effectively develop the skills of the employees. He further emphasises the need for collective consensus on agreed interventions put in place for addressing these needs and priorities. The Skills Development Act requires all organisations with a minimum of 50 human capital or personnel to establish a committee for training and to ensure that it holds regular meetings and that the elected members of the committee have the needed capacity to appropriately represent the stakeholder group during meetings and activities of skills planning (Fasset, 2010).

Another role of the committee on training during the above process is to keep all detailed minutes of every meeting and attendance registers for all meetings of the committee (Hattingh, 2004). These documents become important and helpful when the SETA

undertakes its necessary processes of skills planning, monitoring as well as skills auditing. According to Hattingh (2004), the training committee usually "doubles up" as the employment equity committee for proper functioning of representative bodies. It is not easy to define "generic guidelines" for constituting the committee on training because organisations differ in their nature, size and structure. In this regard, a main guideline would be to guarantee representation across all levels of the organization (management and staff) in the organisation (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004). For example, if the organisation has a 5-tier type of a hierarchy, it would be appropriate to have at least one representative within the committee for on training in each level. It would also be appropriate to combine such representation in all key sections of the organisation.

The key principle guiding this process is to "give voice" to every function and level of "job profiles" within an organisation. According to Fasset (2010), it is important for skills development committees to be representative across all levels of management, including the levels of senior management and executive. This helps to create and maintain credibility of the training committee in the organisation. Fasset (2010) also suggests the following guidelines in establishing the committee on skills development within the organisation:

- The skills development committee of the organisation must be coupled to its Employment Equity Committee (EEC); and
- When these 2 committees are joined, they become one committee and it is often called the Employment Equity Skills Development Committee (EESDC);

There are also guidelines for representation on the EESDC. Fasset (2010) suggests that representation be included for the following categories:

- Different levels of occupations which include management, employee levels and so on
- Different occupational categories which include functional levels including research, gardens, education, bioregional programmes and corporate services
- Union representatives for the employees
- Regional sites to establish representation across all sites – coupled with the points already mentioned
- The employment equity manager who serves as a chairperson of the committee
- The coordinator for employment equity
- The skills development facilitator

- A secretary from the human resource division (Fasset, 2010)

Meyer (2002) notes the following points in relation to the structure of the EESDC:

- The EESDC size (with these guidelines for representation) must be at least 13 members and must include the employment equity manager, the SDF, the EEC, the employee union, the secretary and the regional representatives in all levels (management and functional).
- Attention must also be provided to these 13 members to representation of race groups, gender and people with disabilities.
- Tenure for the office of the EESDC was set to be three years from the date of elections, which is viewed as a meaningful time frame to ensure continuity.

Meyer (2002) cites the following as some of the important objectives set to be achieved by the EESDC.

With regard to employment equity:

- to reach and maintain effective transformation through the EE in the organisation
- to ensure compliance in all associated legislations those underpin the processes of EE.

The objectives of the EESDC are to be considered with regard to skills development and training. In this regard, the attention needs to be given to the following:

- identification of the priorities of strategic skills development;
- important processes to be undertaken in the process of developing the Workplace Skills Plan;

In addition, the organisation's proposed annual WSP must

- comply fully with the set requirements of the particular SETA;
- be based on a "gap analysis" that exist between the "competency requirements" of positions in the organisation (current and future) and the assessed competency of each human resource capital;
- be incorporated with other initiatives of Human Resource Development such as employment equity plan, succession plans, career development plans and;
- be fair enough to benefit all employees irrespective of gender, race, different categories and various levels;

- be relevant with skills targets which are national and those of the sector;
- have implementation tools, monitoring instruments as well as review effective mechanisms of a WSP for every financial year; and
- have a draft "annual training report" and SETA's requirements for each year (Meyer, 2002).

The details indicating how the EESDC is composed and function must at least be contained in official terms of reference (Meyer, 2002). Details that must be included are the number of meetings and their procedures

- the code of conduct for all members;
- the confidentiality principles and processes to deal and manage disclosure of information;
- the processes of processing of all relevant decisions; and
- the applicable dispute resolution.

2.4.3 Making a case for workplace skills planning

One of the main problems in most organisations is inadequate strategic positioning and understanding and inadequate attention to training and skills planning (Hattingh, 2004). When organisations are faced with financial problems and ultimately decide to cut budgets, the one for training is often the first to get taken away. This may be an indication of perception in a number of organisations of skills development and training. Evidence suggests that active "skills development and training programmes" in organisations nearly always have support towards executive level.

Hattingh (2004) states that the critical stage during preparations of the workplace (for purposes of skills development and training) is to acquire support and endorsement from the organization's executive management level and the level of line management. The WSP must get a signature of approval from the level of executive management of the organisation, with resources being secured at this same level. Hattingh (2003) also stresses the importance in this context of line management since it informs the identification of "skills needs, supports interventions and the manner in which they need to be addressed, as well as supports learning application back into the context of work".

The skills development facilitators need to have support from the senior management regarding all aspects of a WSP (Grobler & Warnich, 2006; Hazucha, 1993). This means that the skills development facilitator is responsible for convincing the decision makers, the direct beneficiaries and the relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the personal and professional development opportunities provided by the organisation through a WSP. Grobler and Warnich (2006) and Hazucha (1993) state further that securing support for a WSP may be done through a variety of strategies and activities, which could include a PowerPoint presentation covering the following points:

- a strong statement regarding the significance of identifying and responding to needs of training, which contributes in meeting the organization's performance standards;
- the level of probable training needs for individual personnel, occupational and at the level of the company;
- the responsibility to develop knowledge and skills of human capital from the manager of human resource development, in discussion with top management and the rest of staff members;
- the composition, roles and tasks of the committee on skills development together;
- internal processes that need to be undertaken to identify needs and respond to such needs; and
- a flow diagram indicating the path of a Workplace Skills Plan and the manner in which it is linked to the sector skills plan, together with the National Skills Development Strategy III warnich (2006) and Hazucha (1993).

According to Grobler and Warnich (2006), additional information on the WSPs, sector skills plans, National Skills Development Strategy III and the Environmental Sector Skills Plan is also indicated in the flow diagram. This section pinpoints the Workplace Skills Plan (contents and process) in the wider framework of skills development in South Africa. The diagram below shows the link between a Workplace Skills Planning and the sector skills planning is well informed by the Environmental Sector Skills Plan and that this at the end contributes towards the goals and objectives of NSDS III:

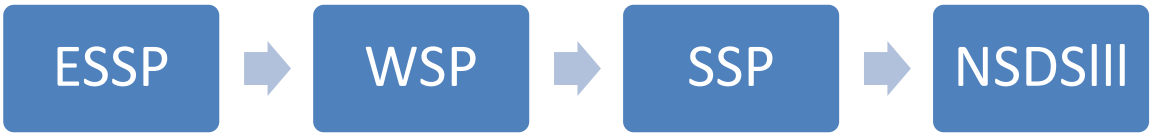


Figure 2-4 Link between Environmental Skills Plan, WSP, Sector Skills Plan and the National Skills Development Strategy III

(Source: Grobler & Warnich, 2006)

2.4.4 What is a workplace skills plan?

Hattingh (2003) defines the WSP as a document that shows the "skills needs" of an individual organisation, as well as the skills development interventions required to address those identified needs. Organisations are expected to prepare WSPs and submit them to the relevant SETA by 30 June every year. The submission is undertaken by skills development facilitators in their respective organisations.

The WSP covers skills development for the period 1 April of the current year to March 30 of the next year (Hattingh, 2004).

The skills needs and together with the planned training interventions captured in the Workplace Skills Plans are integrated into the Sector Skills Plans, which are compiled to accommodate a 5-year term. This means that the SSPs which are currently being finalised are for the period 2011–2016.

Hattingh (2004) stresses the importance of complying with WSP submission requirements as it is what enables the SETA to identify the skills needs and the requisite skills development interventions to address training needs. Hattingh suggests that it would also make good sense for organisations to incorporate a "5 year projection" of skills needs in their annual WSP. This action will help to inform the development of skills for the next 5 years of the Sector Skills Plan. The spending on the SETA skills fund is determined by the Sector Skills Plan and the skills needs reflected in the Workplace Skills Plan. This is another critical link between a Workplace Skills Plan and the Sector Skills Plan. Another reason for the forward planning is that the WSP allows access to the mandatory grant funds, while access to the discretionary grant funds is governed by the extent to which an organisation's WSP reflects the priorities defined in the SETA skills plan.

2.4.5 What are Sector Skills Plans?

Meyer (2002) describes sector Skills Ppans (SSPs) as the "epicentre of skills development". They are regarded as a pool of WSPs within the economic sector. For instance, SANBI, Cape Nature, MPTB, SANParks, KZN Wildlife and ESPTA all submit their respective SSP to "CATHS SETA" which represents the conservation sector. The sector skills plans are informed by the objectives of the NSDS and are required to work towards to achieve them. (Meyer, 2002). The WSP, via the SSP, is thus inserted in the middle where it contributes to achieving the objectives of the "national skills development strategy", not only serving the organisation and the sector, rather the wider labour market of South Africa (Meyer 2002).

In the latter half of 2010 and early 2011 the Department of Environmental Affairs entered into partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training concerning the SSP development by the respective SETAs (PSETA, 2012). Drawing from the Environmental Sector Skills Plan, the National Environmental Skills Planning Forum developed a resource to guide SETAs in terms of how to integrate the environmental driver, environmentally scarce and critical skills in the SSPs (PSETA, 2012).

For all SETAs, an enabling document starts with an account of new opportunities and problems connected with green growth and sustainability, against the background of climate change, natural resource degradation, shortages of energy and so on. (PALAMA, 2010). This has implications for the development of new skills, coupled with reorientation of existing competences to allow sustainable-growth within the national economy. Meyer (2002) notes that the enabling document contains a 5-page spread, related to the respective SETAs as follows:

- Respective SETA's name
- The description of:
    - the significant need to integrate environmental driver into sector skills plans, as well as in skills planning and development;
    - the manner in which the "green growth path" is applicable to that particular SETA; and
    - how "MTSF Goal 9" on sustainable natural resource use and management, seem to be applicable to the SETA.
- Suggested:

- Cross cutting programmes and projects to effectively cater for critical skills in that particular SETA;
- relevant programmes to address scarce skills in that specific SETA;
- programmes for research and innovation related to that particular SETA; and
- proposal of some flagship skills development programmes.

PALAMA (2010) confirms that the enabling document had to be shared among "18 SETAs" in the meeting sat in 2010. The intention was to support their endeavours for the further development of their specific SSPs. Several members of NESPF also made themselves available to work directly with SETAs on incorporation of environmental concerns and strategies in SSPs. According to PALAMA (2010), incorporation of the "environmental driver as well as scarce and critical skills" in SETA SSPs has been effected by the SETAs, although various SETAs have tackled the incorporation of environmental considerations in their SSPs in different ways.

According to PALAMA (2010), the objectives of the enabling document were to assist SETAs so they can adopt a hands-on approach to skills development in order to address Goal 9 of the MTSF, and to make the most of fresh opportunities for development and potential creation of new jobs.

Through collaborative efforts between Department of Environmental Affairs and Department of Higher Education, says "the final drafts of the Sector Skills Plan must be signed off by the Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa task team, together with the minister of the relevant government department", In this case, the Minister of Environmental Affairs (South African Government, 2001). It also indicates that "the signature of the minister is to ensure the environment is given adequate consideration and the implementation of quality skills training aligned to the MTSF Goal 9". The following shows the MTSF Goal 9 and its primary objectives:

- Medium Term Strategic Framework (Strategic Priority 9) and is called: "Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Use". Its objective is: To inspire "sustainable resource management and use" using a variety of interventions that include the below mentioned:;
- Encouraging sufficiency of energy;
- Alternatives for energy Renewable;

- Waste reduction practices;
- No tolerance on unsustainable and unlawful exploitation of natural resources;
- Improved oxygen and impressive quality;
- Supportive of local and maintainable food production;
- Sustainable the use of water; and
- Enhancing diversity and conserving natural habitations (South African Government 2001).

2.4.6 What is an Environmental Skills Plan?

According to PSETA (2012), the Directorate of Sector Education and Training in the DoE, in Partnership with Rhodes University, commissioned the development of the environmental skills plan (ESP) in 2009.

This action led to the release of the final ESP in 2010. The ESP provides an inclusive examination of "scarce and critical environmental skills" required both immediately and in the long. According to PSETA (2012), the ESP guarantees "green growth and sustainability" in the face of growing environmental challenges including increased energy demands, climate change, availability of water, increasingly degraded ecosystems, increased waste generation and so on. The ESP offers an appropriate framework to outline the "scarce and critical environmental skills" for the medium term framework for the sector skills plan as well as the short term framework of the WSP (PSETA, 2012).

It further stated that the key findings in the ESP should be used to guide approaches to "environmental skills development", namely:

- need for a hands-on approach as opposed to a reactive approach, co-ordinated tactic as opposed to ad hoc method, as well as systemically integrated method that integrate systems of skills development, institutions and structures to "environmental skills development";
- need to use the national systems for skills development more effectively; and
- need for the development of skills at every level, as well as in every environmental small focus areas which include water, waste, air quality, climate change, biodiversity, coastal zone management and so on.

PSETA (2012) states that the scarce environmental skills identified may include the following:

- "environmental compliance and management inspection skills";
- "sustainable development and green economy leadership skills";
- "adaptive environmental management and sustainable development planning and implementation";
- "climate change risk and opportunity assessment and monitoring";
- "environmental monitoring and modelling skills";
- "environmental resource economics and green economy planning skills"; and
- "environmental scientific and technical skills".

2.4.7 National Skills Development Strategy

PSETA (2010) point out that the National Skills Development Strategy acts as a policy on skills development for timeframe (2011-2016).

It is divided into NSDS I, NSDS II and NSDS III, as indicated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Focus areas of National

Name of NSDS	Emphasis of NSDS
NSDS I 2001-2005	Equality and the necessity of cultivating a culture of lifelong learning in the working environment. The learning was demand driven and was based on employee's needs (public and private sectors). The effectiveness of delivery was significant to make that the outcomes desired were achieved.
NSDS II (2005 to 2010)	It also emphasised equity, quality skills development in the place of work. It identified a critical need for employees to be employable and promotable, and the need to help designated groups to acquire experience, skills and relevant knowledge within the organization. The identification of these needs was also aimed at helping designated groups and all other relevant stakeholders to gain critical skills. The quality of provision was also identified as a problem area that needed improvement.
NSDS II	This is the current NSDS in South Africa. Its emphasis swings in the direction of institutional learning linked to occupationally directed programmes. It promotes the further development of Further Education and Training Colleges (FET), with an intention to address national skills needs. Better use of workplace skills programmes is encouraged, as is the use of worker-initiated training initiatives. Public sector improved service delivery is seen as an imperative. The issue of language and literacy is of concern in terms of enabling additional learning.

(Source: PSETA, 2010).

As outlined by South African Government (2001), NSDS make available a comprehensive framework for skills development.

It is always taken into account in the development of SSP and should be taken into consideration in the development of the WSP if one brings an argument regarding the

application of training in a wider context of national skills development. The outcome of the consultative procedure indicated above refers to the incorporation of environmental matters as a main consideration in the skills planning process.

The strategy of a new environment which refers to the "environment skills plan" is a key government priority, signifying the importance of the environment in skills planning (South African Government, 2001).

According to Regenesys (2010), the tenth page of NSDS III outlines this strategy as the one that is informed and steered by the below mentioned overarching programmes of government:

- The South Africa's Human Resource Development Strategy
- The new growth path requirements
- the action plan of the industrial policy
- "medium Term Strategic Framework" (MTSF)
- the "rural development strategy"
- the strategy of the new environment

The 8 goals of NSDS III describe comprehensive priorities informing the development of skills at the level of the organization, sector as well as at national levels (South African Government, 2001). These exclude economic sector's specific content, but they include vital matters of the shortages of skills in South Africa. These goals are not likely to lead the identification of "scarce and critical skills" in any specific economic sector, other than local government as far as mandate relating to service delivery (South African Government, 2001).

According to Hattingh and van der Walt (2004), it would certainly be beneficial in defining the manner in which skills needs can be addressed, more so at organizational level. For example, a well-organized workplace based programmes of skills development can effectively be addressed at organizational level, since organisations are often the hosts of this kind of training.

Improvements at an organisational level in youth and adult literacy and numeracy open up the possibility of further training, such as through an ABET programme.

Hattingh (2003) notes that with more emphases regarding skills interventions in the NSDS III. some of the official mechanisms for the development of skills will need solid partnerships

between companies and training institutions. PALAMA (2010) likewise confirms that there is a significant role for South African organisations in the landscape of skills development. According to South African Government (2001), the goals of the NSD III are as follows:

- to establish "credible institutional mechanisms" for the planning of skills.
- to improve accessibility towards programmes aimed at the creation of employment.
- to promote the growth and usage of Further Education and Training colleges".
- to increase numerical literacy in youth and adult language in order to allow access to supplementary training.
- To make better use of trainings implemented within the working environment.
- to provide support to small enterprises, co-operative, NGOs, worker-initiated and community training.
- to increase public sector capacity in order to improve the delivery of services.
- to build career development activities and implement interventions based on vocational guidance.

2.4.8 Ensuring adequate resources for a WSP

One of the main requirements outlined in the Skills Development Act of 1998 is comprehensive consultation with relevant stakeholders during processes to develop and implement training programmes (Meyer, 2002). Stakeholder engagement can be attained by means of representation within the committee of skills development and commitment of senior and line management. This consultation process demands lots of resources (time and financial). Meyer (2002) indicates that ensuring suitable resources for a WSP also means taking into consideration essential resources (time, people and money) as depicted below.

Time as a resource

According to Meyer (2002), "ensuring adequate time for consultation demands careful planning for all processes involved in workplace [skills] planning". A focus in developing this planning should be the annual 30 June due date for WSP submission. Important stages in preparing the WSP include the following:

- Sign by the organization's executive committee: this affects the arrangement of the last meeting of the executive committee to be held prior the deadline of 30th of June to allow sufficient discussion, timeouts signing as well as the submission of the WSP;

- Sign by the committee on training: this requires the skills development committee that signs off to meet on a date that allows enough time to incorporate changes before the WSP is tabled in the meeting of the executive committee;
- Compiling the WSP: it is mentioned that a lot of the SDFs struggle to compile a WSP, which is one of the tasks the SDF ought to perform. It is important for the SDF to ensure that there is sufficient time allocated for compiling a WSP;
- Collecting organisation's relevant information: this is usually the longer process, especially the consultative process that includes skills needs identification, competence profiling, performance appraisals, skills auditing, consultation and reaching agreement on priority skills needs. These processes all require follow-ups in a detailed plan; and
- Collecting necessary information outside of the organisation: it is essential to collect supporting documents such as the NSDS III, the final sector skills plan, the ESP and other information that will ensure a good quality WSP. This process is also likely to take time and must be properly scheduled to ensure quality and compliance.

Hattingh (2004) notes in addition that organisations should make a timeous start in developing the WSP to allow sufficient time for necessary procedures in advance of submission.

Money as a resource

Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) suggest a significant need to structure the annual plan of activities. This will be done to guarantee that a WSP is submitted on time. As with most plans in the organisation, it would also be helpful to set aside funds (annual budget) for a WSP. Hattingh (2004) adds that this financial plan might be viewed as important with reference to the following:

- Consultations: consultations are often likely to require a budget;
- Travelling and accommodation: in instances where your organisation is geographically dispersed, it is realistic to require funds for Accommodation, travelling as well as budget for meetings held in different regions among staff and the various meetings of the training committee. It might also be required to travel and interact with other relevant stakeholders within the sector and beyond;
- Catering: it will be needed during the various meetings; and

- Training of members of skills development committee: it may even be necessary to have funds set aside for training the SDF and other members of the training committee.

It will be beneficial to combine engagement with top management, more so on the importance of the development of skills in budget negotiations for implementing skills interventions within a fiscal year (Hattingh, 2004). According to Meyer (2002), it is essential to determine a ring-fenced training budget for the implementation of skills interventions required to address skills needs within the company.

People as a resource

It is important to have the required people in an organisation. This might help in cases such as when a significant amount of time is required for the director of Human Resources to implement competence profiling. The administrative help might certainly be required in a process of compiling a WSP or even accessing relevant information. Therefore, it may be convenient to likewise match all the needs of human resources to a WSP (Meyer, 2002).

2.4.9 Synthesis

The above argumentation has indicated the role of the workplace skills planning, which is to organise the implementation of skills interventions so that employees are sufficiently skilled, knowledgeable and capable to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation. The role of the strategic human resource management, therefore, is to ensure that the processes of a WSP are well integrated to the strategic direction of the organisation.

This section relates to the first three research questions, namely: What is the perceived importance of aspects of skills auditing in the Limpopo DoE? What is the perceived importance of aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP? To what extent is the WSP implemented, monitored and evaluated?

From this, a variety of key success factors can be identified as follows:

- preparing a workplace for learning;
- registering a skills development facilitator;
- setting up a skills development committee;
- making a case for workplace skills planning;
- understanding the meaning and need for a WSP in the organisation;

- considering the sector skills plan;
- understanding the role of environmental skills plan;
- aligning a WSP to the current national development strategy; and
- ensuring adequate resources for workplace skills planning.

These listed factors indicate that successful implementation of a WSP depends primarily on the strategic human resource management of the organisation. The next section explains briefly the key success factors for WSP implementation and indicates why they are important in strategic human resource management.

2.5 Strategic HR management and the criteria for workplace skills planning

Strategic human resource management and criteria for workplace skills planning constitute a basis for comparison, or a reference point, against which other implementations of a WSP can be evaluated (Thompson & Strickland, 2010). According to Thompson and Strickland (2010) key success factors for WSP implementation can include a variety of aspects, such as information gathering to inform the WSP, skills auditing, compiling and submitting a WSP, implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, and reporting on an implemented WSP. Hattingh (2003), Meyer (2002), Van Der Waldt (2004), and Regenesys (2010) all agree that the above key success factors are the ideal in terms of which the implementation of a WSP can be judged in organisations. This research viewed these above-mentioned aspects as important because they are the critical processes in which the WSP can be effectively implemented in the Limpopo DoE. The diagram below depicts the above-mentioned 5 key success factors for WSP implementation:

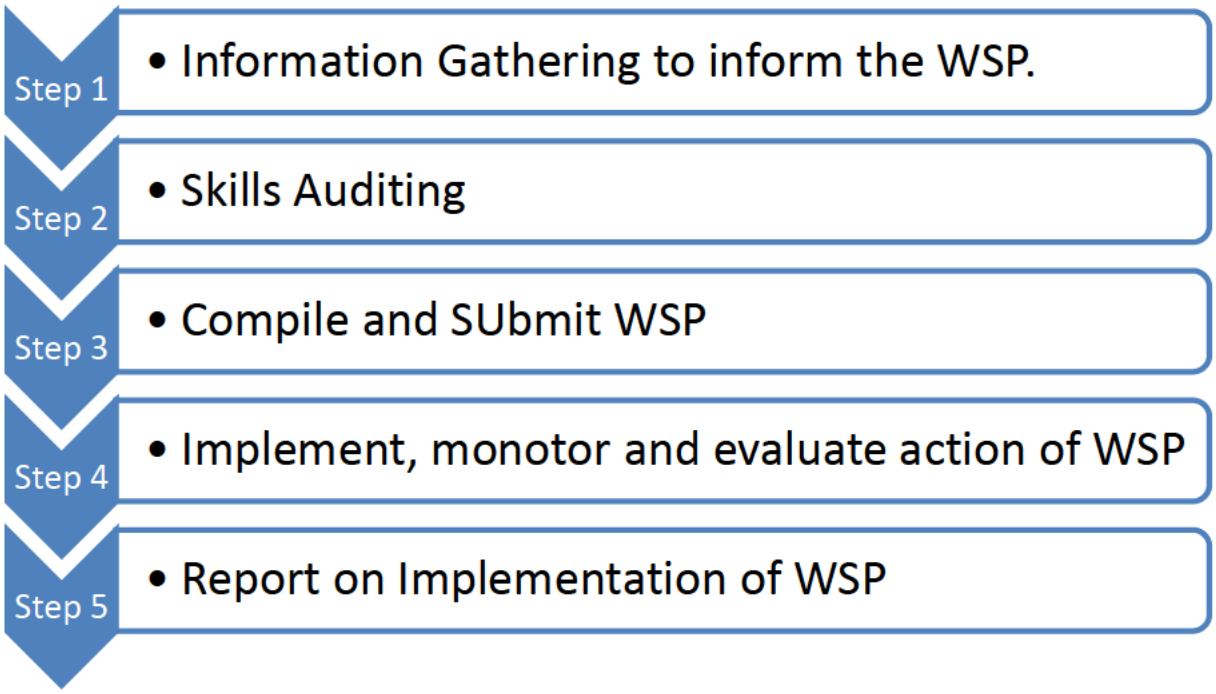


Figure 2-5 Key success factors for WSP implementation

(Source: Thompson & Sprickalan, 2010).

2.5.1 Step 1 Information gathering to inform a WSP

The process of gathering information on the WSP is an essential step that reflects directly on the training needs in the organisation (Hattingh, 2004). The information gathered will reveal the gaps of skills which requires to be addressed through training interventions. The process of gathering information involves consideration of both the external and internal information as indicated below.

External information

- Broader skills planning and development – shaping the "development and implementation" of a WSP. The following are some of such sources (external information):

  The "Human Resource Development for South Africa" 2010 to 2030: it describes various primary goals requiring to receive attention through planning of skills at a national level, and is also a key informant of skills priorities within the SSPs

  - *The "NSDS III"*: provides the main plans for the development of skills strategies and methodologies adopted and place in order by SETAs in their respective SSPs

- The "*Organising Framework" for Occupations:* is the framework in which national skills planning and development is prearranged
- "DHET policies, strategies and structures" on skills development and training
- "SAQA policies, strategies and structures" on skills development and training: it is the "quality assurer" of skills development programmes and trainings which are occupationally directed.

- The "Sector-Specific skills development information" may include:
  - The Environmental Sector Skills Plan: describes the critical and scarce skills commonly through the environmental sector and could assist in the identification of those scarce and critical skills within the company
  - The enabling documents: draw on the ESSP and describes scarce and critical skills for each individual economic sector and offer some guidelines for interventions to address these
  - SETA Skills Plans with which the company is listed and linked (e.g. CATHSSETA, AGRISETA, LGSETA, etc.)
- Strategic "trends and patterns" of the development of skills in the sector which provides shape of skills needs within an organisation (SSPs and ESSP)
- Processes, structures and systems in which skills needs should be addressed and implementation of the development of skills strategies be supported (HRD-SA and NSDS III).

Internal information

- Strategic priorities of the organisation over a short term and medium term.
- Competence requirements to realize organization's strategic priorities over a period of time.
- Priorities of Human Resources over a short term to medium term relating to – for example: strategies of Employment Equity, planned changes to technology, growth, strategies of transformation, vacancies that are difficult to fill, change or retrenchment plans and recruitment trends.
- Hattingh (2004) makes a point that employee information: it can be described from personal development plans. In this way explicit career development plans together with the training needs become easy for individual employees to identify.

When the first step on information gathering is finalised, Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) argue that the process will lead the skills development facilitator and the skills development committee to the below step.

2.5.2 Step 2 Skills auditing

Hattingh (2004) view Skills auditing as the process in which the gaps of skills within the working institution are identified. According to Hatting (2004), a skills audit determines the gap between the required skills and the currently available skills in the organisation. Such a gap is addressed through skills development and training. The skills audit process needs an unambiguous profile of the already existing skills of currently employed human capital.

A fundamental process in the skills audit is clear formulation of competency profiles or job profiles for various categories of jobs. These job profiles describe the responsibilities and standards of performance as well as what is the employee expected to know, understand and be able to do in order to be effective at work.

For an effective skills audit it is important to have a clear structured baseline of "skills needs against" whereby the skills that already exist in the organisation can be compared.

Skills auditing process may include three different phases: human resource planning, job and competence profiling, and finding the skills gap. Further explanation of these three phases follows.

Phase 1: Human resource planning

People are generally perceived as the most valuable asset in an organisation. Although employees sometimes feel that this is not the case, the reality is that organisations are as strong as their personnel complement. In order to identify skills needs clearly, the first step is to realise what the company requires to achieve its goals and objectives. The organization's short term goals, medium and long-term goals are often found in its strategic and business end. A variety of organisations believe in translating these wider goals into their departments, directorates, sections or divisions. These sources are essential to refer in defining the company's needs in the short term, medium and long term.

Organisations never function in isolation and are typically influenced by the external environment (DPSA, 2008). This indicates the importance of considering both types of

environments (external and internal) which exist within the human resource planning. This will also help to noticeably identify factors influencing skills needs as the organisation undergoes its stage of growth and development.

The use of the "PESTEL framework" is recommended by DPSA (2008). SETAs also use "PESTEL framework" in their skills planning process. The PESTEL framework recognises "external factors" that are possible to bring about change within the "internal organisational environment".

Phase 2: Job and competence profiling

Job profiles outline how many jobs required within an organization, as well as the type of positions needed by the institution to achieve its long, short and medium goals as indicated above in Phase 1 (PALAMA, 2010). Regenesys (2010) suggests that a job profile defines the number of employees in a range of various positions, which are then broken down into different divisions, directorates, departments, sections in the organisation. The job profiles outline the role which is expected of the employee for him or her to contribute effectively in order for the employer to meet the desired goals. Regenesys (2010) maintains that a job profile consists of the key work areas of each respective personnel. It is informed by the organization's clear strategy and business plan, as well as the purpose of the job in pursuit of the relevant objectives.

Most employment contracts of employees have 5 to 10 key work areas (Regenesys, 2010). In certain organisations, such as the Limpopo DoE, these work areas are called the key performance areas (KPAs). These KPAs describe the work that an individual employee is employed to do in order to realise their responsibilities in the work institution (PSETA, 2010).

"Competence profiles" on the other hand, are developed from job profiles. According to Van der Waldt (2004), a competence profile is a profile of an employee that shows how much an individual employee knows about the job. A competence profile for every single key performance area must focus on the listed below:

Knowledge: things that employees know and understand in relation to their work, employer, the comprehensive sector in which it operates and so on

- Skills: this refers to what employees are able to practically perform through knowledge and understanding in their workplace
- "Work orientation": values and attitudes through which employees approach their activities related to work, drawing their knowledge, competences and abilities to convert this into what the employer expects of them
- As much as competence profiles are developed from the job profiles, they are not the same as job profiles (Regenesys, 2010). It is advisable to start by doing job profiling before doing competence profiling. Regenesys (2010) notes that a problem in many organisations is weakness in job profiling which results in weak competence profiling and ultimately in poor skills auditing. Although Hattingh (2004) agrees that this process may consume a lot of time, she argues that an effective WSP starts with an appropriately defined, which then inform "competence profiles", which also form the basis for "skills auditing".

Phase 3: Finding the skills gap

As indicated in Phase 2, the skills gap is viewed as a difference between the "job and competence profiles", together with existing competence and resultant performance of employees. According to PSETA (2010), an organisation can assess current "performance and competence" through profiling its present human capital. Profiling human resources helps to provide an organisation with insight into the reality of the available skills, rather than the company's vision, theory of the job and competence profile.

A profile is assumed for each individual member of staff in relation to his or her "job and competence profile" (Paterson, 2008). It may include the below components:

- academic qualification
- competence
- additional skills programmes
- "personal and professional attributes"
- curriculum vitae
- employee "self-assessment"
- the "performance appraisals"

Step 3 Compile and submit a WSP

Hattingh (2003) indicates that once all the relevant information has been collected through the previous 2 steps, it is advisable to consult widely on the identified skills development priorities. She also recommends compilation of a "draft WSP", together with the required skills interventions "for addressing the needs and budgets for implementing these interventions". The last stage in preparing the WSP is to have it signed by the company's relevant authorities before submitting it to the relevant SETA.

In compiling and submitting the WSP it is crucial to consult Management and employees on the identified skills needs.

The information that needs to have been gathered at this stage includes the following:

- international, national and regional trends with particular factors influencing the work performed within the company
- national and sector particular priorities of skills
- the priorities of the organization
- priorities of human resources and terms of the skills needs for all individual human capital

The information gathered will play a role in making a case to address "scarce and critical skills" through training. It will contribute significantly in securing the required resources (budget) to implement interventions of skills development. It is advisable that the training committee prepares this information accordingly (clearly and coherently) and communicate it to both the organization's top management and its human resources. This will be a presentation of the key findings which may be done in the form of a "skills audit report" and a "PowerPoint presentation" which recaps the entire report. The suggested layout for presentation may include the following:

- the "external environment and the implications" this has for the strategy of the business
- the internal environment of HR and its implications for workforce, skills development and training
- sector "trends and patterns" and resultant skills priorities"
- Training needs identified in relation to "job and competence profiles"
- Recommended interventions of training to address these training needs

- Recommended budget requirement

2.5.3 Step 3 Compile and submit a WSP

Preparation of the above information may be regarded as a draft WSP. Many of the skills development facilitators who have used the format of the Workplace Skills Plan suggested by SETAs would agree that the quantity of detail given within the "proposed skills audit report" is very possible to provide little information in line with the prescribed format of a WSP.

All the SETAs have their own particular recommended WSP format.

These WSP formats normally provide for similar information and they comprise the following:

- The SDF and organisation's administrative details
- The profiles of organization's human capital
- The "scarce and critical skills" identified in terms of OFO codes
- Training interventions proposed to address training needs

A majority of skills development facilitators have expressed frustration that a WSP prescribed format does not enable them to present a realistic picture of skills development within their organisations. It is important to acknowledge that a WSP involves 2 purposes for the SETA. First it provides the SETA with relevant information which can be used to profile the economic sector. The second purpose is to provide the SETA with a short version of skills needs for the following year.

With reference to the 2 aims of a WSP outlined above, the prescribed format may possibly be comprehensible, given that each SETA processes a high volume of WSPs every year, depending on the scope of the economic sector.

Hattingh (2003) recommends that the skills audit report be seen as the internal working WSP document. This would be submitted with the WSP to the SETA as a short version of an organisation's "employee profile and training needs" for the following financial year. This action gives liberty to define the training needs comprehensively within the organisation. This takes place over a short period as mandated by the SETA, as well as over both a medium and long term period as necessary for the development of the company.

When compiling a WSP in the prescribed format, it is important to be familiar and conform to the set requirements. The guidelines to be followed in preparing the prescribed WSP are made available by all SETAs to support skills development facilitators in their preparations. The proper gathering of applicable information as anticipated in phase one "gathering information to inform a WSP", , and phase 2 "skills auditing" can be done effectively, a process to complete a Workplace Skills Plan using a format prescribed by SETA can surely be not intimidating.

The WSP ought to be endorsed by the company's skills development facilitator, the committee on training and development, as well as the company's member of the executive committee. If the presented WSP is comprehensive enough to be approved by both of the above-mentioned committees, the final copy submitted to SETA must also receive similar endorsement because it is a short version drew from the former.

2.5.3.1 Submit a WSP to the relevant SETA

Organisations must submit their WSPs to the relevant SETA. This compliance of submitting is scheduled for June 30th of each year and it must be done by the organization's skills development facilitator (Hattingh, 2004). The information from the WSPs is integrated into the SSPs over a 5-year span. The WSP makes available the main "source of information" to profile the sector in the Sector Skills Plans.

The priorities of skills indicated in a WSP provide a clear direction regarding the "sector priorities" which will be identified and addressed in the Sector Skills Plan document.

Regenesys (2010) argues that submission of a WSP by an organisation means that the organisation has agreed, across all relevant stakeholders in the planning skills process, that the document (the WSP) is a true reflection of the required skills in the organisation. Hattingh (2004) states that organisations that do not comply with this submission do not obtain grants from SETA. This means that lack of compliance by the skills development facilitators and their individual organisations in this regard disadvantages employees in terms of having their skills needs financially supported by the relevant SETA. In the case of the Limpopo DoE, for example, lack of compliance by the organisation will mean that ETDP SETA will withdraw its grants (mandatory and discretional) which play a critical role in funding of skills development programmes for school learners, educators and office-based employees.

2.5.4 Step 4 Implement, monitor and evaluate actions of a WSP

2.5.4.1 Implementing a WSP

Depending on the organizational scope, more so the dimension of skills needs to be addressed, the execution of skills interventions based on a WSP will become a manageable responsibility (Hattingh, 2004). She recommends a necessity to develop an "annual training schedule" and will help in the planning and the provision of proper directions towards the execution of skills interventions. It is also important to make known the plan to all affected organization's personnel, which will help to ensure support and effective contribution in the company and its stakeholders. The affected staff members may include the following:

- the incumbent selected to attend training: participants in skills training should participate willingly to guarantee a good return on the investment in training
- the incumbent's line manager: should approve the supervisee's participation on skills programme, especially if the training takes the trainee away from the work area for a lengthy period of time

  support staff (mentors or peer learning): those who avail themselves to give support to the incumbent while he or she is still on training

As much as the stakeholder consultation is emphasised throughout the process of developing the WSP, it is equally important at the WSP implementation stage. Hattingh (2003) stresses that the process of implementing a WSP should always be carried out with reference to the company's strategic goals which the institution is working towards to attain. The next sections show how the implementation of a WSP can be monitored and evaluated.

2.5.4.2 Monitoring of a WSP

Meredith and Mantel (2000:410) define monitoring as the gathering, recording and reporting of information regarding actions of a WSP. According to the UNDP (2002), monitoring is an ongoing process aimed at providing the organisation and its relevant stakeholders with regular feedback on progress or lack thereof regarding the achievement of desired outcomes of a WSP. Monitoring can be defined as an instrument used to track the actual performance of the implementation of a WSP against the pre-determined standards (Australian Development Gateway, 2006).

Universalia (2007) states that monitoring in the implementation of a WSP (as in the Limpopo DoE) can help to determine if the implementation is achieving the intended results. The role of monitoring, therefore, is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a WSP (Australian Development Gateway, 2006). In this context, van der Waldt (2004) defines efficiency as achieving optimal output from available resources or inputs. He defines effectiveness as doing things right in order for the intended objectives to be achieved. These definitions indicate that monitoring of a WSP is about keeping the planned work on track, thereafter informing relevant stakeholders about the implementation.

2.5.4.3 Evaluation of a WSP

UNDP (2002) regards evaluation as a selective exercise performed with a purpose to objectively and systematically assess progress in the skills interventions aimed at achieving desired outcomes through a WSP. This selective exercise should always be linked to organisational plans such as implementation plan, monitoring as well as the strategic goals and objectives. Kusek and Rist (2004:12) define evaluation as an organised assessment of a continuing or complete programme, project or policy. They suggest that such an assessment process should include the design, implementation and results of a WSP. The aim of such process is to identify the applicability and achievement of desired objectives, the provision of credible information, development efficiency, as well as enabling the Limpopo DoE to incorporate all lessons gained into the process of "decision making" of all relevant stakeholders in a WSP.

The next section discusses issues involved in implementing, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP, taking into consideration the Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation.

2.5.5 Step 5 Report on Implementation of WSP

Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) state that reporting to SETA regarding the implemented WSP is done using "Annual Training Report" (ATR). The ATR for the preceding skills development cycle is scheduled to be submitted at the same time as the next WSP on 30 June every year. It covers the previous period from "April of the previous year to March of the current year". Completing the Annual Training Report is likewise performed in the SETA format as it is the case with a Workplace Skills Plan. The second similarity is that as with the prescribed format for WSPs, most skills development facilitators who have submitted using the ATR will know its restrictions regarding the provision of wide-ranging "quantitative and

qualitative analysis" of skills development. As it is the case with a Workplace Skills Plan, the completion of the comprehensive internal skills development report is recommended. These results will be provided in a form of a summary into the ATR as required.

According to Paterson (2008), Hattingh and van der Walt (2004), Meyer (2002) and van der Waldt (2004), there is a range of components that skills development facilitators and organisations can consider in compiling an ATR. In the work of Regenesys (2010), these important components can be summarised in the following statements and questions which skills development facilitators should ask themselves:

- Define accomplishments of a WSP.
- What difference did I make as a skills development facilitator?
- What is it that has changed in my work environment or unit as a result of my work related activities through the implementation of a WSP over the last year?

Regenesys (2010) points out that the skills development facilitator can also get this form of feedback by taking all the WSP activities over the previous 12 months and translate them into three to 5 key accomplishments.

Interviewing your skills development committee members on a WSP of the organisation. This involves making a list of personnel who have lots of good things to say about your activities as a skills development facilitator, or perhaps human capital to share optimistic comments about your company. Regenesys (2010) argues that as a skills development facilitator in your organisation you will need to interview such employees and turn their statements into personal profiles to assist in expressing a tale of your own personal achievement.

Reviewing a training budget. This process will help the skills development facilitator to see what initial budget was put aside for training programmes, how was it used, and whether such expenditures are all in line with the approved financial plan. This may include some "graphics like pie charts" with few passages of manuscript explaining where the budget for training was obtained (including grants from SETA and the National Skills Development Fund) and how the skills development programmes documented in the WSP were prioritised and funded.

Compiling a training data base. In compiling an ATR it is useful to always refer to the training database, together with the monthly and quarterly reports of your trainings. With a lot of money put to training every financial year, the skills development facilitator needs to convince all relevant stakeholders that a training budget was spent effectively and efficiently for the benefit of both the organisation and the employees whose skills, knowledge and competencies are enhanced.

Regenesys (2010) stresses that compiling the ATR is not necessarily limited to the above-mentioned steps or components. More important is a clear indication of how the WSP and other training projects were implemented, how the training budget was spent, and the extent in which these implementations are linked to the overall organisational goals and objectives. According to Hattingh (2004), an ATR can be regarded as a document that provides feedback of the trainings implemented over the previous 12 month period within the organisation.

2.5.6 SYNTHESIS

As outlined above, the important factors in the strategic human resource management and criteria for workplace skills planning, relevant to all 5 research questions, can be listed as follows:

- aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP;
- aspects of skills auditing;
- aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP;
- aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP;
- aspects of reporting on an implemented WSP.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the processes to be followed in the development of a WSP, in this way contributing to the body of knowledge. It has also indicated how various authors have dealt with topics relating to this research on the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE.

The literature has indicated that notwithstanding the historical developments of skills development in South Africa, and the failures and challenges that skills development currently faces, a need to develop a WSP still remains vital for organisations. A WSP, as a skills planning document is critical not only for the organisation as an individual institution

but also for other relevant entities and for other skills planning documents such as the sector skills plan, the environmental skills plan, Skills Development Strategy and the HRD Strategy of SA,

In this regard, it becomes evident that a significant contribution towards solving challenges of skills shortage in this country comes directly from the efforts put by individual organisations and SETAs. The next chapter will expand on the relevant literature, focusing primarily on the "research methodology used in this study".

Chapter 3
STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: ASPECTS FOR WORKPLACE SKILLS PLANNING

3.1 Introduction

This chapter extends the review of literature used in this study, elaborating further on the strategic human resource management aspects of workplace skills planning as highlighted in the preceding chapter. These aspects are important in the implementation of the WSP in the organisation and they include gathering information to inform the WSP; performing a skills audit; compiling and submitting the WSP; implementing, monitoring and evaluating the WSP; and reporting back on the implementation (Thompson & Strickland, 2003).

Information gathering to inform a WSP is regarded as a first aspect and is outlined in terms of 5 different environment systems in which the WSP functions:

- external environment
- internal environment
- employee information
- determining external stakeholders
- determining internal stakeholders
- synthesis

The aspects of skills auditing are elaborated through four different phases which include the following:

- “human resource planning”
- “job and competence profiling”
- “finding the skills gap”
- synthesis

Compiling and submitting a WSP is the third aspect, and is discussed in relation to the need to consult both the management and employees on skills needs that have been identified and on the need to compile the WSP for review and then to submit it to the relevant SETA. The fourth aspect is implementing, monitoring and evaluating the actions specified in a WSP and is discussed in relation to the implementation stage of a WSP and the monitoring and evaluation of the WSP. Reporting on implementation is the last aspect of the WSP and is also discussed in detail. A synthesis is presented following the account of each aspect.

3.2 Strategic human resource management

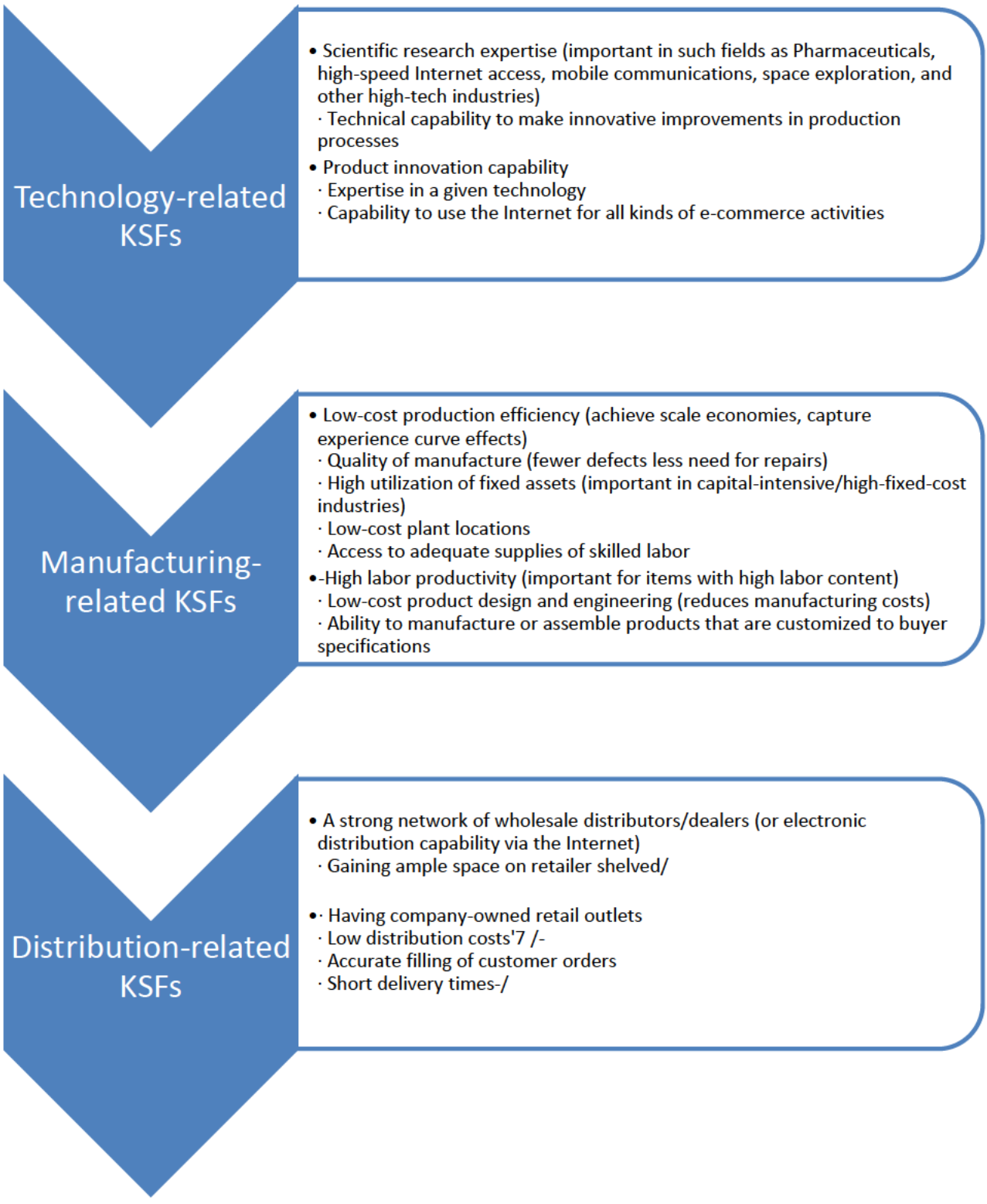
According to (Regenesys, 2010), strategic human resource management is an important tool that assists organisations to establish their strategic priorities and set up their plans and activities for the management of human resources. Critical to this process is the integration of a WSP into the human resource management strategy of the organisation. According to (Regenesys, 2010), this WSP integration is crucial for achievement of strategic organisational goals and objectives through effective human resource management.

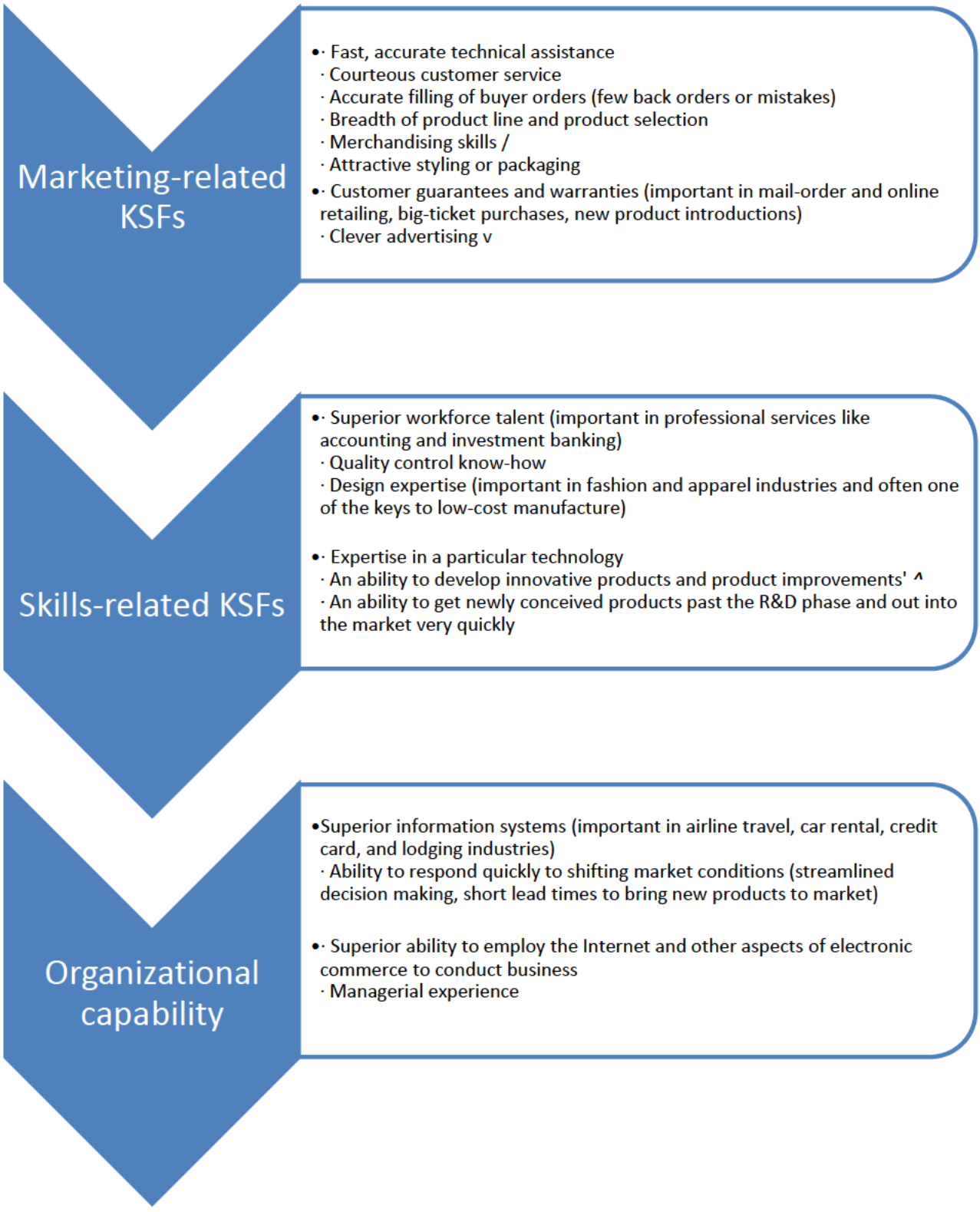
Strategic planning is one of the key success factors in the incorporation of strategic human resource management in the WSP of an organisation (Meyer, 2002). According to (Thompson & Strickland, 2003), strategy involves making clear-cut choices about how to compete. According to Floyd et al. (2000), strategy refers to the various ways in which organisations may compete to be on top in their individual industries. It can also be described as an all-encompassing process for assisting companies and their stakeholders to make future plans and comprehend their vision. Strategic planning is viewed as an ongoing process that is very systematic in nature. It is used to identify desired outcomes of the future and to decide how they can be achieved, as well as how to measure success (Regenesys, 2010).

Key success factors (KSFs) are the factors that most affect the abilities of members of an industry to do well in the marketplace (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). According to Thompson and Strickland (2003), key success factors by their very nature are crucial because they are the fundamentals for the success of the industry. They may include particular strategy elements, human and financial resources, product attributes, competitive capabilities, and competencies. Key success factors can also be described as the rules that determine whether an organisation will be financially and competitively successful.

Key success factors are therefore fundamentally important in the strategic human resource management of an organisation (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). In the beer industry, which Thompson & Strickland (2003) give as an example, the key success factors are “full utilisation of brewing capacity” to retain the costs of manufacturing low, a robust link of “wholesale distributors” to stock the brand and display it favourably in retail outlets where beer is sold, and smart advertising to encourage drinkers of beer to buy the brand of the company and thereby increase sales of beer through the established wholesale or retail channels. In the clothing manufacturing industry, which Thompson & Strickland give as another example, the key success factors are “appealing designs and colour combinations” to generate interest from the buyers, “Little-cost manufacturing efficiency to authorise attractive retail pricing”, and “adequate profit margins”.

The above-mentioned examples show that key success factors not only differ from “industry to industry”, but even differ from “time to time” within one industry as a result of change in the driving forces and competitive conditions. Figure 3-1, taken from Thompson & Strickland (2003), shows the most “common types of industry” key success factors:


Technology-related KSFs
• Scientific research expertise (important in such fields as Pharmaceuticals, high-speed Internet access, mobile communications, space exploration, and other high-tech industries)
· Technical capability to make innovative improvements in production processes
• Product innovation capability
· Expertise in a given technology
· Capability to use the Internet for all kinds of e-commerce activities
Manufacturing-related KSFs
• Low-cost production efficiency (achieve scale economies, capture experience curve effects)
· Quality of manufacture (fewer defects less need for repairs)
· High utilization of fixed assets (important in capital-intensive/high-fixed-cost industries)
· Low-cost plant locations
· Access to adequate supplies of skilled labor
•-High labor productivity (important for items with high labor content)
· Low-cost product design and engineering (reduces manufacturing costs)
· Ability to manufacture or assemble products that are customized to buyer specifications
Distribution-related KSFs
• A strong network of wholesale distributors/dealers (or electronic distribution capability via the Internet)
· Gaining ample space on retailer shelved/
•· Having company-owned retail outlets
· Low distribution costs'7 /-
· Accurate filling of customer orders
· Short delivery times-/


Marketing-related KSFs
•· Fast, accurate technical assistance
· Courteous customer service
· Accurate filling of buyer orders (few back orders or mistakes)
· Breadth of product line and product selection
· Merchandising skills /
· Attractive styling or packaging
•· Customer guarantees and warranties (important in mail-order and online retailing, big-ticket purchases, new product introductions)
· Clever advertising v
Skills-related KSFs
•· Superior workforce talent (important in professional services like accounting and investment banking)
· Quality control know-how
· Design expertise (important in fashion and apparel industries and often one of the keys to low-cost manufacture)
•· Expertise in a particular technology
· An ability to develop innovative products and product improvements' ^
· An ability to get newly conceived products past the R&D phase and out into the market very quickly
Organizational capability
•Superior information systems (important in airline travel, car rental, credit card, and lodging industries)
· Ability to respond quickly to shifting market conditions (streamlined decision making, short lead times to bring new products to market)
•· Superior ability to employ the Internet and other aspects of electronic commerce to conduct business
· Managerial experience

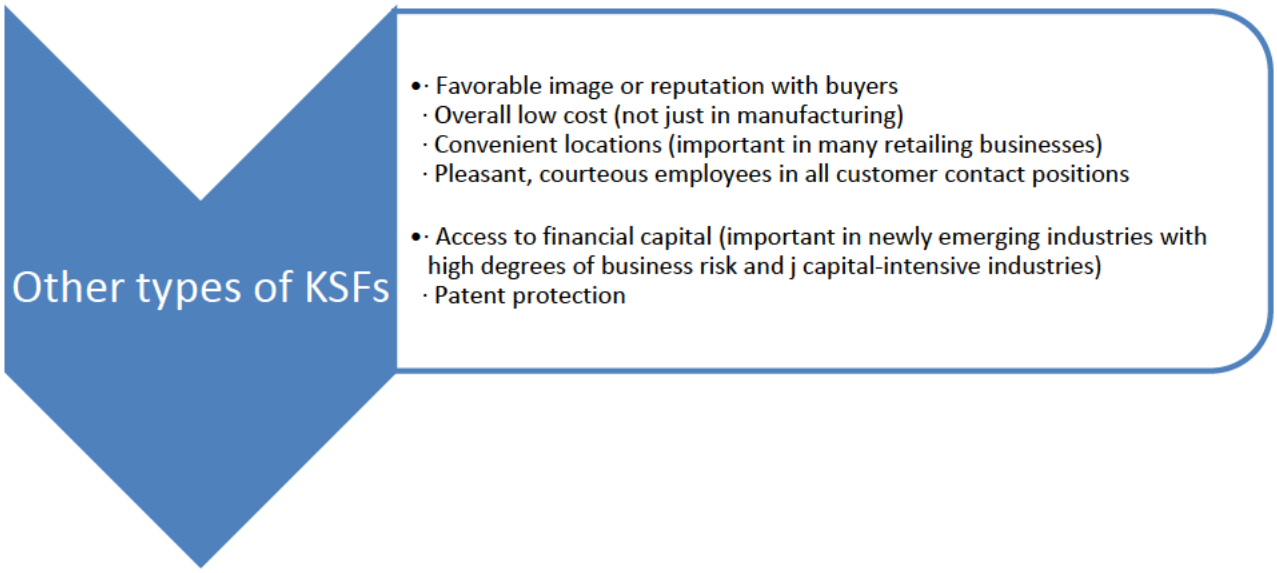


Figure 3-1 The most common types of industry key success factors

(Source: Thompson & Strickland 2003: 43).

The above diagram on the most common types on industry key success factors point out the direct link of these key success factors with those which are discussed throut this papers as 5 key research objectives. According to Thompson & Strickland (2003), strategic human resource management and criteria for workplace skills planning may include a variety of factors. This dissertation considers 5 key success factors for WSP implementation as shown in Figure 3-2.

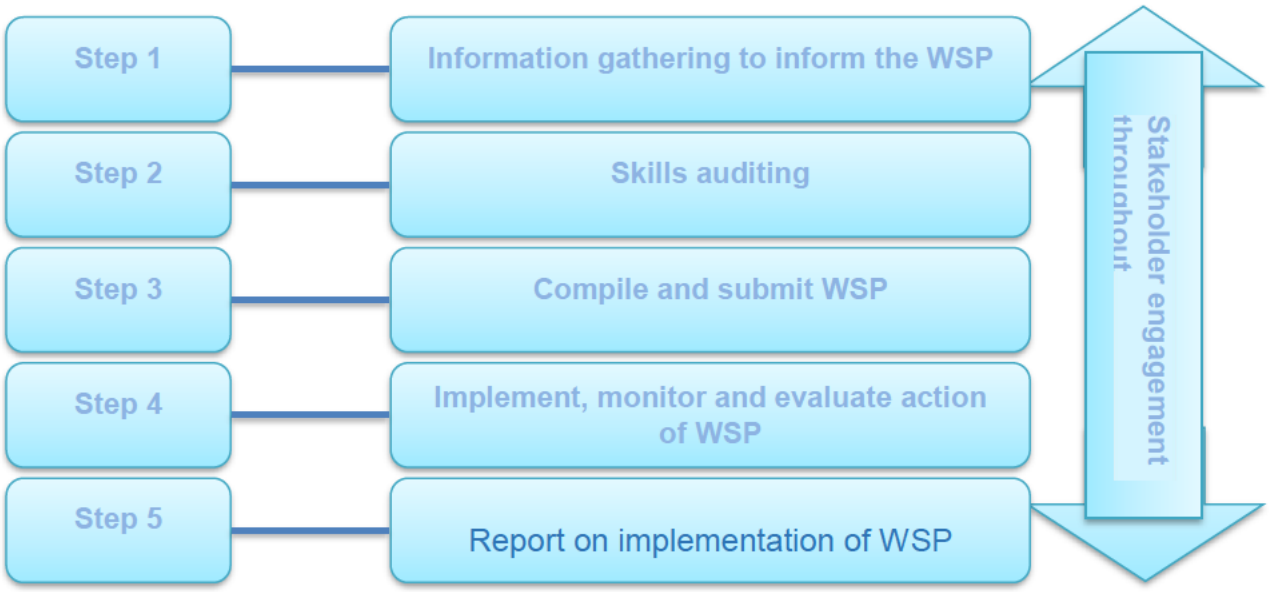


Figure 3-2 Key success factors for implementing a WSP

(Source: Thompson & Strickland, 2003: 98).

3.2.1 ASPECTS OF INFORMATION GATHERING TO INFORM THE WSP

Information gathering is the process of collecting all the information required for the WSP to be developed and implemented (Meyer, 2002). This process lays the foundation for all subsequent critical steps as indicated in Figure 3-2. Information gathering can also be described as a proactive first step during which the organisation, through the skills development facilitator (skills development facilitator), collects information to design a plan on how the skills of the workforce will be developed. According to Hattingh (2004), it is important to incorporate aspects of information gathering in other human performance improvement processes intended to develop the required human capital for achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation. These may include talent management, succession planning and retention of scarce skills.

According to Hattingh (2004), gathering information for the WSP must directly reflect the scope and nature of the organisation concerned. She argues that one of the good things about a WSP is that it directly informs its own development and implementation. She states further that a variety of info may be processed, considered and shared in the process of "workplace skills planning".

Although the skills development facilitator is a member of staff designated to carryout functions of gathering information for a WSP, he or she will need assistance from other role players in the organisation (Hattingh, 2003). The skills development facilitator cannot overlook processes such as "human resource development, skills planning and human performance improvement". Meyer (2002) argues that to ensure that the information gathered creates a WSP that addresses the organizations "skills needs", processes of "skills planning" ought to be performed in agreement with the organization's management, particularly line function managers and employee representatives.

For the purpose of this study, it is essential that employees and managers of the Limpopo DoE take ownership of skills development processes (Hattingh, 2003). This action may contribute effectively towards maximum participation and improved support for the tasks of the SDF and result in the emergence of an appropriate Workplace Skills Plan. Hattingh (2004) states that it is important to establish who should be involved in the first step: gathering information. Table 1.1 indicates some of the important role players and their

contribution in ensuring that relevant information is gathered (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004):

Table 3.1 Role players in information gathering

Top and senior management	Formulate strategic plans and goals, make decisions on the overall processes of a WSP, promote skills development through vocal support, build and support a culture that values skills development, and approve availability of resources (financial and human).
HR Manager	Formulate job descriptions to measure employees' performance against job requirements. Provide SDF with results of performance appraisals and other information on performance gaps and skills needs.
Line managers together with supervisors	Offer input on problems related to training needs and performance, encourage employee's participation in programmes of learning, check the impact of training by monitoring performance, and provide the SDF and HRD with feedback regarding training interventions.
Training committee	Represent business units and address their skills needs, assist the SDF to identify skills needs and feed them in a WSP, promote skills development programmes within own unit, monitor and evaluate the impact of skills in the business unit, include Employment Equity Committee representatives to promote equity targets in a WSP.
Employees	Accurately indicate skills needs in the training needs analysis. Provide feedback on skills interventions attended.

(Source: Hattingh, 2004).

The information collected in the information gathering can be categorised into external and internal information (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). According to Floyd et al. (2000), external information refers to any information gathered from outside your own institution or environment, whereas any information collected from within your own environment or institution is regarded as internal information. The external information to be considered in the information gathering may include the following factors and draw on the following resources relating to comprehensive "skills planning and development" that has to outline the "development and implementation of a WSP":

- "HRD-SA 2010 to 2030" defines various main goals and objectives to be considered through "skills planning at a national level" also a significant "informant of skills priorities and the sector skills plans";
- The NSDS III: provides fundamental guiding principle on training and skills development methodologies and strategies to be implemented and be prioritised by SETAs in the Sector Skills Plan;
- The "organising framework?" in which the "national skills planning and development" is prearranged;

- The “strategies, structures and” policies and of the Organization of “Higher Education and Training” on training and skills development;
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) strategies, policies, and structures on training and skills development: it acts as the quality assurer of occupationally directed skills development and training (Floyd et al. 2000);
- Sector-specific skills development that includes the following:
    - The “Environmental Sector Skills Plan” which describes “critical and scarce skills” commonly throughout the environment sector. It can likewise help to recognise those “scarce and critical skills” inside the company.

  The enabling documents which draws from the ESSP and describes “scarce and critical skills” according to each individual economic sector and offers certain guiding principles for interventions.

  Sector Skills Plans in which the company is registered and linked, for example, the Limpopo DoE and all other sectors of education in South Africa are registered and associated with ETDP SETA (Education, Training and Development SETA). Other examples of economic SETAs may include AGRISETA for Department of Agriculture, CETA for construction and FINSETA for Department of Finance, LGSETA for Local Government, etc.
    - Strategic trends and patterns for skills development in the sector that will shape skills needs in the organisation (environmental skills plan, sector skills plans).
    - “Systems, structures and processes which address skills needs and support implementation of skills development strategies (HRD-SA, NSDS III)” (Floyd et al. 2000).

The Limpopo DoE also gathers some of the information from within its own structures and systems. According to (Thompson & Strickland, 2003), the internal information to be considered during aspects of information gathering may include the following:

- “Strategic organisational priorities over the short and medium term”;
- Competence requirements required to meet such “strategic priorities” over a period of time;
- The priorities of Human Resource over a “short to medium term” relating to the below:
    - “Planned changes to technology”
    - Strategies of Employment equity

- Strategies of Transformation
- retrenchment plans, change as well as growth
- Vacant posts which are not so easy to fill
- "Recruitment trends" and so on.

3.2.1.1 The nature of the different environment systems wherein the WSP functions

Regenesys (2010) defines a system as a set of components, such as activities, indicators, processes or projects, comprising an entity where each component interacts with, or is related to at least one other component within the entire structure and where they all serve a common objective. According to Regenesys (2010), an implemented WSP (such as a WSP for the employees of the Limpopo DoE) constitutes an education system that includes the following elements:

- development of the WSP;
- provisioning of workshops on skills development programmes, tools, machinery and equipment;
- skilled and competent SDFs and training officers;
- target market and the objectives of the WSP;
- marketing and advertising the available skills development programmes such as internships, learnerships, bursaries, etc;
- enrolment of learners and staff members or any other group in their relevant skills development programmes; and
- monitoring and evaluation of these programmes, etc. (Regenesys, 2010).

The systems approach looks at an organisation such as the Limpopo DOE more like an "integrated and purposeful" system made out of unified parts, as opposed to dealing distinctly with the various parts of the organisation (Warren, 2005). It gives skills development facilitators, senior management and all other relevant stakeholders in WSP implementation a way of viewing at an organisation or company holistically and as a part of the "larger external environment". According to Warren (2005), from this perspective each key success factor and its activities affect the activities of any other key success factor. In addition, all the activities of the organisation affect the activities of key success factors for WSP implementation.

The Limpopo DoE has 5 branches: Corporate, Finance, Quality Assurance, Curriculum, and District Coordination. Following Regenesys (2010), these branches can be regarded as systems because they all have their own sub-branches which can be regarded as subsystems. These systems (branches) and subsystems (sub-branches) work together as a unified system called the Limpopo DoE (Regenesys, 2010). This means that the success of WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE depends primarily on how these systems and subsystems collaborate for the benefit of the education system as a whole and its internal and external clients (Du Toit et al. 2003).

Paterson (2008) emphasises that the key success factors for implementing a WSP can also be seen as parts of the whole in the WSP. If, for example, the information gathering to inform a WSP fails to gather the needed information, the whole implementation of the WSP will be affected. Regenesys (2010), too, emphasises that employees in the organisation do not function as independent units; they cooperate reciprocally in their individual units.

Systems theory is also supported by the social learning theory model (Regenesys, 2010), which assumes that human learning is a function of the joint and shared interaction of the individual person, human behaviour and the environment. According to this view, the personal life, social behaviour and environment are joined or linked to each other and all of them inform the manner in which employees respond to either external or internal environmental factors. Thus the behaviour of employees or the social interaction within the organisation is one social factor that can influence implementation of a WSP (Regenesys, 2010).

3.2.1.2 External environment factors to consider

Meyer (2002) believes that although external environment factors exist outside the organisation (such as the Limpopo DoE), they can also affect (positively or negatively) the implementation of the organisation's WSP. She further argues that these external factors can have a serious effect on all employees of the organisation, including senior management, and can thus affect both the individual performance of employees and the performance of the organisation as a whole. She identifies the characteristics of external environmental factors as follows:

- they upset daily activities and systems of the organisation

- they create uncertainties and force senior management to act pro-actively in the changing environment
- they consist of an effect regarding the obtaining of materials such as human resources, technology and books
- they create a difficult and diverse environment that feels dangerous to employees

According to Regenesys (2010), the external control model suggests that external environment is the dominant influence on organisational actions. Recent studies have suggested that the external environment is multidimensional, with multiple and differentiated effects on a number of organisational activities. Regenesys (2010) cites the following external environmental factors that could affect the implementation of a WSP (as in the Limpopo DoE):

- high level of competition: In the case of the Limpopo DoE, other provincial education departments may achieve better results in the implementation of a WSP
- introduction of new technology and equipment
- introduction of a new WSP and ATR format from SETA
- lack of funding of skills development programmes from National Skills Fund, SETA and other external institutions

With regard to the implementation of a WSP in the Limpopo DoE, van der Waldt (2004) argues that external environment factors may lead to the following:

- well-planned skills development programmes may be called-off or postponed
- may lead to fruitless and wasteful expenditure of training budget
- may negatively affect the motivation of the SDF and other relevant stakeholders who are passionate about implementing the organisation's WSP
- May also affect the implementation of internship and learner ship programmes and the awarding of bursaries to staff members and grade-12 learners

According to Regenesys (2010), such factors of external environment may be caused by a variety of reasons or institutions. The reason why these factors are called 'external' is because they are as a result of outside situations which are beyond the control of the Limpopo DoE. Some of these factors may include the following:

- changes in the legislation underpinning skills development and the implementation of WSP
- economic meltdown which affects the international community, including the country of South Africa
- poor administration of public funds that has forced 5 provincial government departments in Limpopo in 2011 under administration, including the DoE
- changes in political system and government administration
- changes in the manner in which service providers do business with government departments
- restructuring of the institution mandated to facilitate training and development services in South Africa (one example is the South African Management Development Institute, now renamed as to PALAMA, and which in February 2014 changed from being an academy to become the 'National School of Government'

3.2.1.3 Internal environment factors to consider

The Limpopo DoE, like all other public and private organisations, is expected to control its internal environment factors as best it can (Floyd et al. 2000). This can be done through the policies, strategies, structures and other systems that have been set in place to control internal factors within the organisation. Regenesys (2010) cites personal and team effectiveness, and alignment of an organisation's strategies, goals and objectives with personal or individual goals as key tools in controlling these internal factors. Floyd et al. (2000) note that organisations with effective strategic human resource management and good motivational tools have managed to deal with internal environment factors more effectively.

Structures, policies, tools and strategies thus enable organisations to control their internal environment. Floyd et al. (2000) suggest that proper planning and implementation of the following points will help to strengthen this control:

- effective leadership and management principles based on fairness and good decision making
- clear policies on organisational behaviour and incentives to conform with ethos the of the organisation
- proper systems of coaching and mentoring of employees

- good performance management and development systems that reward good performance and address poor performance through skills development programmes
- proper systems of wellness counselling that deal with personal problems of employees, etc.

Van der Waldt (2004) states that although an organisation may be able to control internal environmental factors, these factors can still lead to poor organisational performance, and may require a change in organisational strategies and goals and in organisational structure and priorities. This may affect continuity in operational plans and cause a lack of stability among employees.

Regenesys (2010) found that internal environmental factors call for an environmental determinism perspective in which strategic decisions and processes enable adaptation to opportunities, threats, constraints and other characteristics of the environment. In this adaptation top managers have a facilitator role.

With regard to the implementation of a WSP, Hattingh (2004) believes that the internal environment factors can be identified and controlled according to various roles and responsibilities that the relevant stakeholders have in the implementation. The internal environmental factors which are likely to shape the implementation of a WSP in the Limpopo DoE are as follows:

- The SDF and senior management must ensure the formulation of strategic plans and goals to help the SDF describe current and future skills needs of the employees.
- Effective decision making is needed on the overall process of aspects of information gathering for WSP to ensure its relevance.
- Skills development interventions must be promoted through vocal support and the encouragement of employees.
- An organisational culture that values human capital development and life-long learning must be built up and supported.
- There must be "allocation of the financial, human and other resources needed" for successful implementation of WSP (Hattingh, 2004).

Hattingh's (2003) study also found that the HR manager must ensure that aspects of WSP implementation are incorporated in HR processes such as human capital management, performance appraisal, succession planning, talent management and skills retention. She also

make a proposal that (a) there is a need for formulation of clear "job descriptions" to use them to measure the performance of human capital against job requirements, and that (b) the information that is appropriate and significant should be made available to the SDF, especially the performance appraisals outcomes and other crucial information regarding "performance gaps and skills needs".

The HRD manager (or other manager responsible for training and development) must ensure, among other things, that the planning and implementation of WSP is focused on "developing the skills the organisation needs to achieve its current and strategic objectives" (Hattingh, 2003). The HRD manager must therefore work in close consultation with managers and the skills development facilitator to ensure that the WSP is in line with the strategic priorities of the organisation. He or she must also plan and supervise the "nomination, selection and capacity building "of the training committee and the skills development facilitator and to ensure that they have the required capability to execute such functions (Hattingh, 2004).

Regenesys (2010) points out that team leaders, line managers and supervisors must make their contribution towards the provision of effective input regarding the training needs and problems of performance of employees at work. They must also encourage employee's participation in learning and other Programmes which are development oriented, monitor the performance of staff after training to make follow-ups on the impact of training, and provide feedback to the skills planning team and skills development facilitator regarding the success of the programmes of learning according to the "improved on-the-job performance".

The training committee represents branches, business units, sections or directorates of the organisation in ensuring that their training needs are identified and training interventions are being implemented (Paterson, 2008). The roles and tasks of the skills development committee, as indicated by Hattingh (2004), may include the following:

- to assist the SDF in fulfilling his or her role by identifying skills needs in the unit and feeding them into the Workplace Skills Plan
- to promote and support skills development programmes within own unit
- to include representatives from the "employment equity committee" to ensure that the WSP is used to promote achievement of the organisation's equity targets
- to assist in monitoring, tracking and evaluating the impact of skills development on the performance of the business unit

In this process, the employees have responsibilities that Hattingh (2004) lists as follows: that they should accurately indicate their needs for training during the phase of "training needs analysis", be professional when attending training programmes or training sessions, complete their informative and summative evaluations, and provide feedback on completed skills development programmes to indicate their relevance to their own work role. In this way, feedback can be used in evaluating the quality, relevance and impact of such programmes (Hattingh, 2004).

3.2.1.4 Employee information to consider

According to (Regenesys, 2010), "employee information is another critical source of information [that] can be summarised from personal development plans" and that will make it easier to formulate explicit career development plans and identify skills development needs for the individual employee. Meyer (2002) advises that organisations should make their employees aware of the importance of developing their skills, since human capital are often unwilling to reveal areas in which they require development and choose to rate themselves competent in order to obtain "performance bonuses and higher-notch salaries". Meyer (2002) pints out that a key factor in successful development of an organisation's employees is the willingness the employees to perform effectively and efficiently in the organisation, the passion and commitment displayed by employees in their working environment, and their aspirations to grow the organisation.

3.2.2 Determining external and internal stakeholders

A stakeholder can be described as any person who has a vested interest in the development and implementation of the WSP (Knipe et al. 2002). It is important therefore to analyse the needs of stakeholders to guarantee realisation of those needs. One factor in successful development and implementation of a WSP is participation and involvement of all key stakeholders in the WSP. Stakeholders who do not have the chance to participate in the information gathering are often more likely to interrupt the execution of a Workplace Skills Plan.

A lot of participation by stakeholders may become frustrating, time-wasting and destructive (Knipe et al. 2002). The skills development facilitator or the organisation must therefore identify the key stakeholders and plan how to manage them successfully. Knipe et al. (2002) further state that the successful management of stakeholder participation in the implementation of WSP may include the following:

- identification of all relevant internal and external stakeholders
- prioritisation of all key stakeholders
- analysis of the needs of stakeholders' interests and the power base
- deciding on a tactic of how to involve them constructively

Following Hattingh and van der Walt (2004), the information gathering for a WSP in the Limpopo DoE might include participation of the SAQA, the Department of Higher Education and Training, the SETA, the Department of Environmental Affairs, and Human Resource Development.

In cooperating with external stakeholders, it is also essential for an organisation such as the Limpopo DoE to engage in techniques such as gathering relevant information for workplace skills planning, building useful networks, and canvassing support for developing and executing a Workplace Skills Plan (Hattingh, 2004).

Aspects of information gathering in the Limpopo DoE may also include involvement of a range of internal stakeholders (Hattingh, 2004) such as senior management who will help to secure support and allocation of resources for "planning and implementing" a WSP. The HRD manager will contribute to identify short- and medium-term priorities of Human Resources that will govern skills planning and development. Line management will help to identify national and sector priorities that need to be taken into account in defining job and competence profiles. The training committee will ensure that all groups of representatives move in the same direction with reference to workplace skills planning. The unit of human resource management will assist in establishing an understanding of trends, patterns and developments that are likely to mould the planning of skills and training, and lastly, the performance management and development unit will provide assistance with regard to summarising the personal development plans of human capital.

3.2.2.1 Synthesis

From the above argumentation the listed below are the important factors to be considered as aspects of "information gathering to inform a WSP":

- setting up the "committees of skills development"
- determining "external" stakeholders
- determining "internal" stakeholders
- include relevant stakeholders and noticeably stipulate their roles and responsibilities
- support implementation of skills development strategies such as the HRD-SA and NSDS III
- ensure to understand the systems, structures and processes through which to address skills needs
- determining the nature of the different environment systems wherein the WSP functions
- develop and maintain good relationship with all employees and their supervisors
- include representatives from the "Employment Equity Committee" to ensure that the
- WSP is compiled appropriately in order to "promote the achievement of the organisation's equity targets.

3.2.3 Aspects of Skills Auditing

Skills auditing can be defined as the process through which skills gaps in an organisation are identified (Hattingh, 2003). A clearly designed job description for each individual employee is crucial when one needs to conduct a skills audit process. Hattingh (2003) argues – a reason for this could be that the job description must noticeably show the responsibilities and performance standards of human capital. According to Meyer (2002), the skills audit serves as a direct translation of what contributions the employee should make in the operational plans of the organisation. Sometimes the skills audit is conducted in response to key structural challenges facing the organisation in its operations.

Skills auditing determines the gap between the required skills and the currently available skills in the organisation (Meyer, 2002). Implementing the WSP is a gap. According to Hattingh (2004), the skills audit "requires a clear profile of existing skills" of all employees. A fundamental process in the skills audit is clear "formulation of competency profiles or job descriptions for the different job categories". These job profiles must specify the tasks and

their performance standards, together with what incumbents should know, understand and be capable to do to competently perform their responsibilities in those jobs.

Hattingh's (2004) study reveals that an effective skills audit requires a "clearly organised baseline of skills needs" against which to compare the skills that already exist in the organisation. The skills auditing process comprises of three different phases namely: "human resource planning, job and competence profiling, and finding the skills gap". A further explanation of these three phases is as follows:

3.2.3.1 Human resource planning

A human resource is commonly perceived as the most valued asset in the company (Meyer, 2002). Even though at times this viewpoint seems not to accommodate certain situations in the work environment, the reality is that "any organisation is only as strong as its human resource complement". Meyer (2002) further states that to identify the skills needs of employees; the first step "is to understand what the organisation actually needs to fulfil its mandate".

Meyer (2002) states that certain key questions need to be asked when establishing the human resource needs of a work institution. For most companies, their short-, medium- and long-term goals and objectives are likely to relate to their strategic business. Lots of organisations are more interested in the translation of these wider goals into the goals and objectives of their departments, directorates, sections and sub-sections. These are significant sources in defining the needs of a company in relation to the "short, medium and long term".

Organisations never work in isolation and they often get influenced by the "external environment" (DPSA, 2008). This viewpoint shows the importance of considering both the "external and internal environment" during processes of human resource planning. This will help to identify all certain factors influencing the skills gaps as the company continues to undergo its phase of growth and development. DPSA (2008) suggests the use of the "PESTEL framework" which is also used by SETAs for their individual planning of skills. The "PESTEL framework" recognises external factors that are possible to effect change in the organisation's "internal environment". Figure 3-3 shows the "PESTEL framework":

Figure 3-3 Example of a PESTEL framework

(Source: Regenesys, 2010)

3.2.3.2 Job and competence profiling

According to Thompson and Strickland (2003), job profiles outline the quantity of jobs required and the nature of such vacancies. They describe the number of human capital in a range of different posts structured into various organization's departments, directorates, programmes and sections. The job profiles also define the role that needs to be played by each individual employee in order to contribute and help the organisation meet its goals and objectives.

A job profile entails the “key work areas” of each particular employee. It is informed by strategies and plans of the directorate of the organisation, together with the purpose of the job to achieve the organisation’s objectives.

Employees in the Limpopo DoE have a range of at least “5 to 10 key work areas” that are commonly found within their “work contracts” (van der Waldt, 2004). These “work areas” are also referred to as the “key performance areas” (KPAs). These KPAs best describe the work that an individual personnel is hired to perform in order to accomplish his or her title role within their respective company or organisation. Van der Waldt (2004) points out that “competence profiles” are developed from job profiles and for each key work area, they generally focus on three things such as knowledge, skills and work orientation.

Van der Waldt (2004) states that knowledge refers to “what people know and understand about their work, their organisation, the sector and broader environment in which they work”. “Skills” refers to what employees are able to perform (work activities) with the knowledge and understanding within their respective workplace. “Work orientation” refers to “the values and attitudes which [they bring] to their work, drawing on their knowledge and understanding and ability to ‘translate’ this into what they are expected of them in the workplace” (van der Waldt, 2004).

Even though “competence profiles” are developed from the “job profiles”, they are different from the “job profile” (Hattingh, 2004). It is recommended to start by formulating job profiling before “competence profiling”. In many organisations weakness in job profiling then results in weakness in competence profiling and ultimately in poor skills auditing. Although Hattingh (2004) agrees that this process may be time-consuming, she argues that an effective WSP starts “with well-defined job profiles, which inform competence profiles which then form the basis for skills auditing”.

According to Paterson (2008), “methodologies for competence profiling [are] significantly lacking. There does not appear to be [one} generic and agreed methodology for competence profiling”, not to mention that a variety of professionals understand competence differently.

Against this background, different companies make use of different approaches to define the competencies required for different job profiles. For example, in the year 1998 during the time when the NQF was being “developed and implemented”, a useful “competence framework” was well-defined against which to formulate qualifications and to assess

competence (Department of Labour, 2001a). This was called the Applied Competence Framework in the NQF, and though not generally used in defining competence these days, it continues to provide a useful framework to outline competence. "Applied competence" is a combination of "practical, foundational and reflexive competence".

Paterson (2008) recommends the below mentioned figure: (Figure 3-4) in order to indicate various types of "competence profiling" that a company or organisations can use:

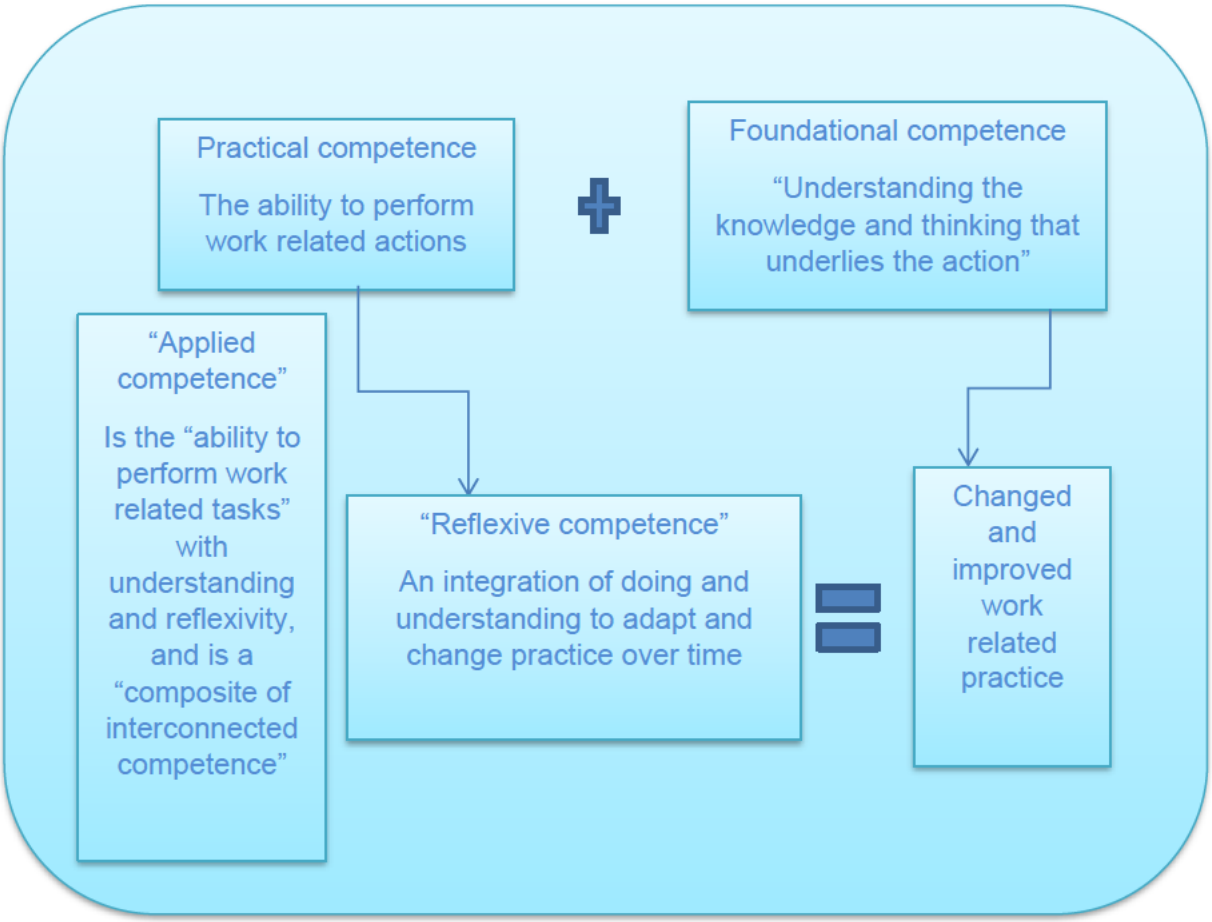


Figure 3-4 Competence profiling

(Source: Paterson, 2008).

Meyer (2002) points out that one of the key problems in "job and competence profiling" is that organisations or companies begin the process with the things that they have as opposed to what they are going to need in the near future as the organisation develops. Job and competence profiling should have a future focus, a theoretical focus, and include the vision, the dream and the reality which is found in the employee profiles as depicted in Figure 3-5:

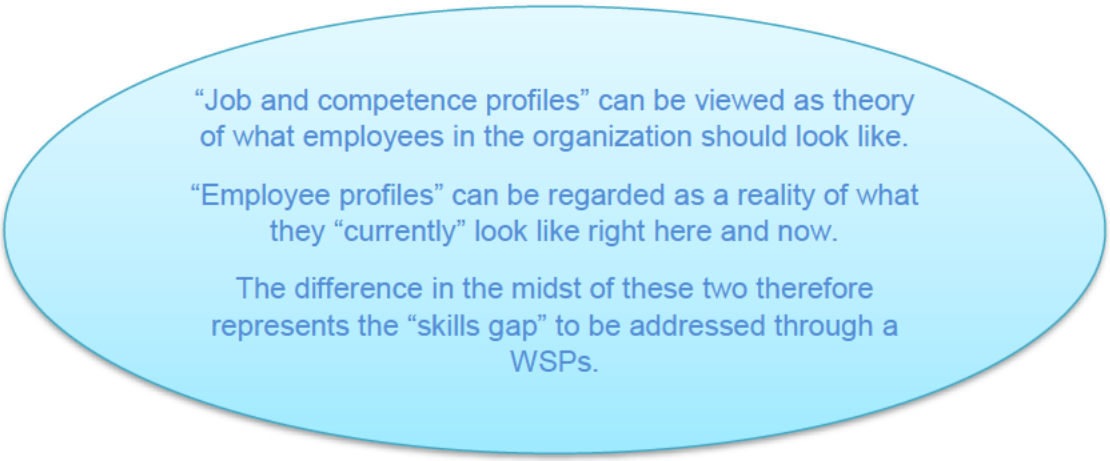


Figure 3-5 Example of an employee profile

Source: Meyer, 2002).

Meyer (2002) points out that because the "external and internal environments" are often changing, it would be inappropriate for one to assume that "job and competence profiles" will indefinitely remain the same. She stresses the importance of reviewing and reconsidering the job and competence profile of the organisation at regular intervals. Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) suggest that a feasible timeframe for "job and competence profiling" is possibly 5 years, since a variety of organisations draw up their strategic and business plans with this period of time at the back of their minds. The job and competence profiles should ideally be developed in relation to the organisational strategy and business plan for a specified time period. Figure **3-6** indicates the elements of a "job and competency profile":

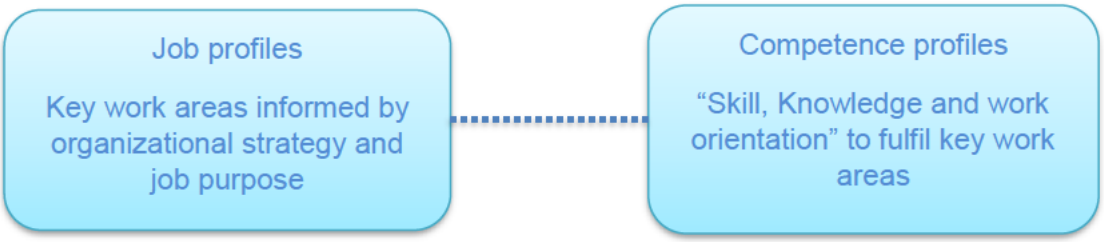


Figure 3-6 Job and competence profile

(Source: Meyer, 2002).

3.2.3.3 Finding the skills gap

As noted previously, the "skills gap" is the difference between the "job and competence profiles", together with the current competence and resultant performance of human capital (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004). An organisation should measure its current competence and

performance by profiling its current employees. In the case of the Limpopo DoE, profiling employees will assist in providing dept. knowledge to the practical skills of its human capital, as compared to the "theory and vision" of the job and "competence" profile (Hattingh, 2004).

Hattingh (2004) notes further that "a profile is undertaken for each individual employee relative to their job and competence profile". It is informed by, among other things, the academic qualifications and competence of employees, additional skills programmes implemented with personal and professional attributes of employees, human capital, employee self-assessment curriculum vitae, and the performance appraisals.

Van der Waldt (2004) emphasises that a key procedure in "skills auditing" is clear "formulation of competency profiles (or job descriptions) for the different job categories". These profiles should specify the tasks and performance standards, and what incumbents should understand, be knowledgeable about and be able to do to perform competently in those jobs. The training needs analysis, which should be conducted annually, should then measure staff to determine what their individual competence is with reference to what their current competence should be. The gap between these two shows the necessity for learning and development to help employees to acquire knowledge and skills that could improve their performance.

The outcomes of this "training "needs analysis" then form the basis of the skills planning process in a form of a WSP (van der Waldt, 2004). This process is aimed at identifying the learning programmes required to address performance gaps and the current and future skills needs of the organisation. The training needs analysis is at the heart of the WSP, and the HRD manager and skills development facilitator should make sure that this analysis is effectively planned and executed. The relationship between these three processes is depicted in Figure 3-7:

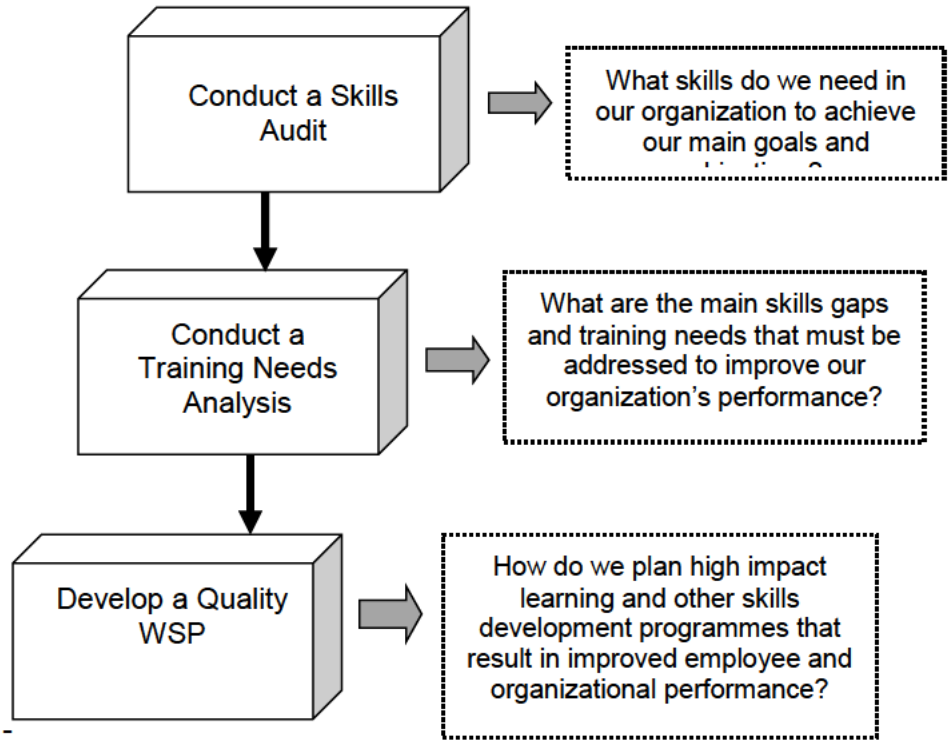


Figure 3-7 Planning for skills development interventions

(Source: van der Waldt, 2004).

3.2.3.4 Synthesis

This section has indicated the following three factors as important:

- human resource planning
- job and competence profiling
- finding the skills gap

3.2.4 Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP

Meyer (2002) states that once the first two aspects of the WSP have been established it is advisable next to consult widely on the identified skills development priorities. It is also advisable to compile a WSP draft, as well as the skills interventions to address the needs and set up associated budgets for implementing these interventions. Table 3.2, taken from Hattingh (2004), shows what the compiled and submitted WSP should be and what it should not be in the case of the Limpopo DoE:

Table 3.2 What a WSP "should and should not" be

What the WSP "should" be	What the WSP "should not" be
The WSP should respond to the question, "What skills does the Limpopo DoE require in order to be able to achieve its plans in one, two or 5 years' time?"	The WSP should not just provide answers of "What training must the Limpopo DoE record in its WSP" for this year?
The result of the "analysis of skills needs and the identification of performance-directed initiatives".	The outcome for a mechanistic process of completing the form and basically compiling a list of training and the rest of statistics.
A tool to provide strategic approach to plan for the development of the workers of Limpopo Department of Education.	Something done to meet a submission date as stipulated by SETA.
A document containing precise details regarding training priorities for Limpopo Department of Education. An instrument used internally to grow the capacity of the workforce, to enhance individual performance, improve service and contribute towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Limpopo DoE.	The outcome of just juggling the figures from the initial WSP to make a submission of a new an updated version to the SETA.

(Source: Hattingh, 2004).

The last phase in preparing the WSP is to have it endorsed by the relevant authorities of the organisation prior making its submission to SETA. With reference to Education Department of Limpopo, the WSP is approved by the HRD Senior Manager (skills development facilitator), the head of department, the head of branch, and the provincial skills development committee: including HRD practitioners, union representatives, the labour relations manager and the HR practitioners.

The following subsections outline critical steps which, according to Meyer (2002), may be involved in compiling and submitting the WSP.

3.2.4.1 Consult management and employees on needs identified

Meyer (2002) argues that a lot of information is already gathered at this stage, which can be summarised as follows:

- "international, regional and national trends and factors shaping the work done in the organisation"
- "national and sector-specific skills priorities"
- "organisational priorities"
- "human resource priorities for skills needs of all employees"

The information gathered will help to make the case for the scarce and critical skills that need to be addressed in the WSP as pointed out by Meyer (2002). This action contributes largely in safeguarding significant resources for executing training and skills development. Meyer

recommends that the training committee should coherently and clearly prepare this information for it to be conversed to the top management and staffs of the organisation. It shall at least require the form of a presentation of the key findings in a "skills audit report and/or PowerPoint presentation" that summarises the whole report.

Meyer (2002) lists the following items for possible inclusion in the presentation:

- "the 'external environment' and implications that this has for the business strategy"
- "the 'internal HR environment' and its implications for human capital"
- skills development and training
- "the sector 'trends and patterns' and resultant skills priorities"
- the skills needs identified relative to job and competence profiles
- "the suggested training interventions to address these needs"
- "the suggested 'budget' requirement"

3.2.4.2 Compile the WSP for review

Organizing the above indicated information will lead to a WSP draft (Hattingh, 2003). Hattingh (2003) maintains that skills development facilitators with experience of working with a format of the WSP from SETAs are in agreement that the quantity of detail provided in the proposed "skills audit report" is possible to provide little information which is aligned with a WSP format.

Each economic SETA has its own prescribed format for a WSP (Hattingh, 2003), providing for similar information, which comprises of: employee profiles, administrative details of the skills development facilitator and that of an organisation, "scarce and critical skills" identified according to OFO codes, as well as the propose training interventions for addressing the employee's skills need.

Many skills development facilitators have expressed frustration that the prescribed format limits them to a rather artificial demonstration of skills needs of the organization (Meyer, 2002). Meyer (2002) maintains that a WSP format prescribed by SETA includes two aims: firstly, to submit appropriate information to SETA so as to use it in order to profile the economic sector, also to supply SETA with a required summary of skills needs that covers the financial year ahead. The above aims indicate that the prescribed format is probably

necessary, taking into consideration – the number of WSPs which should be processed in each SETA (Meyer, 2002).

Hattingh (2004) suggests that the "skills audit report" should be seen more like an internal working WSP document, combined with a WSP to be submitted to the relevant SETA, as a short version of the employee profile and skills needs of the company for the financial year ahead. Grobler et al. (2006) argues that it creates scope for a comprehensive description of the skills needs in the organisation. This could take place within the short term as anticipated by SETA and within the medium term and long term as needed for the growth of the organisation.

Preparing a WSP in the "prescribed SETA format" requires familiarity with the requirements (Grobler et al. 2006). Detailed guidelines for this are provided by all SETAs to support skills development facilitators in such arrangements. If all required information have been collected during the first KSF "information gathering", followed by the second stage "skills auditing", , filling the WSP form prescribed by SETA will then seem not as much intimidating.

The WSP must be signed off by the skills development facilitator, members of the training committee as well as a member of the executive committee of the organisation (Grobler et al. 2006). Grobler et al. (2006) note that if the internal WSP as presented was comprehensive enough to be approved by both of the above-mentioned committees, its last copy to SETA should receive similar endorsement because it is a short version from the former.

3.2.4.3 Submit the WSP to the relevant SETA

Through the skills development facilitator, each organisation must submit its WSP to the SETA under which it is registered by 30 June each year (Hattingh, 2004). According to Meyer (2002), the details from the WSPs are integrated into the sector skills plans to cover the term of 5 years. This highlights a WSP as a primary source of information whereby the sector in the sector skills plans is profiled. Skills priorities identified in the WSP indicate sector priorities to be addressed through the sector skills plans.

According to Hattingh (2004), Meyer (2002) and Grobler et al. (2006), the information in the WSP that is compiled and ready for submission may contain the following:

- Administrative information: levy number that is used as a confirmation that a company is a legitimate organization that pays levy-tax to its

SETA, the contact details of the organisation, the contact person in the organisation (usually the SDF, the head of the department or the chief executive officer), the organisations' banking details, and the contact person in finance (usually the chief financial officer) or any person appointed as the head of finance section.

- Details about the organisation: the size and name of the organisation, the total number of employees, the postal and physical address at which the organisation is located, province allocation, industrial sector, and SETA constituency.

- Employment profile: including the employment categories and designations of employees, together with their gender, age, race and disability.
- Strategic profile of the organisation which outlines the vision and mission of the organisation, its strategic priorities, its skills development strategic priorities, percentage of the payroll spent on skills development, and other related information.
- Planned training for the organisation which details all skills development programmes that the organisation plans to implement.
- Profile of the skills development facilitator, including both professional and personal information.
- Training providers available (in the case of the Limpopo DoE this includes training service providers that are accredited and registered in the data base of the Department).
- Training facilities available: this includes facilities such as conference and seminar venues, computer laboratories and equipment that may be used for conducting skills development programmes.
- Quality assurance: this will confirm proper completion of requirements such as appointment of the SDF and the training committee, conducting skills needs and skills auditing, determining skills development priorities based on an environmental analysis, business plan and skills audit, identification of skills development programmes such as learnerships and internships, developing the skills development management information system, and confirming the completion of implemented skills development programmes as well as the monitoring of such skills programmes and the evaluation thereof.

- "Process and authorisation": this deals with authorisation of WSP by the SDF and the employees' representative, and authorised signature of the employer, training committee and other parties.
- Staff retention and utilisation: this includes areas of skills shortage, strategies employed to retain staff, training priorities, skills interventions, employment equity plan, equity targets in writing, defining the profile in terms of gender, race and disability, employees' profiles reflected in the WSPs, etc.

3.2.4.4 Synthesis

The aspects outlined above relate to the research question on compiling and submitting a WSP to the relevant SETA. The following factors are considered as important:

- determining what the WSP should be
- determining what the WSP should not be
- having a WSP signed by the relevant authorities of the organisation before submitting it to the relevant SETA
- consulting management and employees on training needs identified
- compiling a WSP for review
- submitting a WSP to the relevant SETA

3.2.5 Aspects of WSP implementing, monitoring and evaluating

These aspects fall into two categories: aspects of WSP implementing, and aspects of WSP monitoring and evaluating (Thompson & Strickland, 2003). However, this view was extended by Regenesys (2010) – pointing out that monitoring and evaluation ought to be conducted during or after the implementation phase. The following subsections deal with each of these in turn.

3.2.5.1 Implementing a WSP

Contingent on the size of the organisation and more specifically the scope of skills needs identified, Grobler et al. (2006) argue that "implementing the WSP could be a small and manageable task". It is recommended that an annual training schedule be developed which will help to plan and direct the implementation of skills development. It is key to communicate such a plan to the entire affected personnel. This will help to secure support of

human capital and organization's management as well as their participation. Affected staff members may include the following:

- The employees chosen as attendees in the skills development programmes, where it is imperative that participants in skills training take part keenly for purposes of their own personal development and good return on investment on the side of the organization.
- The section manager who supervises the chosen employee for training will be required to approve his/her partaking, particularly in the event where the attendee stays on training for an extended period of time.
- Support staff through mentors or peer-learning that will be present to support the employee in their skills development journey.

With reference to stakeholder consultation and participation being emphasised throughout the process of developing the WSP, organizations through their skills development facilitators must equally take it into consideration that consultation and participation of stakeholders is similarly crucial at this stage (Hattingh, 2004). Furthermore, execution of a WSP must directly respond to the identified skills audit and skills analysis process. It is also important to engage senior management on budget support that will help to fund the implementation of the WSP (Hattingh, 2004).

Hattingh (2004) states that it can take different forms of interventions to address the identified skills needs and close skills gaps as indicated in a WSP. However. These types of skills interventions may either be organized in the form of "formal or informal" training. Therefore Companies need to be flexible enough to choose the training options that will best suit the in implementation, based on available resources and facilities.

Formal training

Paterson (2008) states that in many organisations formal training is often the first option used in WSP implementation. It may include full-time study, direction, part-time study, short courses, learnerships and short skills programmes. Paterson (2008) lists some of these options for formal training as follows:

- Full-time study: This refers to longer term degree, diploma or certificate course that supports intensive growth in a particular career;
- Direction: This means that the incumbent steps out of the workplace for an extended period of time;
- Part-time study: This refers to longer term learning programme, which perhaps properly accommodate the "mid and senior career professionals";
- Short courses aimed at addressing specific training needs;
- Learnerships that integrate theoretical knowledge with practical work experience; and
- Short programmes of skills aimed at addressing specific skills needs.

One of the main problems with formal training is that it is still based on the abstract, with less attention to the application of practical learning in the context of work (Grobler et al. 2006). PSETA (2010) points out that NSDS III strongly argues for the more effective integration between work experience and service providers of training such as colleges and universities. It fully supports the idea of matching theory and practical work experience, as it calls for stronger partnerships between organizations and training institutions. NSDS III came up with the idea of "PIVOTAL programmes" namely: vocational, professional, academic and technical and they are all occupationally directed and incorporate formal learning as an objective of NSDS III.

A provision has been created for the introduction of a "PIVOTAL" grant which guarantees that 10% of SETAs mandatory grant as a subsidy for organizations that are offering such integrated learning programmes.

Informal training: workplace-based

Given the description of "formal learning" programmes indicated above, other skills needs can be well addressed using "informal learning" programmes such as mentorship, coaching, workshops or action learning interventions, site visits and so on (Mummenthey, 2010).

The above clarification on "formal and informal learning" indicates the vital necessity for facilitators of Skills development to be able to identify skills needs which could be addressed using "formal learning programmes", and those which can be addressed using "informal learning" programmes "formal learning" programmes are unit standards based and they are qualifications registered within the National Qualifications Framework. Whereas "informal

learning" programme is not based on any particular unit standards, which means that it is not registered with any SETA.

The SETAs encourage employers and their skills development facilitators to record the NQF-aligned learning programmes in the WSP. PSETA (2010) states that this does not mean that organisations and skills development facilitators should not implement other essential skills development programmes identified in a WSP.

As listed by Mummenthey (2010), the skills needs which could be addressed through supervised learning in the workplace may include "on-the-job coaching, counselling around particular skills, demonstrations, mentoring ,and peer learning". Mummenthey (2010) argues that implementing a WSP requires different types of training and lists the following possibilities:

- Proficiency training: This training provides employees with technical skills and analytical, communication and conceptual skills. It allows the trainees to practically apply the acquired skills correctly within the working environment.

  Proficiency training are offered by training methods which include classroom education, workbench training, simulation which includes case studies, experimental exercises and computer models, vestibule training, renewal courses, internship as well as programmed training.
- Refresher training: It is important for the organisation to revive employees from time to time by refreshing their minds and competencies. This helps employees to update their skills in order to satisfy their job requirement and to compete with new technological changes and other high demands of service delivery.
- Orientation training: This form of training is more about induction and orientation of the newly appointed or promoted employees in the organisation. It acquaints employees with strategic goals and objectives, structure of the organisation and of their work-unit, culture, service standards and the conditions of employment. Advantages of this training are that it reduces costs by orienting employees in an unfamiliar work environment and minimises the turnover of employees who might be feeling ineffective in the organisation. It also saves time because skills development practitioners spend less time on the training of newly appointed employees and it prevents unnecessary mistakes caused by fear and uncertainty. It ensures higher productivity and better interpersonal relationships among employees.

- Career or development training: This kind of training recognises the need for the organisation to develop the career of each employee, thereby preparing them for the future, whether by promotion in the same organisation or appointment to another organisation. This training improves the morale of the employees and motivates them to take more responsibility in the organisation.
- Job training: This type of training develops the knowledge and skills of employees in their current jobs. The aim is to help them perform their responsibilities effectively. This makes employees feel more useful in the organisation because it enables them to acquire the required skills and experience for their jobs (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004).

According to Meyer (2002), implementing a WSP requires an organisation or skills development facilitator make a selection both of the type of training (as listed above) and of a suitable training method to be used. A decision on training method must take into account the identified training needs, the planned objectives of training, and the resources available, combined with an awareness of the principles of learning. Meyer further argues that although there is a range of available training methods, most organisations prefer to use the most popular training methods known as 'on-the-job', or 'off-the-job' training. The various training methods options are outlined below:

On-the-job training

On-the-job training is one of the training methods most often used by organisations (Hattingh & van der Walt, 2004). This is because it is simpler and it does not demand a large training budget. This training method allows trainees to be placed in actual work situations in order to get them to immediately apply their new knowledge or skills. On-the-job training uses the three common types of training methods which are outlined below.

The first type of training method is known as **learning by doing**. This type of training gives trainees an opportunity to develop their skills by observing the senior or more experienced employees. One of its advantages is that it has been tested and found to be the one that fits the requirements of most organisations. The disadvantage is that senior or experienced employees may not be trained to run projects of skills development, which means that they may lack critical skills and knowledge necessary to facilitate such development sessions.

2. In **mentoring**, a senior or experienced employee is entrusted with the responsibility of guiding a junior employee through the particular period of learning. According to Regenesys (2010), mentoring is a process by which knowledge, skills and experience of a successful person are transmitted to another for the purpose of development. This is a process carried out for new employees who require development and support other than from the manager or supervisor.

3. Shadowing and job rotation often involves rotating trainee managers to different sections of the organisation. The aim is to develop their management skills and familiarise them with other sections and employees. The commitment of all parties involved (trainees, management, employees from new sections) is crucial for this type of training method to work successfully (Meyer, 2002).

4. Off-the-job training

Whereas 'On-the-job' training focuses on acquisition of specific skills and knowledge in a real situation, 'off-the-job' training focuses on developing the understanding of general principles which provide background knowledge and generate the awareness of comparative ideas and practices (Meyer, 2002). According to Meyer (2002), off-the-job training may include various methods such as vestibule training, behaviour modelling, understudy training, case study and business exercise.

5.Vestibule training: This training method uses programmes of skills development to develop the skills of employees who are required to use a particular machine, or to execute specific tasks similar to the ones performed by the trainee on a daily basis at work. The training programme in this instance will be conducted outside the area of work but still under the supervision of skills development practitioners. After the training, the trainees will be expected to apply their newly acquired skills in their working environment.

6. Behaviour Modelling: This training method is usually based on demonstration of an effective procedure. The employees are provided with facilities to gain practical experience during the training sessions, and learn new job-relevant skills through role playing. This is one of the most effective methods for social and interpersonal skills training and is based on social theory. It also makes use of videos to show how things ought to be done and what to avoid.

7. Understudy training: According to Meyer (2002), an organisation may sometimes decide to train employees with the intention of preparing them to assume certain positions in the

near future. In most instances, the position will currently be occupied by an employee who is about to retire, or an employee who has been promoted or appointed to another organisation and is about to vacate the position. The trainee will receive adequate support at different stages where the necessary skills are to be acquired. At times the trainee will be left to experience real challenges that come with that particular post during the performance of duties. When the understudy displays some signs of development and maturity, he or she will get appointed to that particular position when the superior vacates the position (Meyer, 2002).

8. Case study: In this training method, trainees will be given case studies of events in an organisation and be expected to study and analyse them and offer their opinions. Depending on the arrangement by the skills development practitioners and the organisation, the events will be either real or imagined. After the process of analysing and when several cases have been completed, the trainees will be exposed to particular concepts, challenges, techniques and experiences which they will face on the job at the later stage. All these processes take place under the careful guidance of skills development practitioners. This training method will develop the skills of employees regarding the ability to objectively and systematically analyse alternative courses of events

Business exercise: In this training method, employees are helped to develop the skills which enable them to make effective decisions in the organisation, manage time, plan effectively and they also gain communication skills. This method also helps them to obtain experience of the job even before they are appointed to a particular position. The training method simulates the work situation and the trainees are presented with reports, circulars and memoranda in order to allow them to get a feel for the real work scenario (Meyer, 2002).

3.2.5.2 Monitoring a WSP

Monitoring is a continuing function intended to provide skills development facilitators and relevant stakeholders with “regular feedback and early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of intended results” from a WSP (UNDP, 2002). It is can be defined as a process of tracking the actual performance or situation against what was intended in terms of set standards (UNDP, 2002). One can view monitoring as a practise whereby the data during the processes such as implementation, strategies and results of the WSP is collected and used to recommend corrective measures. Some of the purposes of WSP implementation monitoring may include the following:

- to verify the phase of execution of a WSP by acknowledging achievements, identifying gaps and applying the necessary corrective actions to such gaps (Kusek & Rist, 2004)
- to collect and analyse data in order to determine if the implementation of a WSP is achieving its desired results (Universalia, 2007)
- to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of a WSP (Universalia, 2007)

According to Regenesys (2010), the purposes listed above indicate how effectiveness and efficiency are key in the monitoring process.

Universalia (2007) points out that efficiency is an achievement of output from available resources or inputs. Striving for efficiency encourages the organisation's skills development facilitator and relevant stakeholders to work harder than before and can also encourage senior management of the organisation to allocate more budget for implementing a WSP. Van der Waldt (2004) defines efficiency as a measure of speed and accuracy with which work is completed, and also as the ratio of input to output, or the rate at which input is converted into output.

The concept of effectiveness; on the other hand, refers to the correct way of doing things so that the intended objectives are achieved (Universalia, 2007), Thus, for effective WSP implementation it is important that all the critical success factors identified and discussed in this thesis are put into effect. According to van der Waldt (2004), the term 'effectiveness' refers to the outcomes or change brought about by inputs and outputs (implementation of a WSP).

Monitoring is thus chiefly concerned with keeping the WSP implementation on track and alerting stakeholders if anything goes wrong (Regenesys, 2010). When done properly, monitoring is a very useful device in WSP implementation and provides the basis for evaluation. It enables skills development facilitators to determine whether available resources are sufficient and are being optimised, whether or not they have sufficient and appropriate capacity, and whether or not they are achieving the desired outcomes.

3.2.5.3 Evaluating a WSP

According to Regenesys (2010), evaluation is a comparison between the actual WSP that is being implemented or has been implemented and the WSP that was set to be implemented.

Evaluation can thus be described as a process that examines what was set to be done, what has been attained and how it has been done. Regenesys (2010) further states that evaluation can be done either in the course of implementing a WSP, or after the implementation has been completed. The intention is to see if there are any lessons to be learned for the future implementations.

According to the UNDP (2002), evaluation can be described as "a time-bound exercise that systematically and objectively [assesses] the relevance, performance and success" of ongoing and completed WSP implementation. It is undertaken selectively to answer specific questions intended to guide skills development facilitators and relevant stakeholders in the implementation of a WSP. It also serves to provide information on the validity of underlying theories and paradigms initially used to develop and implement a WSP. Evaluation also helps to identify things which worked, things which did not work and why those things could not work. In the work of Kusek and Rist (2004), it is stated that the processes of evaluation are aimed at achieving one or more of the following purposes:

- to determine relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the implementation of a WSP
- to provide SDF and relevant stakeholders with evidence of why targets and outcomes of implementing a WSP are or are not being achieved
- to provide credible and useful information and enable incorporating into the decision-making process of lessons learned
- to methodically and objectively measure development in the implementation of a Workplace Skills Plan

Every employer has a responsibility to ensure effective evaluation of their own WSP, in this way making sure that every skills intervention introduced through a WSP is of good quality (PSETA, 2010).

Although ensuring the quality of skills programmes is never easy in the WSP, many elements of quality can be ensured through effective evaluation of the WSP in the implementation stage. PSETA (2010) argues that quality-assuring activities of a WSP begin at the monitoring phase. This involves follow-ups on whether implementation is done according to the plan, quality of training facilities, adequacy of training materials, accreditation of a facilitator, etc.

In regard to training and education services provided through WSP implementation, quality assurance refers to systematic processes planned to provide confidence in such services delivered by relevant service providers (Bateman, Keating & Vickers 2009, p.8). It is a set of activities established by relevant authorities or bodies to make certain that services of education and training satisfy customer requirements in a systematic and reliable manner. According to Hattingh (2003), quality assurance conducted by national quality assurance bodies does not guarantee the quality of education and training services in organisations; its primary role is to ensure quality standards and compliance by education and training service providers. Regenesys (2010) suggests that organisations, through their monitoring and evaluation instruments, need to verify the quality of education and training services delivered to them by relevant service providers. A similar point is made by Paterson (2008) who suggests that organisations have a responsibility to verify, monitor and evaluate the performance, compliance and legitimacy of service providers which they hire to deliver education and training services.

Aguinis (2014) suggests that when the skills development facilitator delivers training through a WSP in the organisation, the method of evaluating the WSP and the evaluation itself are equally significant. In this regard, Kirkpatrick's 4-level training evaluation model provides effective ways in which a WSP can be evaluated by the skills development facilitator in the organisation (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Hattingh (2003) adds that skills development facilitators feel more confident when presenting an annual training report that shows a well-evaluated WSP that indicates a good return on investment. Kirkpatrick's 4-level training evaluation model can help skills development facilitators to evaluate WSP actions for future improvement (Kirkpatrick, 2006). The 4 levels of the Kirkpatrick model – reaction, learning, behaviour, and results – are outlined below with discussion on how they can be applied in WSP evaluation.

2. Reaction

This level measures how trainees reacted to the training. It is important for the skills development facilitator to get feedback on whether the training added any value for the trainees, how they feel about the facilitator, the topics presented during the training sessions, the training material, the way it was presented, and the training facilities (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Measuring reaction helps the skills development facilitator to understand how well the

training was received by the employees. It also enables the skills development facilitator to improve the implementation of future skills development programmes in a WSP.

3. Learning

Kirkpatrick (2006) argues that at this level, the skills development facilitator measures what the trainees have learned or how much their knowledge and competencies have increased as a result of the training. In this regard, the skills development facilitator needs to have begun with a list of specific learning objectives. These must be made clear and discussed with a service provider. It must be kept in mind that measuring learning can be done in various ways subject to the set objectives, also subject to the interest of the skills development facilitator regarding the development of abilities, skills or changing particular mind-set of employees.

3. Behaviour

According to Kirkpatrick (2006), this level is meant to evaluate how far the implemented skills development programme managed to change the behaviour of the trainees. More importantly, it focuses on how the trainees apply new skills in the workplace. The skills development facilitator needs to recognise that employees' behaviour can only change if working conditions are favourable. Thus, if the skills development facilitator skips the first two Kirkpatrick levels it will be seen that no behaviour change has taken place: the trainees will not have gained anything from the training and the training will thus have been ineffective. Aguinis (2014) notes that sometimes direct supervisors may not allow trainees to apply new knowledge gained from skills development sessions, or the trainees may not have a desire to apply such knowledge.

4. Results

This is a level in which the final results of the training are analysed (Kirkpatrick, 2006). The analysis should include outcomes that the skills development facilitator had set for the organisation, for the individual trainees and for their business units.

According to Kirkpatrick (2006), the 4-level training evaluation model can be applied, level by level, in the following ways.

For the first level of the model (*reaction*), the skills development facilitator can start by identifying how he or she is going to measure reaction. Here the following questions need to be considered:

- Did the trainees feel that the training was worth their time?;
- Did the trainees think that the training was successful?;
- What were the biggest strengths of the training and its weaknesses?;
- Did the trainees feel comfortable with the venue and presentation style?; and
- Did the training session accommodate the style of learning of the trainees?

Identifying the extent in which these reactions can be measured will be done in the following step. This may require the use of an "employee satisfaction" survey. Thereafter the gathered information will require to be carefully looked at so as to consider changes to be made.

To measure *learning* as a "second level" for the model, the facilitator of skills development should start by identifying what he or she wants to evaluate. This may include changes in knowledge, skills or attitudes of employees. According to Aguinis (2014), Kirkpatrick advises measuring these areas both before and after the training sessions. This means that a skills development facilitator can start by testing all trainees to determine their level of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Trainees will also be tested after the training sessions to measure what they have learned. This can also be done through interviews or verbal assessments.

Behaviour; as the third level of the four-level training evaluation model, can be difficult to measure effectively. This process should take place weeks or months after the initial training, considering the following questions:

- Did the trainees put any of their learning to use?
- Are trainees able to transfer their new knowledge, skills or attitudes to other colleagues?
- Are trainees aware that they have changed their behaviour?

According to Aguinis (2014), Kirkpatrick believes that in order to measure behaviour – one need to conduct interviews and observations. Another significant point highlighted was with reference to the viewpoint that behaviour changes if conditions are favourable. The example of this is that "effective learning" may have taken place during the training. However, if the

workplace is not suitable for any behaviour changes the trainees cannot manage to apply the skill, knowledge or attitude that they have learned. Another reason could be that their direct supervisors deny them with sufficient recognition, support or reward for their behaviour change, making employees to neglect the recently acquired skills and go back to their initial behaviours.

Outcomes constitute the final level of the model, and a skills development facilitator needs to know how this level can be applied. Aquinas (2014) argues that of all the four levels, evaluating the final results of a WSP is possible to demand exorbitant cost and consume lots of time. The biggest challenges are identifying which outcomes, benefits or final results are most closely linked to the WSP, and coming up with an effective method to evaluate such outcomes over the long term. Below are some of the outcomes possible to take into consideration, depending on the objectives of the training:

- increased “employee retention”;
- increased “production”;
- higher “morale”;
- reduced “waste”;
- increased “sales”;
- higher “quality ratings” and
- increased “customer satisfaction” (Aquinas, 2014).
- fewer “staff complaints”.

Kirkpatrick’s model may consume a lot of time and demand lots of money to use, particularly the third and fourth level of the model. This indicates that in particular companies and organization’s state of affairs, the model will certainly not be applicable, most certainly for a company or organisation that is yet to employ a committed skills development facilitator. With a same token it may cost a lot of budget to conduct data collection process with a singular aim to evaluate training at levels “3 and 4”. Nevertheless, the practical side with this depends primarily with the systems and processes already in place within an organisation.

The model assumes that each level's importance is greater than that of the preceding level, and that all four levels are linked to each other. For example, the model implies that reaction is less important, ultimately, than results, also that reactions must be positive for learning happen. In real-world scenarios, this may possibly be different. Also it becomes essential to

take into consideration that organisations change in a variety of ways, and so is employee's behaviour and the outcomes of their performance. E.G, quantifiable developments in areas such as productivity and retention are not necessarily the consequences of training attended. However, they also come from a computer system introduced or a boss appointed recently.

Kusek and Rist (2004) stress that evaluations differ both according to types, and according to the methods used in conducting them. This indicates that for every individual project, system or programme requiring to be evaluated, a suitable evaluation type and method must be chosen. The following are the different types of evaluation:

- Informative evaluation: It can be conducted during the implementation of a WSP in order to improve performance.
- External evaluation: It can be conducted by an evaluator who is not directly involved in the development and implementation of the WSP. This is normally conducted by people from outside the organisations involved.
- Ex-post: This is a type of summative evaluation of an intervention, usually conducted two years or more after it has been completed. Its purpose will be to make follow-ups on how the execution of a WSP has served its objectives. It will also conclude on similar interventions in the near future.
- "Independent evaluation": This form of evaluation is done by persons separate from stakeholders who were part of the development and execution of the Workplace Skills Plan. The trustworthiness of this evaluation depends primarily on how independently it has been carried out.
- Monitoring and evaluation matrix: This refers to a table labelling questions on performance, requirements of gathering information, and reviews of events with stakeholders and resources and activities required to implement a project monitoring and evaluation system. This matrix shows how, when, where and by whom will the data be collected

All the above forms of evaluation are relevant in the emplementation of a workplace skills plan of the organization, regardless of whether the organization is a private or public sector. The decision all which form of an evaluation to be used maybe taken by the skill development facilitator inconsultation with the relevant staholders. This decision will also be guided by size and scope of the organization – together with the availability of human, physical and financial resources.

Monitoring and evaluation are often used as two processes which go hand in hand (Regenesys, 2010). In this regard, these two processes can be linked as follows:

3.2.5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation of a WSP

Table 3.3, taken from Kusek and Rist (2004), shows a comparison between monitoring and evaluation.

Table 3.3 Monitoring versus evaluation

Monitoring	Evaluation
Ongoing	Periodic
Conducted internally	Conducted externally or internally - often by another unit in the organisation
Clarifies the objectives of implementing a WSP	Analyses why desired results in a WSP were not achieved
Links activities of a WSP and their resources to objectives	Assesses specific causes or contributors of activities to bad results
Translates objectives into performance indicators and set targets	"Examines the process of implementation of a WSP"
Routinely collects data on indicators and compares actual results with targets	Explores unplanned outcomes in a WSP
Reports progress to SDF and relevant stakeholders and alerts them to problems	"Provides lessons, indicates important achievements and offers recommendations for improvements"

(Source: Kusek & Rist, 2004).

According to Khan (2007), "monitoring and evaluation" have numerous qualities in common. For example, they learn from past experience and concentrate on how the work is performed by focussing paying attention to three important: efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Most employers, and particularly private sector organisations, have adopted what is called a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) results-based system (Khan, 2007). According to van der Waldt (2004), this system can be described as a management strategy focusing on performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts. Understanding this requires knowledge about outputs, outcomes and impacts. According to Regenesys (2010), an outcome is the short- or medium-term effect of an intervention on outputs; outputs are the products, capital goods and services that result from a development intervention. In the specific context of public sector or government departments, outputs are the services being delivered to the communities they serve, and impact refers to the positive/negative or primary/secondary long-term effects produced by a project, programme or policy or service being delivered to the served communities.

According to Kusek and Rist (2004), the relationship between outputs, outcomes and impact in a results-based M&E system can be diagrammatically displayed as shown in Figure 3-8.

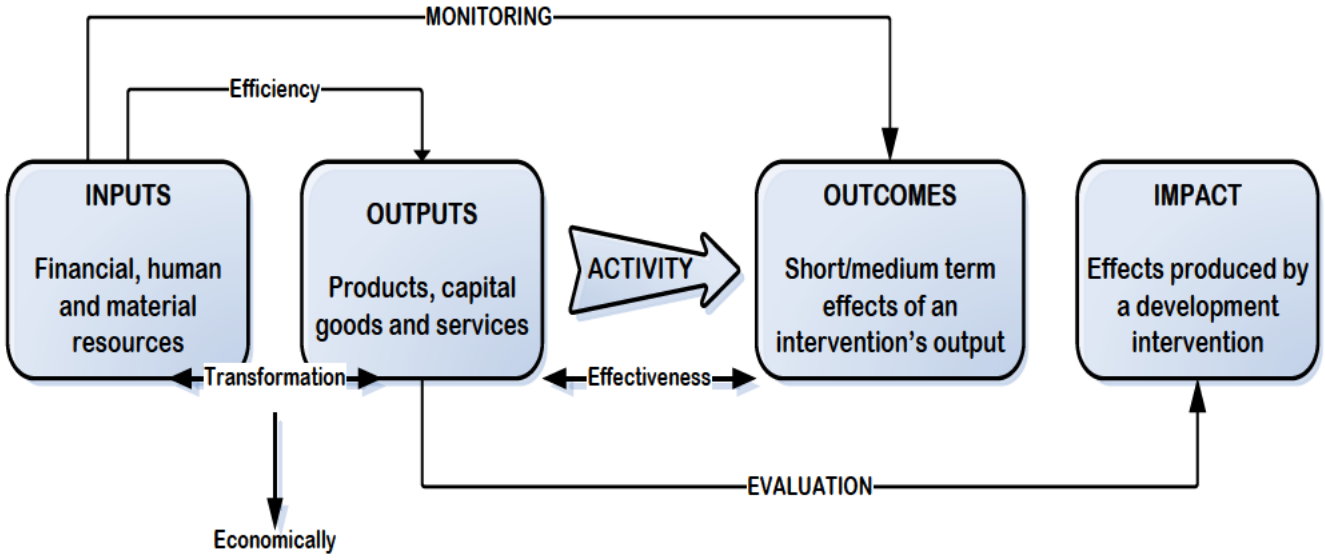


Figure 3-8 "Output/outcomes/impact chain"
(Source: Kusek & Rist, 2004).

Van der Waldt (2004) gives the following outline of the way this chain may be used in a results-based M&E system for ensuring support for public employees struggling to improve service delivery standards Table 3.4:

Table 3.4 Output/outcomes/impact chain

Impact:	Reduced stigma of public employees being labelled as lazy
Outcome:	Improve open communication about the topic by addressing its causes and effects in class
Outputs:	Capacitate SDFs and senior managers to offer emotional support Stimulate conversation by including it in course material
Activities:	Launch a provincial campaign to promote encouragement and support for all departments experiencing high level of service delivery protests Train public servants on how to speed-up service delivery and deal with angry members of the public
Inputs:	Trainers Funds Information brochures

(Source: van der Waldt, 2004)

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2005) states that the purpose of an M&E systems includes the following:

- "M&E systems help improve performance and achieve results. Their overall purpose is the measurement and assessment of performance in order to manage the achievement of outcomes, expected accomplishments, and outputs effectively".
- In former times, monitoring and evaluation paid more attention on the assessment of inputs and processes of implementation. At the present time, its attention is on the assessment of the contributions of different factors to a particular outcome of development. Such factors include partnerships, outputs, advocacy, policy advice, capacity development methodologies and regional coordination mechanisms.
- Monitoring and evaluation makes vital contributions on the detailed documents of the processes of programme and project, thus improving knowledgeable decision making through "programme and project management", and making available the necessary information to members together with associate members and funding agencies regarding the process and results of the different investments made.
- Monitoring and evaluation also gives employers feedback regarding the performance of projects, programmes and activities. In this way, it makes significant contribution towards the enhancement of projects and programmes through the analysis, collation and distribution of experiences from existing and finalised activities. Therefore a strong emphasis is put on organisational learning with a purpose of enhancing the performance of the future.

Van der Waldt (2004) provides us with the following main points governing what he calls the "Power of Measuring Results":

- "If you do not measure results, you cannot tell success from failure"
- "If you cannot see success, you cannot reward it"
- "If you cannot reward success, you are probably rewarding failure"
- "If you cannot see success, you cannot learn from it"
- "If you cannot recognise failure, you cannot correct it"
- "If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support"

3.2.5.5 Synthesis

With reference to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP, this part of dissertation has specified the importance of the below factors:

Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan

- "willing participation by employees in attending skills development programmes"
- sufficient support from supervisors to supervisees chosen to attend programmes of skills development
- "formal trainings"
- "informal trainings"
- on-the-job trainings
- off-the- job trainings

Evaluation of a WSP

- follow-ups on how the training was received by the attendees
- an environment that allows employees to implement the skills and knowledge acquired from training programmes
- maintaining the output/outcomes/impact chain

These points all have bearing on the research question relating to aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP. The next section elaborates on aspects of reporting on a WSP.

3.2.6 Aspects of reporting on the implementation of a WSP

Organisations are required to submit their reports on the implemented WSP to their relevant SETAs (Meyer, 2002). This reporting is one of the responsibilities of the skills development facilitator or of the person appointed or assigned to facilitate skills development services in an organisation. The report for a WSP is known as the annual training report (ATR). According to Hattingh (2004), the ATR of the previous skills development cycle is submitted together with the next WSP on 30 June of every year. It covers the previous skills development period from 01 April of the previous year to 31 March of the current year.

Hattingh (2004) points out that as it is done with a Workplace Skills Plan, the Annual Training Report is similarly done using a specified format provided by SETA. An additional similarity is that as it is the case with the prescribed format of a WSP as indicated above, many skills development facilitators with experience of completing and submitting the Annual Training Report should be familiar with its confines regarding the provision of inclusive "qualitative and quantitative analysis" of skills development. In addition, likewise

with the WSP, the "completion of the comprehensive internal skills development report" is suggested, as well as providing a short version on these findings in the ATR as required.

The "Annual Training Report", as an authorised document introduced by PSETA so that organisations can submit reports regarding skills development which they have conducted, must be viewed in relation to the Workplace Skills Plan, which is a skill's planning document established by PSETA so that organisations can plan for their skills needs (Hattingh, 2004). The WSP and the ATR are fundamental to the establishment of a demand-led skills development system that is responsive to South Africa's economic and social needs (Fasset, 2010). The ATR can be regarded as an instrument used by employers to monitor the achievement of skills development objectives, and skills priorities as indicated by PSETA (2010) in a Workplace Skills Plan.

In occurrences where there are differences between a Workplace Skills Plan and the Annual Training Report, SETA (2010) states that the ATR allows the SDF to analyse reasons for non-completion of trainings as planned in the WSP. The Annual Training Report is used by the SETA for Finance and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training (Fasset) for the following purposes:

- to identify discrepancies in the supply of skilled labour and its demand in the sector
- to provide support to government concerning the introduction of the National Skills Development Strategy and its review
- to assist government in assessing training capacity and training investment in order to ensure effective allocation of resources
- to assist government in terms of distributing the "levy funds" to qualifying organisations using the system of Levy Grant (PSETA, 2010)

PSETA (2010) refer to the areas highlighted below as significant components which are also used by Fasset as it cooperates with a variety of organisations. Hattingh (2004) states that these areas are key for skills development facilitators to understand, particularly when representing their respective organisations during official conferences, meetings and during the submission of a WSP, ATR and so on. These areas can be summarised as follows:

3.2.6.1 Confidentiality

Fasset recognises the need for complete discretion regarding information provided through the WSP and the ATR. Skills development facilitators are assured that their organisation's information will be treated with the strictest confidence. With regard to the information received in the grant applications, all will be aggregated for the purposes of the sector skills plan, research as well as strategic directives.

3.2.6.2 Grant amount

The ATR is fixed as a percentage of all levies paid by an organisation or employer (SETA, 2010). Employers or organisations that followed proper procedures in making their applications and made them on time received 45% of their total levies paid in the 2004/5 financial year. The deadline for submitting the ATRs was extended from 31st of May 2005 until 30th of June 2005. Fasset (2010) indicates that all organisations that made their submission and received their approval for the interim training report (ITR) in November 2004 were entitled; after approval of their application, to the remaining 50% of the 45% ATR grant. However, this points out that by this time – 50% was paid out in respect of the ITR.

3.2.6.3 Annual training report: criteria for acceptance

According to Hattingh (2004), organisations should comply with the following criteria in the process of Annual Training Report grant application:

- The organization must be legitimate or listed with Fasset and it must have updated levy contributions.
- The work institution is approved and it qualifies for the WSP grant. This includes the registration of the organisation's Skills Development Facilitator and the approval of a WSP.
- The ATR of the organisation is correctly completed and submitted in the format required by Fasset's.
- The ATR of an organisation is endorsed with reference to the requirements set by Fasset.
- The application of the organisation ought to be submitted to Fasset on or before 30th of June.
- It is compulsory for an Annual Training Report to get approval from Fasset before making any grant payments.

- The payments of grant are done in terms of "grant disbursement schedule" organized by Fasset, which is always available on Fasset website.

Organisations that make their applications on time using the required format receive "50% maximum of levies received at the time of grant payment". This means that with "45%" of total levies paid to the SETA, "15%" will be paid to organisations for a Workplace Skills Plan.

It is essential for SDFs to properly complete all parts of their forms when making submissions to SETA (PSETA, 2010). This enables an organisation to qualify for support from its appropriate SETA. Van der Walt (2004) and Hattingh (2004) believe that skills development facilitators are to take note of the below checklist while completing a form:

- The Skills Development Levy (SDL) number is included on every page of the grant application form.
- Each page of the grant application form is signed by the SDF and the relevant authorised signatory.
- Names are not typed in the above indicated space, but rather they are hand written in full.
- To make sure each section or page that is not applicable is clearly marked "not applicable" using a line that is drawn across that division or page.
- SDFs are responsible for keeping a copy of the grant application form for record keeping purposes.
- SDFs can, if necessary, request an extension of the grant deadline. This can be addressed to Fasset in writing, through the use of a required form available on the Fasset website. It must be submitted not later than deadline date of grant application (30 June).
- The application form must be used in relation to the comprehensive guideline of the ATR document which is available on the Fasset website.

With reference to the above; through my observation both as a skills development practitioner and as a researcher, it is essential for Skils Development Facilitators to follow all the WSP requirements stipulated by Fasset in its website. This action plays a critical role in the proper implementation of skills development programmes aimed at enhancing the performance of individual employees and that of an organization. In this way – economic

SETAs are able to properly identify skills needs within the sector, also to properly plan, implement and support skills development interventions of different organizations within the economic sector.

3.2.6.4 Sections of the form

SETA (2010), Fasset (2010) and Hattingh (2004) all agree that the ATR application form consist of several sections which are arranged in the following order:

The organization's particulars

The table relates to the organization's SDL number, organization's name and the details of establishments related to the "main SDL number". In these circumstances, Fasset will consider requests from employers to 'link' SDL numbers. The relevant form for linking requests can be found on the Fasset website. The "designated" SDL number is called the Parent SDL and is usually the key SDL number. Organisations always wish to keep the "parent SDL" number as the core number in the future. The SDL numbers which are connected to the Parent SDL are known as "Child SDL numbers" (PSETA, 2010). The Skills Development Levy numbers of the "Parent and Child" are cited and stated as required by this part of the application form (Fasset, 2010). These details assist the SETA to pay a correct amount for grant payment with reference to the levies received from various establishments. Hattingh (2004) points out the importance of skills development facilitators in indicating the submission dates of the application form to the SETA.

B1 "Education and training" interventions delivered

This refers to the planned training in section "A5" of the Workplace Skills Plan in the last financial year and refers to training assumed in this period (Fasset, 2010). For example, skills priorities which may have been identified in the Management Consulting, accounting, Finance and so on. Other relevant sectors include the following:

- information Technology; that include software package training, network engineers, MS Office Suite, hardware training, IT support services, internet based solutions training, etc.
- Management and leadership such as supervisor training, MBA, emotional intelligence, teamwork skills training, diversity management training and so on.

- Client Service including call centre training, key account management, telephone etiquette, reception duty training, front office and so on.
- Specialist Financial such as GAAP Update, credit control, update on Income Tax and so on.
- Transactions processing, provision & Administrative skills which include payroll administration, and so on.

If the skills development facilitator included extra priorities of skills within the WSP, or "have developed additional skills priorities subsequent to WSP submission", they should never think twice about reporting against them (Fasset, 2010). It is crucial for the facilitators of skills development to feel no restrictions on the topic of skills priorities listed above and to include other priorities to suit the needs of their own organisation. In this provided table, the skills development facilitator should complete the quantity of trainings attended per skills priority. PSETA (2010) states that it is important for skills development facilitators to point out if the training intervention is recognized by SAQA. If this is applicable, skills development facilitators are expected to furnish the SAQA ID number.

According to Fasset (2010), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is classified into eight bands and levels. These levels only serve as guidelines and the final alignment of "existing education and training interventions" may vary. Table 3.5 depicts the band, the levels and the education and training intervention:

Table 3.5 Bands, levels, and education and training intervention

Band	Level	Education and training intervention
GET	1	ABET Level 4/ Grade 9
General education and training		National certificates
FET	2	National certificates
Further education and training	3	
	4	
HET	5	National diplomas
Higher education and training		National certificates
	6	National first degrees
		Higher diplomas
	7	Professional qualifications
		Honours degrees
	8	Post-doctoral research degrees
		Doctorates
		Masters degrees
Unknown		If you do not know at what level to estimate the education or training.

(Source: Fasset, 2010)

Fasset (2010) states that the contents are only utilized for purposes of explaining. Table 3.5shows the "reporting format" on the prioritisation of skills development interventions:

Table 3.6 "Reporting format" on the prioritisation of skills development interventions

Skills priority #	"Education and training intervention" delivered (corresponding to the priority of skills)	Level of education & training: number of education/training interventions (NQF levels)									SAQA registered?	
			Further			Higher						
		General up to & incl. Level 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Unknown	Yes / no	If yes, provide SAQA ID number
#2	**"Management and Leadership"** • "Diversity management training" (in-house)									1	No	
#3	**"Client Service"** • Training on "Call centre" (short course)									1	No	
#4	**"Specialist Financial"** • Income Tax Update (SAICA) • "Commercial and Financial Accountant" Public Practice "learnership code: 01/Q000008/00/480/6" • Chartered Management Accountant (CIMA) (learnership code: 01/Q010012/00/930/7)						1	2			Yes	TAX 2934 TAX 4785 20391
#6	**Life Skills** • ABET (private provider) • Management of time (workshop)		1							1	Yes	ABET4326 "ABET4589 "
#7	**Human Resources** • Industrial Relations (Diploma at "External Provider")					1					No	

(Source: Fasset, 2010).

B2 Report on training provided to beneficiaries

"This table corresponds to section A6 of the WSP and should indicate the number of employees trained in the organisation during the course of the financial year" (PSETA, 2010). The table aims to identify trainees attended learning interventions described in section"B1". According to Fasset (2010), this table allows the SDFs to specify the number of trainees including their profiles, who received training and *not* the quantity of training activities implemented during the year. It is also important to notice that trainee accounting and auditing clerks fall into the Technicians & Associated Professionals category. Table 3.7 sets out guidelines for skills development facilitators regarding the provision of specified information to SETA:

Table 3.7 "Beneficiaries attended learning interventions described in section B1"

Field	Explanation
"Occupational Group"	This has been broken down into wide classifications along SOC Codes. It is suggested that SDFs use the document appearing in Schedule 2.
African M/F/D	This is the total number of Africans currently employed in the organisation in the broad occupational categories (SOC codes) split along population group, gender and disabled demarcations.
Coloured M/F/D	This is the total number of Coloureds currently employed in the organisation in the broad occupational categories (SOC codes) split along population group, gender and disabled demarcations.
Indian/Asian M/F/D	This is the total number of Indians/Asians currently employed in the organisation in the broad occupational categories (SOC codes) split along population group, gender and disabled demarcations.
White M/F/D	This is the total number of Whites currently employed in the organisation in the broad occupational categories (SOC codes) split along population group, gender and disabled demarcations.
Total M/F/D	This is the total number of male, female and disabled persons employed in the organisation in the broad occupational categories (SOC codes).
Total	Please ensure that the totals in the columns match.

(Source: PSETA, 2010).

In relation to the disabled column, disabled employees are in the first instance categorised along race and gender lines, than again as disabled (Fasset, 2010). Thus Table 3.8 reflects seven Africans employed of whom two are disabled persons. Fasset (2010) specifies that, with reference to the Employment Equity Act of 1998, people with disabilities are defined as "people who have a long-term or recurring mental or physical impairment that substantially limits their prospects of entry into or advancement in employment". Physical impairments include visual and hearing impairments, amputations, paralysis, and problems with internal organs. Mental impairment includes "clinically defined emotional and mental illnesses and learning disabilities".

Table 3.8 "Race, gender and disabled" column

African			Coloured			Indian/Asian			White			Total		
M	F	D	M	F	D	M	F	D	M	F	D	M	F	D
4	3	2										4	3	2

(Source: Fasset, 2010)

B3 Employed workers in structured programmes leading towards NQF 1

Anticipated from skills development facilitators is to designate according to the listing in "Table 3.9" the total of personnel from each "occupational profile" (Hattingh, 2003). She points out in addition that this action will only comprise of workers participated in "NQF level 1 structured learning programmes". Fasset (2010) regards "structured learning" as any form of learning that is reported within a WSP, or embarked upon thereafter for one reason or another. The number of trainees and their completion of the training should be broken down

according to gender and population group. The total column indicates the total number of all "trainees or completions", including disabled employees.

These details may also appear separately in the final two columns of the table. In instances where the training provided is not based on "SAQA registered unit standards", the equivalent of the "NQF level" must be included. Fasset (2010) indicates that "adult basic education and training" (ABET) is regarded as an education and training intervention towards the attainment of Grade 9 or Standard 7. It is also equivalent to Form 2, NQF level 1 or ABET level 4.

Table 3.9 Employed workers in structured programmes leading towards NQF 1 (ABET)

Band	NQF	Education and training intervention
GET: General education and training	1	"Qualification Unknown/None/No schooling"
		Grade 0
		Grade 1/Sub A
		Grade 2/Sub B
		Grade 3/Standard 1/ABET 1
		Grade 4/Standard 2
		Grade 5/Standard 3/ABET 2
		Grade 6/Standard 4
		Grade 7/Standard 5/ABET 3
		Grade 8/Standard 6/Form 1
		Grade 9/Standard 7/Form 2/ABET 4

(Source: Fasset, 2010).

B4 Report on education and training interventions provided

PSETA (2010) put emphases that in this particular segment of the report, skills development facilitators ought to take into consideration that "fields indicated in Table 3.10" match with section "A7" of the Workplace Skills Plan. The table specifies the number of trainings implemented within the organisation during the year. It needs the skills development facilitators to list the "interventions of education and training" and connect them to "skills priorities and beneficiaries of each education and training intervention".

According to PSETA (2010), skills development facilitators "must capture the number of programmes [implemented] during the year by the number of beneficiaries" of the training program. Employees in this reporting format "may complete more than one training intervention"; they are also allowed to "complete the same intervention more than once"; skills development facilitators should compare this report with the WSP to realise the

difference between "the planned training and training implemented" skills development facilitators who electronically manages to complete this section are advised to put more rows to the table so that it can suit their own education and training intervention.

Table 3.10 "Education and training interventions provided"

Field	Explanation
Skills Priority	These are listed above. If the SDFs Has other strategic priorities that fall outside the scope of what is identified, they may list them.
Education and training intervention	This should be "drawn from section A7 of the WSP and aligned to the Skills Priority". For example, number 4 Specialist Financial.
Status	SDFs should go back to the WSP and establish whether the planned training was implemented in relation to the training planned. Additional trainings implemented without being included in a Workplace Skills Plan should also be reported in this table.

(Source: PSETA, 2010).

B5 Variance report

Fasset (2010) points out that this section links the training planned "in section A6 of the WSP with training implemented over the course of the year". The ATR reports against the intended achievements of a WSP. The report only needs to be completed with respect to training targets that are not being achieved. To help the sector meet its skills development goals and objectives, Fasset will monitor the difference between "training planned and training implemented". This section specifies a variety of reasons for variance.

Fasset (2010) indicates that facilitators of skills development are recommended to add more details in the space provided. When reporting in this section, skills development facilitators are anticipated to only include human capital who did not receive training. The Limpopo DoE; for example, may have decided to train 15 officials on a "PERSAL Update training" but as a result of restructuring only 12 officials attended" the training intervention. In terms of reporting this, the skills development facilitator should enter 3 (variance between 15 intended to be trained and 12 actually trained) in the block corresponding to the reason 'Restructuring'. Potential reasons for variance between a Workplace Skills Plan and the Annual Training Report may include the following:

- **Restructuring:** This may include acquisitions, mergers, work re-organisation, downsizing, etc.
- **Provider availability or inadequacy:** The training provider "may not have been available" for the required training intervention or those available "may have been considered not adequate".

- **Budgetary constraints:** The company may have reduced the financial plan for training and education. This action may minimise opportunities of training and education on the side of the organization's human capital.
- **Operational requirements:** Restrictions or extra requirements: the organisation's strategic emphasis may have shifted from its initial position, or the organization has adopted new technology and has put it into place. This action may have put additional demands on education and training, or even fewer demands.
- **Course duration exceeds training period:** In cases where the training course exceeds the training period specified, the SDF is expected to provide additional reasons.

B6 Training spend report

Organisations are mandated to provide reports regarding the actual expenditure on skills development as well as the "percentage split of training expenditure" between the "strategic skills priorities" (Hattingh, 2003). This form of reporting is done through the use of information provided in "B4". Hattingh (2004) states that aggregating training interventions into "skills priority areas" makes it likely to determine the intervention's total cost and the expenditure's total on training. This may increase a "whole range of cost factors", including in-house and external service providers (public and private). According to Hattingh (2004) and Fasset (2010), such "cost factors" may include the below:

- development of "curriculum and learning programmes"
- development of study materials like notes, books as well as licensing fees
- payment of lecturers, train the trainers, facilitators and permanent training staff
- costs of running or hire of training facilities
- costs of conducting seminars, lectures, workshops, etc.
- fees for tuition, enrolment together with costs for examination and accreditation
- study aid, travel reimbursements, costs for accommodation, relocation costs to learners and so on
- skills audit of the organization, monitoring and evaluation processes, training needs analysis ETC
- "costs of reporting, monitoring and evaluation training interventions"

All of the costs mentioned above include VAT.

Fasset (2010) shares a view that organisations and their skills development facilitators need to note that the total expenditure does not include the following:

- the salaries provided to learners and employees for their period on training and education
- lost "person work-days" (learner's leave) and budgets for temporary standby workforce or wages of learners
- fixed building or equipment costs which are not to be remunerated

B7 "Development and consultative process"

Fasset (2010) highlights the following stages as fundamental in the process of reporting on the development and consultative process:

- Which process followed by the SDF or organisation in order to develop the Annual Training Report? The skills development facilitators are expected to tick the appropriate box on the form with additional explanations. For example, the SDF may consult with the employees on their training implementation in a staff meeting, or as part of the system of performance appraisal. This may include evidence such as committee meeting minutes.
- Did the ATR contribute in achieving the goals of the organisation's employment equity plan? This section requires SDFs to tick the appropriate box on the form and provide their own description if necessary. Possible comments could be how the skills development strategy contributed to achievement of employment equity goals, or how the planning processes can be aligned and holistic.
- Did the committee on skills development review the Annual Training Report? Perhaps what arrangements were made to enable worker representatives to comment on the report? It is the responsibility of the SDF to ensure that all levels of the organisation are represented in the skills development committee. Employees should be consulted about the person designated as the skills development facilitator, the WSP and the report on the ATR. According to Hattingh (2004), organisations with more than 50 employees must establish a skills development committee that will reflect employee interests from all occupational categories.
- Are you having difficulties in planning affirmative action and employment equity in your organisation? In this section, SDFs are required to describe their aims and

challenges regarding the planning of employment equity and affirmative action, if applicable. The reasons for this may differ from organisation to organisation. For example, implementing employment equity may be easy to achieve in a call centre environment regarding appointment of employees with disabilities, than in a consulting environment where the consultant may need to be mobile.

- Please identify the areas in which you have experienced skills gaps. PSETA (2010) view "skills gaps" as something that occurs when shortages of skills from the current personnel hinder effective performance.
- This action may have altered the way in which work-responsibilities are traditionally performed. This indicates that some of the human capital may be short of "requisite IT skills".
- In occurrences where you have identified assortment of skills gaps, noticeably specify possible reasons for each skills gap as they differ from one to the other. Hattingh (2004) believes that skills gaps occur for a variety of reasons, and these reasons for specific skills gaps may vary.

B8 Training committee

With reference to the work of Fasset (2010), organisations with 50 or more personnel are required to establish a training committee which is also known as the skills development committee, which must cater for the interests of personnel across all work-related categories within the organisation.

The participation of "trade unions" also becomes significant in the committee for skills development. Table 3.11 indicates how the information regarding the training committee may be provided:

Table 3.11 Information concerning "skills development committee"

Field	Explanation
Title	
Surname	
Initials	
Representation or Designation	The committee member's designation, including the job title or occupational group.
Method of Appointment to committee	This refers to the method or process whereby committee member was appointed to the committee. For example by "management, by other committee structures such as employment equity, through union channels, by a staff association, by a voting process, by employer appointment, etc".
Contact number	Optional
e-mail address	Optional

(Source: Facet, 2010).

B9 Staff turnover

This part of the form specifically provides details regarding the total number of human capital within an organisation on the "first to the last day of the financial year "(Fasset, 2010). The difference between the two totals will show the number of employees that have left the organisation. PSETA (2010) argues that skills development facilitators should note that this figure may be greater than the difference between the two totals, particularly in instances where employees have joined and left the organisation in the same year.

B10 Confirmation of accuracy

This section of the form requires details of the skills development facilitator employed to the organisation applying for a grant and of the "authorised signatory" (Fasset, 2010). In a case where the company's skills development facilitator is not registered with Fasset, the organisation is guided by making sure that it completes submit appropriate documents to Fasset. This process ought to be completed before the authorisation of the Annual Training Report application form. Below are the functions to be performed by the skills development facilitator:

- assist the organisation and employees to compile a Workplace Skills Plan
- advise the company and its human resources regarding the execution of the Workplace Skills Plan
- assist the organisation in designing the Annual Training Report on the execution of the WSP
- advise the organisation regarding any "quality standards" put into place by the SETA
- act as a "contact person" between the organization and the "SETA"
- "serve as a resource regarding all aspects of skills development in the organisation"

Fasset (2010) recommends that in a case where the skills development facilitator resigns or for whatever reason – ceases to facilitate skills development, the company should entitle another employee to carry on such functions. The organization will therefore be responsible to inform Fasset on such developments. Fasset also provides a form to be completed by organizations when changing the Skills Development Facilitator and it is found on Fasset's website.

This authorisation section of B10 shows that" consultation has occurred between the employer and employees through the skills development committee" (Fasset, 2010). With this, the form serves as proof of training conducted and "certifies the accuracy of the ATR". Fasset reserves the right to "independently verify information and may even call for evidence of training conducted". Organisations ought to make certain that training records are handled with care and retained, and that the payments of levy to the "Commissioner of the South African Revenue Services" are updated.

PSETA (2010) points out that when required – the "authorised signatory and the skills development facilitator" may act responsible for the Annual Training Report in the place of each junior in the group. The possible "authorised signatories" may include the chief executive officer, the managing partner, the managing director, the financial director and so on. According to PSETA (2010), both the authorised signatory and the skills development facilitator signatory are responsible for "authenticating the content of the document". In this way – they act as representatives of the organisation in this process of verification. However, the responsibility for the "correctness" of this document rests with the employer who must ensure that Fasset receives the signed document. The SDL number must be "indicated on each page of the grant application". Every page in the documentation ought to be initialled by the SDF and the authorised signatory.

B11 Banking details

The advice given to skills development facilitators is that they should not complete this section, unless if the banking details of their organization have changed from the time when they made their last grant submission (Fasset, 2010).

With reference to organisations providing all the required details and complete a submission for a consolidated grant, Fasset (2010) suggests that it is necessary for such organizations to complete a form and furnish banking details separately for each "Skills Development Levy number in which the banking details differ". To enable Fasset to confirm the banking details provided by the Skills Development Facilitator of an organisation, one of the documents which maybe required include copy of company cheque, original cancelled cheque and letter from the bank confirming banking details.

Organizations must submit to Fasset - the required information of the "person confirming the banking details and authorising payment to the banking details provided" (Fasset, 2010). These details may include the following:

- full names (first name and surname)
- job title
- identity number
- signature (including date of signature)"

Fasset (2010) points out that it is essential to make certain that this is a "person authorised to bind the organisation".

Schedule 1: "Criteria for appointing skills development facilitators and consultation"

PSETA (2010) and Fasset (2010) both indicate that the appointment of the skills development facilitator requires a consideration of the following details:

- Employers must appoint an employee or any other person who is formally contracted to the employer as the SDF.
- Organizations with below 50 employees, or perhaps with "a sales turnover less than that specified in Schedule 4 of the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998)", may "jointly appoint a skills development facilitator".
- Organizations must forward to the SETA the personal details (names and contacts) of the person appointed to carry out responsibilities of a skills development facilitator for the "financial year on or before 1 April of each year".

They additionally suggest that in instances whereby the SDF resigns from the organization, the company should forthwith

- appoint a "new skills development facilitator"
- submit the personal details of the new facilitator to the relevant SETA.

Hattingh and van der Walt (2004) note that the employer needs to "provide the skills development facilitator with the resources, facilities and training to perform the [skills-development] functions" set out for the organisation and its employees.

Schedule 2: "Definitions of occupational groups"

This section provides for the "definitions of occupational groups" as pointed out by Fasset (2010) as follows:

Senior Officials, Legislators, Owner Managers and managers: Major Group 1

These senior officials are appointed to formulate laws, regulations and public rules, act on behalf of government, and oversee the implementation and interpretation of government legislations and policies. They plan, coordinate and direct the activities and policies of organizations, or the organization's internal units or sections. This may include supervision of other human capital. In cases where particular professional, technical or operational skills and knowledge is expected of employees at legislative, administrative or managerial level, it is often complicated to "decide whether a particular job belongs in this or another major group" (Fasset, 2010). In such cases, additional information on the key tasks of the job in question becomes vital. If the main tasks need an operational use of particular specialised knowledge or "a specific technical skill", this will mean that the "job belongs in a different major group". If "professional Knowledge or technical skill only serves as a basis for legislative, administrative or managerial tasks", this means that "the job belongs in this major group".

Fasset (2010) outlines the following as instances of seniors deliberated above:

- Executive managers, such as chief executive officer.
- Senior managers, such as managing director, senior manager, partner, senior partner and experience in a physical and life sciences field.
- Middle managers, such as the manager.

"Professionals": Major Group 2

These are people with high level of experience and professional knowledge in fields such as physical sciences, life sciences, humanities and so on (Fasset, 2010). They "systematically teach about the foregoing, improve the existing stock of knowledge apply scientific or artistic concepts and theories or participate in any combination of these three mentioned activities". Fasset (2010) identifies the following tasks as some of those "performed by professionals":

- "Conducting analysis and research and developing concepts, theories and operational methods, and advising on or applying existing knowledge related to physical sciences

including engineering, mathematics and technology, and to life sciences including the medical profession and to social sciences and humanities"

- teaching the practice and theory of one or various disciplines at several levels of education
- "teaching and educating handicapped persons"
- "providing various business, legal and social services"
- "creating and performing works of art"
- "providing spiritual guidance"
- "preparing scientific papers and reports"

The functions may also include other employee's supervision. This will certainly rest up on the particular tasks and its level of responsibility in the process of executing them, and up on requirements of training and national education (Fasset, 2010). It may be appropriate to classify some of the occupations identified here as "Major Group 3: Technicians and Associate Professionals". Such cases are to be found in particular among teaching occupations, nursing occupations and social services occupations. PSETA (2010) lists the following as examples:

- professionals for finance and accounting
- professionals for information management and analysis
- human resources professionals
- legal professionals
- operations management professionals and economists
- sales and marketing professionals
- computer programmers
- technicians for information technology
- accountants
- manager for payroll
- rofessionals for teaching
- management consultants
- lawyers

Technicians & Associated Professionals: Major Group 3

This refers to individuals with experience and technical knowledge of the life sciences and physical sciences field or the "social sciences and humanities" (PSETA, 2010). They do technical and connected tasks associated with research and the application of "scientific or artistic concepts and operational methods", business regulations or government, and deliver teachings at particular levels of education. These tasks which are done by "technicians and associate professionals" often include the following:

- technical tasks associated with "research and the application of concepts and operational methods in the fields of physical sciences including engineering and technology"
- life sciences including the profession for medicine, humanities and social sciences
- teaching young children at pre-schools and primary levels
- teaching persons with disabilities
- initiating and implementing several technical services linked to "trade, finance, administration, including administration of a number of government laws and regulations, and to social work"
- providing entertainment through sports and art
- performing some tasks relevant to religion

PSETA (2010) point out that the above listed tasks may also contain supervision of particular personnel. "Technicians and associate professionals may receive guidance from senior government officials, managers or professionals". According to Fasset (2010), it is recommended that depending on the particular activities and responsibility level regarding the execution of such tasks and on training requirements and national education, it may probably be appropriate to classify certain above-mentioned occupations into Major Group 2. PSETA (2010) identify the following as relevant examples:

- associate accounting with professionals for finance
- associate professionals for finance and accounting
- professionals for analysis and information management associate
- human resources professionals associate
- legal experts and associate
- economists and professionals for operations management associate

- sales and marketing professionals and associate
- professionals for technology and associate engineering
- trainee accounts clerks, articled clerks, etc.

Clerks & administrative workers: Major Group 4

Clerks are tasked with a responsibility to compute, store, record, organize and retrieve information connected to tasks in question, and execute various clerical duties – most particularly in relation to travel arrangements, money-handling, appointments, requests for information and so on (Fasset, 2010). Fasset cites the following as tasks performed by clerks:

- typing, stenography and operating word processors together with other office machines
- capturing information in computers
- handling secretarial responsibilities
- computing and recording statistical data
- keeping important records regarding production, stocks and transport
- keeping important records regarding freight transport and passenger
- performing responsibilities of clerical in libraries
- filing documents
- performing responsibilities in connection with services of mail
- sorting out documents and other materials for printing
- writing on behalf of a person who is uneducated
- performing operations related to money handling
- dealing with arrangements for travelling
- furnishing “information” requested by clients and making appointments
- operating a telephone switchboard

Depending on the responsibilities and structure that is involved in the functioning of units and the running of the organisation, these tasks highlighted above may include employee’s supervision. Examples which are relevant may include data capture clerks, bookkeepers tax clerks, secretarial staff, accounts clerks and typists, tellers, Cashiers, administrative assistants, switchboard operators, receptionists, administrative clerks, post room clerks, printing assistants and filing clerks.

Service employees and sales persons: Major Group 5

Service employees and market sales employees provide protective and personal services associated with travel, housekeeping, personal care, catering, protection against fire and unlawful acts, or "pose as models for artistic creation and display, stalls and markets, or demonstrate and sell goods in wholesale or retail shops and similar establishments" (Fasset, 2010).

The responsibilities executed in this regard usually embrace the following:

- organising and providing services during the period of travelling
- housekeeping
- preparing and serving the food as well as drinks
- child care
- fundamental nursing and relevant care at institutions and at homes
- personal care; for example, the activity of washing, cutting, curling or arranging the hair and provide treatment for the beauty
- companionship
- fortune telling and forecasting
- embalming
- necessary arrangements for a funeral
- "protection of individuals and property against fire and unlawful acts and enforcement of law and order"
- "posing as models for advertising, artistic creation and display of goods"
- selling goods in retail establishments, marketplace, wholesale, stalls and so on
- "demonstrating goods to potential customers"

These tasks may also include supervision of other workers. Examples of workers in this category are service workers, delivery workers, shop and market sales workers, cleaning, security worker, cleaning workers, technical and maintenance workers, shop attendants, "tea ladies" and retail sales workers.

Skilled fishery and agricultural employees: Major Group 6

Employees in this category grow, cultivate and crop "field or tree and shrub crops", "gather wild fruits and plants, breed, tend or hunt animals, produce a variety of animal husbandry

products, cultivate, conserve and exploit forests, breed or catch fish" and cultivate or gather other types of sea life with an aim to provide shelter of their own and their household, food, finances and so on. Their responsibilities may consist of the following:

- fertilizing and cleaning the soil
- planting, sowing, spraying, fertilising and harvesting field crops
- cultivating fruits, shrub crops and other trees
- cultivating garden vegetables and horticultural products
- collecting plants and wild fruits
- breeding, nursing and raising animals and hunting them for meat, milk, hair, fur, skin, honey, sericulture etc.
- cultivating, exploiting and conserving forestry
- breeding and fishing
- cultivating and collecting other types of aquatic lives
- "storing and carrying out some basic processing of their produce"
- selling foodstuffs to marketing companies, purchasers and in the marketplace

These above highlighted activities may also include employee's supervision. The "Skilled agricultural & fishery workers" category comprises of employees such as fishermen, crop growers, horticulturists, forestry employees and farmers.

Skilled employees & associated trades: Major Group 7

In the work of Fasset (2010) it is specified that craft and associated employees apply their particular skills and knowledge in the fields of construction and mining, form metal, erect metal structures, set machine, tools or equipment Make machinery, repair and fit machinery, maintain machinery, perform responsibilities for printing documents, produce textiles, wooden, foodstuffs, and other articles which may include handicraft goods. Fasset (2010) states that the work highlighted at this point is performed through hand and through other instruments used to lessen the effort of physique and time needed for particular responsibilities and also to improve the "quality of the products". These responsibilities need knowledge of all phases of the process of production, the purpose and nature of the final product as well as the tools and materials used. Fasset (2010) highlights the below tasks or responsibilities done by "craft and related trades employees":

- “extracting and working solid minerals”
- constructing, repairing and maintaining buildings and other structures
- casting, welding and shaping steel
- erecting and installing structures of heavy steel, tackle, and connected equipment
- making tools, equipment, machinery and other steel articles
- “setting for operators, or setting and operating various machine tools”
- fitting, repairing and maintaining manufacturing machines together with vehicles and engines, electronic instruments, etc.
- manufacturing precision tools, household items, jewellery and other valuable articles of steel, glass, pottery and related products
- producing handicrafts
- printing activities
- producing and processing crops and various articles made of wood, textiles, leather and other relevant materials

This comprises of employee’s supervision. This category comprises of examples such as ore processors, miners, carpenters, electricians, bricklayers, aircraft, welders, plumbers, painters, mechanics, fitters, glass makers and turners, shoemakers, boilermakers, clothes makers, locksmiths and so on.

Plant & operators of machines plus assemblers: Major Group 8

- operating and monitoring mining and other manufacturing machines and tools for processing glass, metal, wood, minerals, ceramics, paper, chemicals, etc.
- operating and monitoring the treating of water, power generating connexions and other relevant plant
- operating and monitoring machines and other tools used to produce articles from chemicals, steel, minerals, paper, wood, rubber, plastics, fur, leather and textiles, and which process goods and associated products, and operating printing and machines for bookbinding
- operating trains and driving vehicles
- operating and monitoring agricultural and industrial mobile machines and tools
- assembling products from elements and parts in relation to the strict specifications of the organization and its procedures

These tasks also involve supervision of employees. The employees included in this category are assembly line employees, railway signallers, production supervisors, motor mechanics, lathe operators; mine drills operators and so on.

"Labourers and elementary occupations": Major Group 9

These involve employees that perform basic and routine activities, including the use of hand tools, sometimes significant efforts which are physical, and normally only restricted personal creativity and decision (PSETA, 2010). The tasks performed by workers found in this category "elementary occupations" consist the below:

- selling goods on street corners, door to door, and other public places
- providing various "street services"
- washing, cleaning and pressing
- taking care of offices, hotels, apartment houses and other relevant buildings
- washing windows and other glass sides of the above indicated buildings
- delivering goods and messages
- carrying bags
- providing door guardianship and watching after the property
- "stocking vending machines or reading and emptying meters"
- collecting refuse
- sweeping streets and other associated places
- performing a variety of basic farming, hunting, fishing activities and so on
- performing basic activities related to construction, mining and manufacturing as well as sorting of products and basic assembling of goods
- packing and sorting goods by hand
- "freight handling"
- hand-guiding cars to transport goods and commuters
- "driving animal-drawn vehicles or machinery"

These responsibilities include supervision of employees. The category "labourers and elementary occupations" involves employees such as news vendors, caretakers, sweepers, kitchen workers, tinkers, char workers, garbage collectors, telephone sales persons, employees on construction, quarry employees, security guards, etc.

3.2.6.5 Synthesis

With reference to reporting regarding the "implementation of a Workplace Skills Plan", this section has highlighted the importance of the factors listed below:

- "confidentiality of organisation's information submitted to Fasset through a WSP"
- "submission of ATR by organisations and qualifying for skills grants"
- "ATR criteria for acceptance"
- "particulars of the organisation submitting an ATR"
- "prioritisation of skills development interventions by organisations"
- "reporting on education and training interventions provided to beneficiaries"
- "employed workers in structured programmes leading towards NQF 1 (ABET)"
- "variance report"
- "introduction of skills development committees in organisations"
- organisation's banking details
- criteria for appointing the skills development facilitator
- defining the occupational groups

3.2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated further on the strategic human resource management aspects of workplace skills planning as highlighted in the preceding chapter. These key success factors for WSP implementation include gathering information to inform the WSP, conducting a skills audit, compiling and submitting the WSP, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the WSP, and reporting on the "implementation" of a WSP.

In "outlining the aspects" of information gathering to inform a WSP, the focus was on the different environment systems in which the WSP functions. These include the external environment, the internal environment, employee information, determining external stakeholders, and determining the internal and external stakeholders.

The second set of aspects (aspects of skills auditing) were outlined in relation to three different phases: human resource planning, job and competence profiling, and finding the skills gap. Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP were discussed in relation to consulting both management and employees on skills needs that have been identified, compiling the WSP for review, and submitting a WSP to the relevant SETA. Other aspects

covered related to implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, and reporting on a WSP.

Each set of aspect was concluded with a synthesis summarising important factors indicated in the respective section. The next chapter focuses on the research approach used in this study on the key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE.

Chapter 4
RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research approach, design and strategy that were used in the research on key success factors for implementing the WSP. It identifies and explains the rationale for following a post-positivist and quantitative approach in this research. The chapter also indicates the study site, sample site and the empirical research that was conducted to determine the success factors for WSP implementation that managers regard as key and the extent to which Limpopo DoE managers apply those aspects.

The chapter also discusses the research "population, sampling strategy and the size of the sample" that was selected to represent the population. With reference to data-collection method, the chapter indicates that the researcher chose a structured questionnaire as a suitable research instrument to collect data, thereafter identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the data-collection instrument. Data quality control is also discussed in this chapter, focusing on areas such as the data-collection procedure and the validity and reliability of the data-collection instrument. The quantitative data in this research was captured in Microsoft Excel, and statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Other statistical software packages available such as Stat-Pac for Windows are also indicated.

This chapter also outlines the "descriptive statistics and the reliabilities of various constructs" assessed through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient generated by SPSS. Other areas discussed in this chapter include pilot study, practical significance, ethical consideration and limitations of the study.

4.2 Research design

The research design indicates the plan or blueprint that the researcher devised and employed to conduct investigations in this study. Renesys (2010) points out that a research design as a "plan or blueprint" which a researcher must employ in order to realise the research

objectives. It includes information on the researcher's target population, the accessible population and the sampling approaches (sampling methods or plans) to be implemented.

Mouton and Marais (1992: 21) advice that researchers need to establish guidelines that will give direction to the research study. This must be done before the research is conducted and will help the researcher to maintain focus on the research enquiry. According to Boikanyo (1998)," a research design addresses the planning of scientific inquiry, designing a good plan to explore, describe and explain something". A research design can thus be regarded as a set of guidelines followed by a researcher in ensuring that the research problem is properly addressed. Regenesys (2010) states that through research design, the researcher is able to establish the suitable research methodology, together with the research methods.

4.3 Research methodology

Having finalised the research design, the next step for the researcher was deciding on the "appropriate research methodology" to the design. This is supported by Mouton (1996). Regenesys (2010) describes research methodology as "a strategy used by the researcher to implement the research design". Mouton further points out that "for every research methodology there is a range of research methods or techniques that can be applied by the researcher". For this study on the "key success factors for WSP implementation", the researcher decided to use survey research.

Powell and Connaway (2004) define survey research as a strategy used by the researcher to collect data from a population or part of a population to determine the present status of a "phenomenon". *The concept of survey* refers to "to look at" or "to see over or beyond" or "to observe". Survey research allows the researcher to generalise from a "smaller group or sample" to a "larger group or the whole population". Using a survey the researcher collected data to determine the feelings, beliefs, opinions and attitudes of the managers in the Limpopo DoE regarding key success factors for implementing the WSP.

Survey research is typically used where a large number of people who are geographically spread out over a wide geographical area are to be used as participants in the study (Powell & Connaway, 2004). A similar situation pertained with the districts of Limpopo in which this study was conducted and absence of technological facilities such as emails and fax required the researcher to use various means of transport for questionnaires to reach some of the participants.

Powell and Connaway (2004) argue that it is not practically possible to "survey the entire population, and smaller samples of the population are therefore sampled on a random basis". Regenesys's (2010) viewpoint on "Survey research" is that it is used to gather contemporary data: for example, data about a phenomenon as it presently exists, rather than historical data as in historical research. However, survey research is also appropriate for studying personal factors and for the analysis of relationships. Powell and Connaway suggest that other research methodologies to be used may include the following:

Experimental research: Powell & Connaway (2004) regard it as a rigorous research methodology. They point out that It is the optimal strategy for the researcher to pursue when he or she needs to test "cause and effect" among variables, whereby a "an event or cause always leads to another event or effect". With reference to Powell and Connaway's (2004) viewpoint regarding the connexion between cause and event, they argue that "causality and is an important concept in experimental research". In the experiment, the researcher "creates a condition or situation, or changes an existing situation". By studying the effect of such changes on the responses related to the topics the "researcher can be able to recognise conceivable causes". There are normally two groups of subjects in experimental research: the experimental group who are exposed to the dynamics, as well as the control-group whose circumstances stay unchanged.

"Historical research": This is used to reconstruct past events or phenomena to determine what had occurred (Powell & Connaway 2004). It is more than simple describing past-events – interpretation plays a significant role. It is Gorman and Clayton (2005) who pointed out that "history" plays a main role in trying to understand "human behaviour and human organisations". The aim for conducting "historical research" is not just about past events and finding out more information about them in terms of what really took place, but also to obtain clear viewpoint regarding the current situation and facilitate preparations towards the future.

"Case study": refers to a particular kind of qualitative research whereby "in-depth data" is collected regarding a particular phenomenon in its real life context within a given timeframe (Powell & Connaway 2004). As opposed to survey research, "case studies" have a demanding examination of a less quantity of subjects of research as opposed to a large sample. A case may also consist of groups, individuals, organisations, specific incidents, geographic region, and forums and so on.

"Operations research": It is defined as "application of scientific methods to manage operations in an effort to aid managerial decision making" (Powell & Connaway 2004:60). In this kind of research "analytical mathematical techniques" play an important role. This is a strategy of research which is largely used at the level of senior management and it calls for a specialised skills and knowledge in the use of "mathematical techniques".

"Systems analysis": In this type, a system as a whole is investigated to draw conclusions regarding the interaction of its components (Powell & Connaway 2004:61). Usual deliberations in systems analysis may contain the objectives of the system, its performance, the resources, the environment, the sections and the management of the whole system. Similar to "operations research", *"systems analysis"* is also typically used at the level of management.

Content analysis: This involves the systematic analysis of the occurrence of words, phrases, and concepts in books, films and other kinds of materials (Powell & Connaway 2004:62). It can, for example, be used to determine how frequently racist and sexist terms appear in certain books.

Mouton (2001) states that selection of these research techniques is determined primarily by their appropriateness to the research design. It is the researcher responsibity to understand the differences between research design and research methodology. Mouton provides the following summary of these differences:

Table 4.1 Research design versus research methodology

Research design	Research methodology
Focuses on the end product: what kind of study is being planned and what kind of result is aimed at?	Focuses on the research process and the tools and procedures to be used.
Point of departure = research problem or question.	Point of departure = specific tasks; for example, data collection and sampling at hand.
Focuses on the logic of the research: what kind of evidence is required to address the research problem adequately?	Focuses on the individual steps in the research process and the most objective (unbiased) procedures to be employed.

(Source: Mouton, 2001)

There are 5 steps that Mouton (2001) suggests as key to be used by researchers as to obtain a suitable match between "research design and methodology" The first is to go back to the determined research problem in the working environment of the researcher. The second is that the researcher should take into consideration the research problem within the context of

the preceding information regarding the “research approach, design and methodology”. On step number 3 the researcher is needed to make a decision regarding the chosen research approach, whether it will be a “qualitative or quantitative” approach.

Step 4, based on the design that the researcher has chosen, is to identify the most appropriate research design and research methodology for the investigation. Step 5 is for to compile brief explanatory notes in which the researcher indicates and motivates his or her decisions. Mouton maintains that these basic steps may also help the researcher to identify the most suitable data-collection technique for the research.

4.4 Research approach or paradigm

4.4.1 Research approach

According to Maree (2002), the research approach usually refers to two possibilities: quantitative approach or qualitative approach. Welman and Kruger (2002) stress the importance of correspondence between the research paradigm and the research approach. They argue that these paradigms are the fundamental to the research methods by means of which data is collected and analysed in the research process. For the purpose of this study on the key success factors for implementing a WSP in the Limpopo DoE, a positivist research paradigm was adopted. This is because the data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires from the managers of Limpopo DoE, whereby they were requested to rate the level of extent and importance.

According to McLafferty and Onwuegbuzie (2006), both quantitative and qualitative approaches are legitimate research approaches that enable successful research investigation. They point out that the success of a research project does not only rest on just a “research approach”. However, it also rests on the researcher’s skills and abilities and the suitability of the adopted research approach.

The following section in this chapter starts by discussing “quantitative research” and point out the manner in which it has been used throughout this study. Other possible research approaches are “qualitative research and mixed method research”.

4.4.1.1 Quantitative research approach

Positivist research is generally quantitative and involves numerical measurement and statistical analyses of measurements to examine social phenomena (Cooper et al. 2012). Cooper (2012) states that positivist research views reality as consisting of phenomena that can be observed and measured. According to Neumann (2003), the "advantages of quantitative approach are that it places a premium on objectivity and reliability of findings and encourages replication". In social sciences and business research, "positivism may not always be appropriate, as all social phenomena [cannot] be accurately and reliably measured, thus reducing the validity of the findings."

According to Connaway (2004), "Quantitative approach can be described as highly structured and it involves the quantification of concepts", where possible, to do measurements and conduct evaluations (Powell & Connaway, 2004). It is regarded as an approach that is formalised with a scope that is carefully defined. The scope in this case is bigger, more worldwide and it is defined more accurately. Powell and Connaway (2004) add that the "quantitative research approach" usually lets the researcher to stay in the background, as he or she infrequently interacts with the research participants.

Cohen (1980) regards quantitative research as "social research that employs empirical methods and empirical statements". In addition, he argues that "empirical statement" is a "descriptive statement" regarding the actual scenario "in the real world rather than what ought to be the case. Typically, empirical statements are expressed in numerical terms." Cohen also states that "another important factor in quantitative research" is empirical evaluation, which seeks to determine the degree whereby a specific policy or programme "empirically fulfils or does not fulfil a particular standard or norm".

The next definition contains certain parts which show the specificity of "quantitative research". Kumar's (1996) study views quantitative research as "the numerical representation and manipulation of observations aimed to describe and explain the phenomena that those observations reflect". In Regenesys (2010), it is pointed out that "Researchers make use of quantitative research approach in a wide variety of natural and social sciences, including" biology, physics, sociology, psychology and geology. According to Creswell et al. (2004), quantitative research allows the collection of data to be done in a numerical form, in that way - making it likely to apply a method that is based on mathematics. A similar viewpoint cannot be made with reference to qualitative research.

Since qualitative data are not in the format of numbers, therefore cannot be necessarily analysed through the use of statistics. The final segment of the definition of "quantitative research approach" addresses the use of statistically-based methods, in certain statistics, to analyse the collected data. In the same way, the data in this study was analysed through the use of statistical methods.

An assortment of data which do not certainly appear in quantitative form can be collected in a quantitative way (Creswell, 1994). This can be done by designing research instruments that convert phenomena that do not naturally exist in quantitative form into quantitative data that can therefore be analysed in a statistical method. These may comprise examples such as beliefs and attitudes. With reference to this research, a questionnaire was used in order to gather relevant data regarding the attitudes of managers of the Limpopo Department of Education on the subject of the implementation of the WSP within their organization. These attitudes, however, do not naturally exist in quantitative form. The questionnaire contained a four-point Likert scale according to managers of the Limpopo Department of Education had to provide ratings to indicate the extent of application. For example, managers were asked "to what extent do you think skills audit is properly conducted in the Limpopo DoE?" On the four-point Likert scale, managers of Limpopo DOE were able to tick either "not at all", "small extent", "some extent" or "great extent", giving answers in number form: 1 for "not at all", 2 for "small extent", 3 for "some extent" and 4 for "great extent".

4.4.1.2 Qualitative research approach

As opposed to quantitative methods, the qualitative research approach is a research approach that uses non-numerical data (Maxcy, 2003). It is "an umbrella term for a large number of different research methods (e.g. participant observation, interviews, case studies, and ethnographic research)" which differ widely and are "used by researchers with quite different world views, some of which clearly lie towards the realistic end of the spectrum" (Maree, 2002).

The qualitative approach "focuses on observing events from the perspective of those involved and attempts to understand behaviour [of] individuals" (Powell & Connaway, 2004. p.3). "The emphasis is therefore on human beings as the research subjects or participants and exploration of their behaviour and their experience of situations and events". Qualitative research enables the researcher to "interact with research participants" as individuals and groups whose experiences and behaviour is willing to understand. In Maree (2002), it is

pointed out that the effect is that the scope can be “less defined” and processes are not that formalised. The investigation is usually generated primarily by observation. Even though qualitative research is regarded as less rigid as compared to quantitative research, yet it still need the researcher to use a sequence of strategies of research in which the data will be collected, organise, process and interpreted. Notwithstanding observation, the tool for collecting Data would typically comprise of interviews and open ended questionnaires.

Maree (2002) states that qualitative research turns to be more suitable when the research subjects to be studied are “complex, social in nature and cannot be quantified”. It often puts more emphasis on “studying fewer subjects and interpreting the results based on observable patterns**.”** The significance in this case is determined by observations of the researcher and it can be in relation to the Knowledge, experience and judgement. Not like in the case of applying the statistical analysis in the quantitative process, Maree (2002) states that qualitative research is often conducted in a “natural setting” and studies research subjects in the environment in which the subjects “live or work - rather than the laboratory”.

As a consequence it puts forth additional case studies whereby groups, individuals and communities are “studied and in which behaviour is focused upon”. Accordingly the data analysis is “descriptive and defines and describes in detail” the context whereby the study happens.

Phenomenological researchers argue that “the world is socially constructed and that science is driven by human interests”. The researcher, as a “subjective entity”, is thus part of the universe which he or she is studying (Cooper et al. 2000). In addition, he argues that objectivity thus turn out to be an impossible aim.

They state that “the advantages of qualitative, interpretive orientation in research are that the findings often have greater validity and less artificiality, as the process of observing phenomena in natural, real-life settings often allows researchers to develop a more accurate understanding of those phenomena” (Cooper et al. 2000).

The data may be gathered on a widespread range of research-subjects and changed to a quantitative nature through the use of the instrument for collecting data: namely, tests, questionnaires and so on (Vithal et al., 2004). Also possible is that a researcher; within a single study, may decide to use both the quantitative and qualitative research approach. It is therefore become imperative for researchers to keep in mind – the understanding of a

difference between "quantitative and qualitative research approaches". The summary of these differences are provided by Greene and Caracelli (2003) in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 "Quantitative research approach versus qualitative research approach"

Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Less defined scope and less formalised processes	Formalised approach and well-defined scope
Often associated with descriptive enquiry that draws on interviews, documents, narratives and observations	Associated with statistical and experimental studies with various numerical manipulations
Studies social phenomena from the perspective of the participants	Uses objective measurements and statistical measurements to explain a phenomena
Used to study social phenomena and the emphasis is on human beings as research subjects	Is used in natural sciences and to study cause and effect relationships
The design evolves during the study	The design develops prior the study
Generally generates new theory (inductive)	Aims to test a theory (deductive)
Natural setting	Setting: laboratory
Uses small samples	Uses big samples of large populations in wide geographical areas
Face-to-face interaction with participants	Standardised instruments - the researcher seldom interacts with the respondents
Narrative description and the researcher's observations, which may be based on experience, knowledge or judgement	Statistical analysis of numeric data
Research phenomena are social in nature and cannot be quantified	Accurate measurements
Uses open unstructured questionnaires and interviews	Uses surveys and structured questionnaires

(Source: Greene & Caracelli, 2003**).**

Brewer and Hunter (2006) point out that researchers are at liberty to use both "quantitative and qualitative research approach" in a single study. This mixture of two different research approaches is known as "Mixed method approach".

4.4.1.3 Mixed research method

Mixed research approach is "the combination of various qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis in one research project" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). However, according to Johnson (2006), pragmatism is regarded as the most important philosophy of "mixed research method".

Mixed methods research is generally regarded as "an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research)" (Johnson, 2006). According to Johnson, mixed research is a synthesis that includes ideas

from qualitative and quantitative research. Guba and Lincoln (2005) state that both "quantitative and qualitative methods" can be suitably utilized with any research paradigm. They add that within each individual research paradigm, mixed methodologies can make a perfect sense for a research.

In Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), the authors indicate that mixed research method has been established as a third methodological movement over a period of twenty years, complementing the existing traditions of both qualitative and quantitative movements. This development has been complemented by series of explorations for an appropriate paradigm aimed at providing recognized and clear utilization of mixed methods parallel to the paradigms which have been broadly accepted as those supporting the proper utilization of quantitative and qualitative approaches distinctly. The use of "mixed method approach" has found its meaning to indicate the use of more than two research methods within one research project yielding both "qualitative and quantitative data" (Cresswell & Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). The mixtures of different methods that produce similar data are called multimethods (Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009). As much as multimethods are able to adopt the paradigm appropriate to the single kind of data that is being collected, they do not comprise of similar paradigmatic problem as compared to mixed methods.

In Denzin and Lincoln (2005), they point out that a mixture of two research approaches "quantitative and qualitative" may be able to deliver according to two or more different aims. First it helps in discovering and handling threats towards validity as they arise within the use of "qualitative or quantitative research" through applying methods from the "alternative methodological tradition, and can thus ensure good scientific practice by enhancing the validity of methods and research findings". In addition, researchers may use mixed method approach so as to obtain a clear understanding towards the phenomenon that is being researched. This can be realised through linking complementary findings to each other, which lead from the use of methods from the different methodological traditions of qualitative and quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Greene (2006) identified the below as 5 main aims of mixed methodological studies:

- *triangulation*: includes seeking corroboration and convergence of results from more than one research methods conducted on the similar phenomenon

- *complementarity*: refers to enhancement, elaboration, illustration as well as clarification of research results from "one method with results from the other method"
- *development*: refers, for example, to the use of research results from one method to help inform the other method
- *initiation*: refers, for example, to "discovering paradoxes and contradictions that lead to a reframing of the research question"
- *expansion*: refers, for example, to "seeking to expand the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components".

The list below indicates some of the reasons for combining quantitative and qualitative (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). They provide a framework regarding the manner in which this combination can be effective at the data collection, research design and at the stages of data analysis of the research process. The next table (Table 4.3) gives examples of effectiveness in combining quantitative and qualitative research approach:

Table 4.3 Effectiveness in combining quantitative and qualitative research

Type of data	Research design	Data collection	Data analysis
Quantitative Data	It can assist the qualitative component by identifying representative sample members, as well as outlying (i.e., deviant) cases.	It can play a role in providing baseline information and helping to avoid "elite bias" (talking only to high-status individuals).	It can facilitate the assessment of generalizability of the qualitative data and shed new light on qualitative findings.
Qualitative Data	It can assist the quantitative component of a study by helping with conceptual and instrument development.	It can help in facilitating data collection.	It can play an important role by interpreting, clarifying, describing, and validating quantitative results, as well as through grounding and modifying.

(Source: Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

"Mixed research approach is an effective combination of quantitative and qualitative research" (Collins & Sutton, 2006). They point out that the above indicated approach is usually based on the below rationales for conducting the mixed research:

- Participant enrichment: this points to the activity of mixing "quantitative and qualitative research" with a purpose of optimising the sample through the use of techniques which include recruitment of participants, involved in activities which include "institutional review board debriefings, ensuring that each participant selected is appropriate for inclusion".

- Instrument fidelity: “assessing the appropriateness and/or utility of research existing instruments, creating new instruments, monitoring performance of human instruments”.
- Treatment integrity: assessing fidelity of intervention.
- Significance enhancement: for example, facilitating thickness and richness of data, augmenting interpretation and usefulness of findings.

4.4.2 Research paradigm

In Harrits (2011), he states that the researcher conducts a research with his or her actions and beliefs being guided by certain set of standards and rules. These rules and standards are known as paradigms. This points to the reality that researchers have a responsibility of choosing an appropriate paradigm that suits the focus of the study. Taylor, Kermode and Roberts (2007) regard a paradigm as “a broad view or perspective of something”. Weaver and Olson (2006) point out; through their definition of paradigm, the manner in which the research can possibly be guided and affected by a particular paradigm: “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”.

A paradigm can be regarded as a worldview (Creswell & Clark, 2007). In the work of Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), they define a paradigm as a “worldview, together with the various philosophical assumptions associated with that point of view”. Greene (2007) uses the term “mental model” much the same way as a worldview. A worldview consists of stances adopted in relation to ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Cresswell & Clark, 2007), or to “dimensions of contrast” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The below 5 different components of paradigms are highlighted by Chalmers (1982):

- “explicitly stated laws and theoretical assumptions”
- “standard ways of applying the fundamental laws to a variety of situations”
- “instrumentation and instrumental techniques that bring the laws of the paradigm to bear on the real world”
- “general metaphysical principles that guide work within the paradigm”
- “general methodological prescriptions about how to conduct work within the paradigm”.

A paradigm is “a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Chalmers, 1982). Chalmers (1982) states that in the social

sciences there are presently quite a few competing paradigms. A variety of discussions are prearranged around a notion that there are only two research paradigms namely: “quantitative and qualitative research paradigm”. However, this view is believed to be just a generalisation which put emphases on data as opposed to foundational assumptions and beliefs (Smith, 1989), (Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001), (Gephart, 1999), (Guba, 1990), And (Cupchik, 2001). The precise number of available research paradigms in the research field and the names related to each of them differ from one author to another. Below is the generally accepted list of three paradigms and it is drawn from the above cited writers:

- positivism and post positivism
- critical theory
- interpretivism

A paradigm is not just a philosophy of science such as “positivism and post positivism”. It is moreover the organised theory of social science such as behaviourism theory, as well as the related research framework (Coptic, 2001). In addition, it is “the application of that entire framework to practice”. Each level is able to influence and get influenced by the rest of the levels. In Cupchik’s (2001), he indicates that most fundamentally there is a philosophy of science which makes a variety of assumptions regarding the essential issues such as the “nature of truth (ontology) and what it means to know (epistemology)”. Even though numerous researchers and practitioners ignore this foundational layer of assumptions, it is an essential aspect of a paradigm. Cupchik maintains that “many of the basic tenets of [behavioural] psychology (and information processing theory and cognitive science), for example, would make very little sense without the assumptions of postpositivism” (Cupchik, 2001).

Harrits (2011) maintains that “the important difference between paradigms is not the type of data preferred, but the underlying beliefs and assumptions of each paradigm.” The following are the different types of research paradigms:

4.4.2.1 Positivism and postpositivism

Positivism is a research paradigm in western philosophy established by the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the seventeenth-century (Kuhn, 1962). Kuhn (1970) regards positivism and post positivism as the philosophy of science that is the foundation for other research paradigms. In this regard Cresswell and Clark (2007) identify four world views, and

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) identify 5 world views, the only difference being that the latter chose to establish a separation between positivism and post positivism, while the former chose to regard positivism and post positivism as one research paradigm. According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), there are very few differences between positivism and post positivism so that treating them as distinct world views is hardly warranted.

"Postpositivism modifies some of the excesses of positivism such as the claim that research must be value free," and can thus be viewed as the "successor to positivism" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The four "commonly agreed paradigms are thus post positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Of these only the transformative and pragmatism worldviews are seen to be compatible with mixed methods research; positivism and its successor post positivism are strictly identified with "quantitative research, and constructivism with qualitative research". Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) add that this making neither primarily appropriate for mixed-methods research.

"Post-positivists" welcome the view that we cannot perceive the universe we are part of as completely objective and as outsiders who are disinterested, and believe that the "natural sciences do not provide the model for all social research". Although "research may never be able to help us reveal that particular reality through our research". Nonetheless, they do "believe in the possibility of there being an objective reality" (Harrits, 2011). In addition, Harrits (2011) comments that "post-positivists" maintain that we should try to possibly estimate that inevitability "as best we can, all the while realising that our own subjectivity is shaping that reality".

Instead of determining the truth, "post-positivists" will attempt to represent reality as best they can. Regenesys (2010) states that as compared to positivists, "post-positivists believe that research can never be certain". Instead of focusing on "certainty and absolute truth", "post-positivist social science focuses on confidence – how much can we rely on our findings? How well do they predict certain outcomes?"

Realists are of an opinion that whatever research does – is to "uncover" an existing reality (Maxcy, 2003). "The truth is out there. It is the job of the researcher to use objective research methods to uncover that particular truth". Based on this understanding, this study on the "key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE" adopts methods that maximise objectivity. The involvement of the researcher in the study was minimised by applying

relevant methods. For example, in instances where managers requested further clarification on questionnaires, the researcher avoided leading statements that could influence the responses of the respondents. According to Maxcy (2003), "positivism maintains that the world works according to fixed laws of cause and effect". "Scientific thinking is used to test theories about these laws, and either reject or provisionally accept them".

Maxcy (2003) also refers to "positivism and post positivism as epistemologies, regarding them as two different world views that underlie quantitative and qualitative research". The quantitative view is often described as being "realist' or at times positivist', while the world views underlying qualitative research is viewed as being 'subjectivist' (Maxcy, 2003)".

4.4.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is an "approach to social science research, as it rejects the positivist idea that the same research methods can be used to study human behaviour as are successfully used in fields such as chemistry and physics" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), interpretivists argue that "when the researcher studies the behaviour of a particular metal, the primary causes of changes in the metal are within the environment". As much as human beings behave in a particular way because of their environment in which they are exposed to the influence is not direct as it is with a piece of metal.

It is also argued that "humans are also influenced by their subjective perception of their environment—their subjective realities" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). In this case the researcher "does not worry about the subjective impressions of a steel bar"; however, if the researcher fully intends to understand the behaviour of an 18-year-old delinquent, he or she must understand the delinquent's view of the world around her. Also important to understand will be "the subjective perceptions of her by others in her social and cultural context. Thus, for interpretivists, what the world means to the person or group being studied is extremely significant for good research in the social sciences" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

Interpretivists favour qualitative methods such as case studies, interviews, and observation because those methods are better ways of getting at how humans "interpret the world around them" (Merten, 2003). According to Merten (2003), humans "interpret their sensations", which means that "they do not directly experience the 'out there' world as it is." Dilthey made additions to the "18th century foundations of interpretivism", whereby he argued that the goal of the research in social science was based on an understanding, also that the proper

topic of social science research was “the lived experiences, of humans (Morgan, 2007). According to Morgan (2007), Dilthey “was reacting against contemporary ideas that the social sciences should emulate the positivist methods of the natural sciences,” citing as a reason that “humans could be treated as complex machines. For Morgan, natural reality was not the same as social reality, and that meant that different methods of research were needed to study social reality.”

4.4.2.3 Constructivism

Morse (2003) states that constructivism was proposed as an alternative paradigm for research in response to the paradigm problem for mixed methods which arose in 1970s and 80s. “Finding a rationale for combining qualitative and quantitative data in the face of seemingly incompatible paradigms underpinning them has been seen as a problem for mixed methods researchers” (Morse, 2003). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), “it has been claimed that mixed methods are not possible due to the incompatibility of the paradigms underlying them.” To deal with this problem, various alternative approaches were introduced which are classified into three basic categories: “a paradigmatic stance, multiple paradigm approach and the single paradigm approach” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Cresswell & Clark, 2007). In relation to approach number one – it ignores “paradigmatic issues”, the second indicates “alternative paradigms are not incompatible and can be used in the one research project”, while the third approach argues that both “quantitative and qualitative research can be accommodated under a single paradigm”.

There is no authentic method of stating with total confidence that one paradigm is better than others (Merten, 2003). He states that shortage of capability in making a final selection with “supreme confidence, scholars and research consumers should be willing to acknowledge that the viewpoints and procedures based on other paradigms are accepted and used by reasonable scholars,” regardless of whether they agree with them. In Merten’s (2003) study, it is indicated that there is no absolute winner in whichever effort of trying to discover a paradigm without weaknesses and mistakes. This view is directly opposed by other authors such as (Phillips & Barbules, 2000), who continue to assert that “We need disciplined, competent inquiry to establish which of our beliefs are warranted and which are chimerical. And the philosophy that will serve us best in our endeavours is post positivism”.

4.4.2.4 Experiential realism and pragmatism

Another world view or epistemology that underlies the work of some quantitative researchers is experiential realism (Feilzer, 2010). “Experiential realism claims, as do anti-positivist positions, that we cannot observe the world in a purely objective way [because] our perception itself influences what we see and measure” (Feilzer, 2010). In contrast to subjectivist positions, experiential realists believe that there is a limit to subjectivity – that we are limited in our subjectivity by the fact that we use a limited number of schemas to formulate our views of the world because our perception is “embodied”. We do not make our observations “passively, but actively interact with the world through our bodies” (Feilzer, 2010). Feilzer (2010) indicates that the “experiential realists” turn to view the practise of metaphor as fundamental to the manner in which we find sense in the universe around us, as we use “metaphors” with a purpose to make sense of our world. One key “metaphor” that we often make use of in doing this is the “subject-object schema”, and it splits the universe into “objects (things) and subjects (people)”. In Feilzer (2010), it is indicated that such a “metaphor” has its roots within the fact that in our interactions with the universe we realize a distinction between an “external world consisting of edges, surfaces and textures that are not us and those things that are us, the actor”. As we move around our universe, the objects remain “invariant”. According to Mulaik’s (1995) study, it is pointed out that “science is an activity that is based on this subject–object schema”.

With reference to the work of Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004; Feilzer (2010; Maxcy (2003; Morgan (2007), they show “Pragmatism has gained significant support as a stance for mixed methods researchers”. Feilzer (2010, p. 8) argues that it is focused more on “toward solving practical problems in the real world” rather than “focussing on the assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge”.

The majority of “quantitative and qualitative researchers” choose a pragmatist methodology to research and make use of various approaches subject to a research question which they are aimed at answering (Feilzer, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Maxcy, 2003; Morgan, 2007). In certain instances, this leads researchers to quantitative research approach. Examples of this are when researchers are required to provide a quantitative response to a question, are looking to “test a theory mathematically”, or are required to simplify results to a population and so on. In different instances, they will make use of “qualitative research methods”, or

even choose to make use of “mixed research method”. The below summary provides us with the research method contains several “research paradigms” which are highlighted as follows:

4.4.2.5 Mixed research paradigm

“Mixed research approach” as a concept has been defined in a variety of ways. This includes descriptions of this concept such as a “worldview”, as an “epistemological stance”, as “shared beliefs among a community of researchers” and as a “model examples of research” (Morgan, 2007). Even though the third of these is closest to Kuhn’s definition provided in 1970’s, Morgan (2007) recognizes that a second meaning “a paradigm as an epistemological stance”, has been the most commonly used meaning across all debates regarding social science Morgan (2007) acknowledges that the second meaning – a “paradigm methodology”.

However, Miller (2006) argues that it is the first of these meanings which have been already accepted by some of the major writers in the field.

Harrits (2011) has proposed “two more paradigms for mixed methods research”, which he refers to as “nested analyses and praxeological knowledge”. Nevertheless, his practise of the word “paradigm” does not match up with the “worldview” use accepted by the above highlighted writers. It matches more with the fourth use such as “model examples of research” (Morgan, 2007). The usage of the term suggests that there would be various “paradigms in mixed methods research alone”, providing the term a clearer much more precise meaning than that generally used in the literature concerning mixed methods.

The three different positions that “mixed methods researchers” may take with an intention to identify a suitable paradigm to support their research may include the “paradigmatic stance, the multiple paradigm stances and the single paradigm stance”. These are drawn from the “original six stances” introduced by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003), as they are being reduced into three by grouping numerous within the “multiple paradigm stance”. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) drawing from the work of Patton (1990) make the point that “methodology is independent of the epistemology that gave rise to it”. The “paradigmatic stance adopted by a researcher” may probably not be made clear. This is because in most instances researchers begin conducting a research without taking a stance regarding to their “paradigmatic position which is left implicit”. This action also does not indicate that researchers do not have a “paradigmatic position in mind, it often means that they do not have it articulated within their research papers. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2006) make a

point that a research is never free from a chosen paradigm. Therefore the “paradigmatic stance” supported by Patton may possible not be sustained as a worthwhile method in order to justify the “mixed methods research approach”.

The “multiple paradigm stance” suggests that the researcher may make use of more than one paradigm in his or her research project. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) state that this action may take three forms which are: the “complementary strengths thesis, the dialectical thesis and the multiple paradigms thesis”. Mors (2003) point out that the “complementary strengths thesis” keeps the methods separate with an intention to draw on the strengths of each. With reference to the dialectical thesis, it is argued by Greene (2007; Greene and Caracelli (2003) that insights can be obtained through mixing “mental models, whereas mental model is the set of assumptions, understandings, predispositions, values and beliefs” with which all social inquirers approach their work”. The “multiple paradigm theses” contend that a “mixed-methods design” plays a critical role in determining the suitability of “paradigm choice” (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). However, this suggestion means that certain paradigms are suitable for some designs and not for others. It therefore becomes crucial that the researcher identifies the most appropriate paradigm for the research design being executed.

Feilzer (2010), Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Maxcy (2003), and Morgan (2007) all agree that pragmatism has gained considerable support as a stance for mixed methods researchers. It is focused on “solving practical problems in the real world” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 8) as opposed to “focusing on assumptions about the nature of knowledge”. It is also worth mentioning that it was “derived from the writings of Peirce, Dewey and James in the 19th and early 20thcenturies and Rorty in the late 20th century”.

The “transformative–emancipatory paradigm” proposed by Mertens (2003) as a paradigm for mixed methods research places “central importance on the lives and experiences of marginalised groups such as women, ethnic racial minorities, members of the gay and lesbian communities, people with disabilities, and those who are poor”.

A proposal was made by Saunders et al. (2012) that a process of research may commonly contain a “sequence of stages” within each individual paradigm argued above, and they can also be understood through the below table:

Table 4.4 "Sequential stages in research process within each paradigm".

In the positivist paradigm	In the phenomenological paradigm	In the mixed paradigm
A theory is advanced.	A broad area of focus is defined.	Separate positivist and phenomenological examinations of the problem.
Concepts and variables are derived from the theory.	The researcher asks open-ended questions and records observations about the phenomena in a real-life context.	One paradigm predominates while the other is used for a small component of the study.
Hypotheses or research questions are developed from the theory.	The researcher searches for categories and groupings in the data.	It designs where a researcher combines both paradigms throughout, using the advantages of both if necessary.
Concepts and variables are operationalised into visible, definable indicators so that they can be measured.	The researcher looks for patterns and recurrences in the data.	
A research instrument measures the variables and operationalised indicators to test the hypothesis.	Patterns are interpreted into a reasoned explanation of the phenomena.	

(Source: Saunders et al. 2012).

4.4.3 Rationale for following a post-positivist and quantitative approach in this research

The researcher chose to adopt a quantitative research approach rather than a qualitative approach, as a means for testing objective theories by examining the "relationship between variables". However, such "variables in turn were measured naturally on instruments so that numbered data could be analysed through statistical procedures". Following Cresswell (1994), below are the reasons for identifying the structured questionnaire as the research instrument:

- Structured questionnaires are quicker, compared to focus group discussions.
- The researcher wanted to guarantee the anonymity of the participants (which made the managers of Limpopo DoE more willing to provide answers to sensitive questions).
- Through the use of structured questionnaires, the researcher managed to reach a large number of managers of the Limpopo Department of Education.

4.4.4 Study site

This research on "key success factors for implementing a WSP" was conducted in the Limpopo DoE. Limpopo is one of the nine provinces of South Africa, situated in the northern part of the country. The study was conducted in two institutions: the provincial office of the Limpopo DoE and the Sekhukhune district office.

Other districts of the Limpopo DoE are Capricorn, Vhembe, Waterberg and Mopani. All 5 of the district offices deliver the education-related services to a number of circuit offices, which in turn deliver similar services to the primary and secondary schools of the province. In regard to the study site, it is important to emphasise that the study was "limited to the provincial office and Sekhukhune district", and that the "circuit offices" and schools under these institutions did not form part of the study site.

Regenesys (2010) defines a study site as the single organisation responsible for conducting the research at a particular locality. It further maintains that the study site is not necessarily the setting where activities of research will actually take place.

The example of this is that in this research project not all managers of the Limpopo DoE completed questionnaires at the provincial office or Sekhukhune district as the study site. A lot of them completed questionnaires at different training venues or meetings where the researcher was able to hand-deliver them.

4.4.5 Sample site

The empirical research for this study was conducted in August 2015 in Riba-Cross District Office. Riba-Cross, situated in Burgersfort town in Sekhukhune district, is one of 5 new district offices in the Limpopo DoE introduced towards the end of year 2011, giving the Limpopo DoE a total of ten district offices.

The sample sites for the study being the provincial office of the Limpopo DoE and the Sekhukhune district office, all managers permanently working for the Limpopo DoE and willing to participate in the study who took part were located in one or the other of the two offices.

4.4.6 Empirical research

Empirical research was conducted in the Limpopo DoE, at Riba-Cross District Office in February 2014. The research instrument used to conduct the research was a questionnaire designed to determine, firstly which key success factors for WSP implementation managers regarded as important, and secondly, the extent to which Limpopo DoE managers applied these factor. The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Section A: Demographical information.
- Section B: Aspects of information gathering to inform the WSP.
- Section C: Aspects of skills auditing.
- Section D: Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP.
- Section E: Aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP.
- Section F: Aspects of reporting on the implementation of a WSP.

4.4.7 Target population

Population can be defined as "the entire group of persons that the researcher wants to study [as research subjects] because it contains all the variables of interest to the researcher" (Bak 2004). For the purpose of this study, the researcher identified the research population as all employees who are permanently employed by the Limpopo DoE and currently serving in this organisation. De Vos (2002) argues that researchers seldom have access to the *entire* population. He points out that the population that the researcher does have access to and actually does study usually become different from the rest of the population in one aspect or more.

The researcher should "identify, define and describe his or her target population carefully, and specify the set of criteria to be included in the population" (Regenesys, 2010). With reference to such target population, it is suggested that the population which a researcher may manage to reach is the "accessible population or study population" (De Vos, 2002).

With reference to the study on "Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan", the population comprised the entire staff members of the Limpopo Department of Education. On 10 April 2013, the PERSAL system of the Limpopo DOE indicated that the organization had 63919 human capital employed. This total number comprised of "56917 education specialists" and "5948 office based" employees.

The target population of the study was the 2788 permanently employed employees stationed at the 5 district offices of the Limpopo DoE, and included both "education specialists and office-based" employees.

The population of the study was particularly the managers working for the Limpopo DOE stationed in the provincial office and the districts. The study did not include circuit managers or school managers. The head of department (administrative head) and the heads of districts (senior managers) were consulted to gather data about the research topic. All participants were given a questionnaire which was personally transported to each of them as they were also signing the register for it. Delivered questionnaires were personally collect, with the response being 100%.

Given the size of the study population", it was important for a researcher to identify the population sample. Welman (2002) notes that in the social sciences "it often happens that the target population and the accessible population are too large or unmanageable (e.g. spread out across a wide geographic area). In these cases, the researcher has to define his/her population and use a sampling [technique] to limit the target population or the accessible population in some way". Welman states that a sample can be defined as "a subset or measurements drawn from a defined population"**.** Vithal and Jansen (2004) define sampling as "a logical way of making statements about a larger population, based on what the researcher has determined and discovered regarding a smaller population".

In order for the researcher to confirm that the drawn sample really represents the population, Cohen et al. (2002) suggest the two vital factors which ought to be taken into consideration:

How "similar or dissimilar" is the research population?

A population consisting of people who are "similar" to one another is known as homogeneous population, while a population comprising people who are "dissimilar" to one another is known as heterogeneous population. Both the "Homogeneous and heterogeneous" are population categories which are exceedingly appropriate within the context and field of research. "The more alike homogeneous the elements of a population are, the smaller the sample can be and still be representative of the target population or the accessible population" (Cohen 2002).

The "degree of precision" with which the population is specified

In a case whereby a "research population" is clearly defined, the researcher feels more confident that the study sample is representative, particularly with the entire inclusion of all elements of the population. The "defined population" in which the researcher draws the sample from is referred to as the "sampling frame". The "sampling frame" is classified as one of the key essentials of sampling. This is because when a sample is drawn from a "poorly defined population", it is likely to be biased and will fail to reach the desired research goals (Cohen 2002).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher had to draw a sample of the population through the use of "simple random sampling as one of the probability sampling approaches".

Smith (2000, p. 83) defines sampling theory as a "technical accounting device" introduced in order to give good reason in the process of collecting information and choose in a suitable way the restricted set of objects, events, persons and so on from which the actual research information will be drawn. In addition, Smith points to the below mentioned points as some of the key advantages of sampling:

- Gathering data on a sample is "less time-consuming" as compared to sampling the whole population.
- Gathering data on a sample is less costly, since the "costs of research are proportional" to the number of hours spent on data collection.
- A large population may perhaps be "spread over a geographical area", which will involve a lot of expenditures regarding travelling.
- "Sampling" may probably be the only available option as a practical method of data.

With a variety of sampling methods available as options to select from, the researcher decided to make use of the "stratified random sampling".

4.4.8 Sampling strategies

In the simple random sampling used in the study, the researcher wrote the names of all 5 districts and put them in a plastic bag for one to be selected randomly. This was done to guarantee that each district obtains an equal chance to be selected in the sample**.** This process of randomly selection is referred to as the fishbowl technique, which is one of the techniques of random sampling.

Saunders et al. (2012) state that in simple random sampling each element in the population stands an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample. They also mention that the selection process is not biased or prearranged. For example, if the researcher were to choose every fourth element in the sampling frame (the actual list of elements from which sample is actually drawn, ideally the complete and correct list of population members only) then there would be no independent "randomness in the selection process". Saunders et al identify the following and refer to them as basic steps in the process of "simple random sampling":

- Clear definition of "research population": With reference to the research on the Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan, the population refers to all officials of the Limpopo Department of Education and it is expressed as N. Therefore a sampling frame refers to all the managers of the Limpopo Department of Education. If the researcher was only interested in male managers of the organisation, for example, all females were going to be excluded in the process of creating a sampling frame, which would have been much less than the sample size the research has.
- "Listing of all members or elements of the population": In order to select a sample of the research, the researcher needed to identify all managers at the Limpopo Department of Education. Before carrying out this study, the researcher obtained a permission from the gatekeepers and thereafter the researcher was able to view a list of all managers working for the Limpopo Department of Education. If the researcher decided to choose a sample size of 100 managers, the sample is again expressed as n. The number is chosen based on the cbudget limits as well as the minimum time for the researcher to distribute research questionnaire to managers. However, the sample size can also be determined through the use of a sample size calculation, which is a predominantly useful statistical instrument.
- Numbering the elements of the research population: This is a process of assigning a consecutive number from one to N, next to each individual manager in the Limpopo Department of Education.
- Selecting the research sample using an approach that guarantees randomness: At this point – the researcher finally gets to select which of the managers will be invited to participate in the research on the Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan.

Regenesys (2010) states that "random sampling is based on the selection of elements from the target population by means of some form of random procedure. The most commonly used probability sampling techniques are simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling and cluster sampling."

Among the available simple random techniques are the lottery technique (also known as fishbowl technique) and the random number table.

Lottery technique which is also known as "fishbowl technique".

"A symbol for each element or the unit of analysis of the population is written on an identical piece of paper and it is placed in a container, mixed and thereafter one number is drawn at a time. The sample size of the study will determine the number of papers to be drawn. This type of sampling is well known in the South African lottery, whereby random numbers are generated through lottery balls or by computer".

Random number table

The disturbing random number is frequently used in order to collect a random sample. The number table is drawn up mathematically, so that the numbers are written randomly, in rows or columns as depicted in Figure 4-1 Random number table

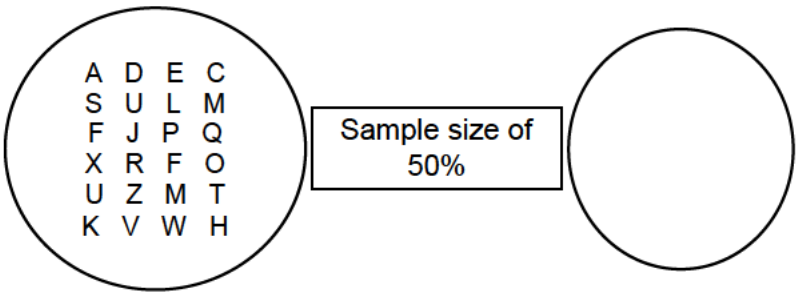


Figure 4-1 Random number table
Source: Maree (2002: 143)

A random sample of size n = 15 has to be drawn from a population of size n = 67

n = the symbol for the size of the population

N = the symbol for the sample size

Figure 4-2 Example of using random number table for sampling

(Source: Maree, 2002:37).

4.4.9 Sample size

Sample size in this study is the number of the managers of the Limpopo DoE who were chosen to participate in the study. The following table shows the sample that was drawn from the population to take part in the study:

Table 4.5 The research sample

Sample size for frequency in a population		
Population size(for finite population correction factor or FPC)(*N*):		1019
Hypothesised % frequency of outcome factor in the population (*p*):		50%+/-5
Confidence limits as % of 100(absolute +/- %)(*d*):		5%
Design effect (for cluster surveys-*DEFF*):		1
Sample size(*n*) for various confidence levels		
Confidence	**Level (%)**	**Sample Size**
95%		75
Equation		
Sample size *n* = [DEFF*Np(1-p)]/ [(d^2/Z$^2_{1-\alpha/2}$*(N-1)+p*(1-p)]		

4.4.10 The sample

The sample in the study comprised 75 permanently employed managers of the Limpopo Department of Education. The researcher was confident enough that there was enough representation on the sample of the study, also that the research population was clearly defined. The example of this is that the researcher did not eliminate any particular elements of the population from this study. According to Maree (2002), the clearly defined population from which a research sample was drawn is called the "*sampling frame*", which is also referred to as one of the main essentials of sampling. This is because when a research sample is drawn from a "poorly defined population", there are high possibilities for that particular research sample to be biased.

The sample did not include the circuit managers or the school managers (school principals). Questionnaires were hand-delivered to every manager who was selected to participate in the study. A total of 95 questionnaires were printed, and these were distributed to a total of 75 participants. The researcher gathered all of the structured questionnaires which were already completed by the managers that were chosen as part of the research sample.

4.4.11 Data collection method

With reference to the chosen research design and methodology, the researcher chose to use a "structured questionnaire" as a suitable research instrument to collect data relating to the study objectives (Regenesys, 2010), and a data analysis plan was established before commencing with the data collection. Regenesys (2010) identifies three "pre-planning processes" which require to be clearly introduced ahead of processes of data collection and data analysis.

Format of the research instrument. The researcher made sure that all categories of data required for the completion of the research objectives had been included. In addition, the researcher further determined the manner in which individual areas of the research tool were to be analysed, as well as the manner in which the quantitative items were to be processed and so on.

B: Identification of appropriate statistical technique. The researcher had a full grasp of the specific statistical technique that was going to be used in the analysis of each section of the research instrument. The researcher also made sure to get familiar with the "procedures and interpretation of the relevant statistics".

C: "Pilot study". With reference to this research, the research instrument was administered in a small pilot group that was chosen by the researcher. The purpose of this exercise was to examine the "user friendliness, comprehensiveness and adequacy of the data-collection procedures and instruments". In addition, the data was analysed to establish the adequacy of the data analysis plan of action. A critical point about the data collection stage is that once the data is collated and about to be analysed it is often too late to return to participants to gather additional information on the gaps revealed during the data analysis stage.

Goodstadt (2007) points out that a "questionnaire" is still regarded as one of the most popular methods of conducting scholarly research. He maintains that it provides an appropriate way of collecting the required information from a target population. Malhotra (2004) views

questionnaires as a prearranged set of questions directed to participants with a purpose to obtain answers. This means that through questionnaires, the information needs of the researcher is translated into a set of precise questions that respondents are willing and able to answer.

Malhotra (2004) regards a questionnaire as "the main means of collecting quantitative primary data". He maintains that "a questionnaire enables quantitative data to be collected in a standardised way so that the data are internally consistent and coherent for analysis". With regard to this research, questionnaires were used to guarantee standardisation and comparability of the already gathered data throughout research participants. "It also increases speed and accuracy of recording and facilitates data processing" (Malhotra, 2004).

Some of the advantages of "questionnaires as a research instrument for data collection"; According to Malhotra (2004), may include the following:

- Questionnaires are easier to plan, compile and administer.
- Questionnaires comprise of "standardised instructions" and participants find it easy to identify exactly what the researcher anticipate them to do.
- Costs in administering the questionnaire are low.
- Questionnaires help to reach a large group of participants.
- The researcher has an option to either hand questionnaires directly to respondents or mail them to participants with clear instructions.
- Questionnaires lessen "personal contact" between the researcher and the participants. This action increases likelihoods of objectivity".
- Respondents are able to straightforwardly and rapidly fil-in the questionnaires, which they can also do in their own time.
- Participants are at liberty to remain anonymous and their confidentiality is maintained.
- Information collected through questionnaires is easy to tabulate.
- Irrelevant and confusing answers to questions are mostly excluded.
- It is easier to prevent repetition of responses.
- It is easier and quicker for respondents to answer.
- Answers are easier to code and statistically analyse.
- The answers of the participants are easier to compare, codify and analyse statistically.

- Unlike in a face-to-face interview, a questionnaire enables participants to respond to sensitive questions.
- Responses can be kept simple, short and straight to the point.

Malhotra (2004) also notes the following disadvantages of the questionnaire as an instrument for data collection:

- Questionnaires are not very easy to design.
- Many questionnaires end up not being returned to the researcher - leading to low rate of feedback.
- Questionnaires enable participants with little knowledge about the research subject to take part in the study
- Answers offered by the questionnaire may be confusing to the respondents and difficult for them to interpret.
- Questionnaires often not give respondents an opportunity to ask for further clarification.
- A questionnaire may lead participants to make choices they would not make in practice.
- Questionnaires provide an opportunity for questions to be answered randomly, or even by somebody else.
- Various respondents may interpret research questions differently.
- There is a possibility of clerical mistakes or marking the wrong response.
- Questionnaires force respondents to give simplistic responses to complex issues.
- The respondents may become frustrated when the answer they would like to give is not one of the choices provided by the questionnaire.
- The researcher may not be present to visually observe the reaction of respondents to questions.

4.4.11.1 Data-collection instrument for managers of Limpopo DoE

All data regarding key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE was collected using structured questionnaires as the data-collection instrument. The structured questionnaires can therefore be regarded as a set of research questions that specified the set of responses as well as their format (Malhotra, 2004). This means that all Limpopo DoE managers who participated in this study received a questionnaire in which they were requested to complete. According to Johnson (2006), the instrument for collecting data in the

research refers to the actual tools used to employ the research methods. As it was the case in this study, the research method obviously determined which research instruments were to be used.

Bless and Smith (2000) suggests that the structure of the questionnaires must meet the following requirements:

- All guidelines on the questionnaire must be clear, straightforward and not be confusing to the respondents. This means that research participants must not be confused and begin to wonder as to what is required of them. Regenesys (2010) argues that a clearly compiled questionnaire enables research participants to effectively and efficiently provide answers without having to worry about the way in which the questionnaire is designed and require answers.
- Questionnaires should not be too long and boring to the respondents. In the case of this research, a questionnaire was designed in a short and clear manner that did not creat problems or confusions to the research participants.
- Questionnaires must provide sufficient information for respondents to understand and feel comfortable participating in the study. With reference to this research, a questionnaire had enough information and all research participants had adequate clarity and they were able to comfortably take part in the study. In addition, the researcher was able to thoroughly explain the questionnaire to all participants before taking part in the study.
- Questionnaires should be designed in an interesting way that will attract the attention of the respondents. This requirement was also met through the properly designed and interesting questionnaire that was distributed to participants. This was also evident through the large number of questionnaires that were completed and returned back to the researcher.
- Questions should be meaningfully structured so that respondents find the questionnaire easy to complete. Research participants did not find it difficult to understand and complete a questionnaire for the study on the Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan. All questionnaires were returned to the researcher without blank spaces due to lack of clarity.

The questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter, the consent letter, and an explanation of the Likert scale.

Covering letter

"A questionnaire should have a covering letter that provides participants with important information about the research itself, the researcher, and other stakeholders involved" (Bless & Smith, 2000). In this study the covering letter was attached and provided the participating Limpopo DoE managers with the necessary information.

The covering letter served as an invitation to the managers of Limpopo DoE to participate in the study. Saunders et al., (2012) states that the covering letter with the questionnaire can be regarded as a document which enables participants to decide whether or not to take part in the research. "Information delimited in the covering letter included the names and contact details of the research officer, the supervisor of the research project and the researcher". Furthermore, it indicates the research topic, the aim of the research, and assurance of "liberty and confidentiality of participants". This "covering letter" was signed and kept by participant.

Notwithstanding the information being furnished to research participants using the covering letter, the researcher must still be accessible to participants in order to further clarify any available misunderstanding concerning the study (Saunders et al., (2012). This action is significant firstly to orientate the participant regarding the subject of research, and secondly to get informed participation throughout the study. It is moreover argued that the most commonly used technique to explain the aim of the questionnaire is by having the "covering letter attached to the questionnaire" (Saunders et al., 2012). They also suggest that questionnaires ought to contain an "opening section" that noticeably and briefly explain the fundamental purpose of the study, as well as the importance of the participants' involvement in the research.

The consent letter

All questionnaires distributed to managers of the Limpopo DoE had the informed consent letter attached to them. The consent letter required every person who take part in the study to complete his or her full names and provide confirmation to indicate their understanding of the contents of the "questionnaire and the nature of the research project". The consent letter was also used to request managers to express their interest regarding the participation in the study and, also to check if managers understood their freedom of withdrawing their participation at any given time. All participants managed to sign the "consent letter" prior taking part in the study. All the "signed informed letters were retained by the researcher".

The Likert scale

The structured questionnaire is a research tool that was used in order to gather data furnished research participants with a Likert scale, wherein participants were asked to just "mark with a √ or x" to indicate the needed information with regard to "key success factors for implementing the WSP in the Limpopo DoE". Below is the Likert scale that was utilized for item-responses:

Table 4.6 Likert scale for item responses

Not at all	Small extent	Some extent	Great extent
1	2	3	4

The structure of the questionnaire

All structured questions were answered through the use of the same "Likert scale".

All research questions were categorised into six different sections in which the questionnaire was divided.

These sections include: "demographical information, aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP, aspects of skills auditing, aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP, aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP**, as well as the** aspects of reporting on the implemented WSP". The categories of these sections are outlined as follows.

Section A: "Demographical information". This section was intended to help the researcher in determining whether the participants had sufficient "knowledge and experience on the subject of workplace skills planning". The participants were asked to furnish the researcher with their demographical information relating to gender, race, status of employment, experience in the Limpopo DoE, and level of education, participation in WSP programmes and processes, and number of skills development courses the manager had attended. The positive feedback from the empirical research also indicated that the Limpopo DoE managers did indeed have adequate knowledge and experience to understand the questionnaire. With reference to the results of the empirical research, the data collection tool or the questionnaire did not have any "gaps or adjustments" which required attention.

Section B: Aspects of "information gathering to inform the WSP". The purpose of this section was to determine the manner in which the aspects of gathering information to inform the WSP was perceived as necessary in the Limpopo DoE. The Limpopo DoE managers were also asked to rate the extent to which they think information gathering in their organisation

considered external factors, internal factors, employee information and the relationship between training units and other sections of their company.

Section C: Aspects of skills auditing. The purpose of the research was to determine the extent which managers think the aspects of skills auditing were properly conducted in the Limpopo DoE. This section also required managers to rate the extent to which skills auditing considered human resource planning, job and competence profiling, finding the skills gaps, and the link between the employee's qualification and his or her current job demands.

Section D: Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP. This section of the questionnaire sought to determine whether the Limpopo DoE managers thought their organisation was committed in compiling and submitting the WSP, and the extent which they agreed with the following statements: "employees are always consulted regarding the skills needs identified in the WSP"; "members of skills development committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP"; "activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organisation' management"; and "the Limpopo DoE always submits its WSP on time to SETA".

Section E: Aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP. This section sought to determine the extent to which the managers thought WSP actions were well implemented in their organisation and the extent which they agreed with the following statements: "implementation of a WSP in Limpopo DoE includes accredited formal trainings"; "a WSP of their organisation includes the implementation of workplace based trainings"; "training methods are designed to suit each particular training implemented"; "a WSP is properly monitored in the Limpopo DoE"; "the results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes"; "management encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP"; and "the quality of implementing a WSP improves every financial year in the Limpopo DoE organisation".

Section F: Aspects of reporting on the implementation of a WSP. This final section of the questionnaire asked the managers to rate the extent which they thought the Limpopo DoE reported to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year. In addition, managers were asked if they agree with the following statements: "the Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA"; "the Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA"; "the skills development committee plays a critical role when compiling an Annual Training Report"; "a report of a WSP of Limpopo DoE includes other trainings conducted by

other units"; "members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR"; and "all reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in the Limpopo DoE".

4.4.11.2 Development of the questionnaire

Malhotra (2004) argues that although questionnaires are developed mostly for purposes of survey research, they are also developed for purposes of experimentation. In developing a questionnaire for this study, the researcher began by specifying the type of data that needed to be hand-collected by the questionnaire. According to Cooper et al. (2000), "questionnaires should also be designed with the target respondents in mind, taking into account their educational level and experience. The language used and the context of the questions must all be familiar to the respondents." For example, "questions that are appropriate for college students may not be appropriate for those with only a high school education." Valsiner (2000) argues that questionnaires that "fail to keep in mind the characteristics of the respondents; particularly their educational level and experience", result to a "high incidence of uncertain or no opinion" responses.

The researcher developed a "structured questionnaire based on the systems theory as the theoretical framework". The significance of the theoretical framework is that it positions the research within the environment that is not biased in nature (Bak, 2004:18). The research is customarily built from a particular theory because it adds an "elegant and powerful explanation" to an educational or social event (Vithal & Jansen, 2004:17). They moreover point out that it provides a viewpoint to events and should "always exist in the context of competing and rival theories". The questionnaire was used as the only instrument for gathering data on "key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE", and was printed and delivered to the Limpopo DoE managers who formed part of the study. It contained instructions, questions and statements. Bak (2004) states that the questions used in a questionnaire are of the utmost importance, and that it is not enough simply to formulate any questions that seem to explore or address the research problem.

In the present study the researcher used structured questionnaires that contained relevant research questions. Bak (2004) states that relevant research questions lead to relevant data being collected in the research. Without this assurance, the researcher may generate findings that fail to link the research objectives with the conclusions. The researcher accordingly carefully considered every question in terms of the following criteria:

- "Is the research question measuring what it is supposed to measure?"
- "Does the question have to be included in the questionnaire in order to investigate and understand the research problem?"
- "Is the question phrased in a way that will elicit the right kind of answer?"
- "Will the respondent be able to understand the question?"

The next section focuses on "data quality control", how the data was captured and analysed, and the validity and reliability of the data-collection instrument.

4.4.12 Data quality control

4.4.12.1 Data-collection procedure

With regard to this research, the procedure for collection data was Amed at facilitating informed and constructive interaction with the participants of the research. The researcher managed to personally distribute questionnaires to every manager during training sessions, seminars and management meetings. The researcher achieved this through visiting every venue where managers were gathered for whatever work-related purpose and requested few minutes from the facilitator for managers to complete questionnaires. The researcher was always present in the field to make sure that all questionnaires were completed and returned, that all were completed by the correct participants, and that all were interpreted correctly, with any questions or concerns regarding misunderstanding of questions being attended instantly.

It is also significant for researchers to "have the data analysis plan established before commencing the data collection" (Saunders et al. 2012). Essential pre-planning processes for data collection and data analysis require clarity on the following points:

- Format of the research instruments: The researcher must ensure that all categories of data required for the completion of the research objectives have been included. In addition, there has to be clarity about the way in which each area of the research instrument will be analysed, how quantitative items will be processed, and how the computer will be used during the "data analysis" stage.
- "Identification of appropriate statistical techniques": The researcher ought to must ensure to have a full-grasp of the particular statistical techniques that will be used in the analysis of each section of the research instrument.

- "Data presentation and layout": It is a responsibility of the researcher to choose the kind of graphics and tables to be utilized during the presentation of the data.
- Pilot study: It is always crucial for researchers to administer the data collection instrument to a small and manageable pilot group with a purpose to examine the "user friendliness, comprehensiveness and adequacy" of research instrument and the data collection procedures. Moreover, the data ought to be analysed with an intention of establishing the "adequacy of the data analysis plan of action".

  It is worth mentioning that during the data collection phase, it is always "too late" to return back to the research participants with an intention to collect additional information that will help in trying to close the identified gaps during the process of data analysis, more so when the data has already been collated and yet to be analysed. In the process of gathering data, the researcher guaranteed free collaboration from research participants, also that every manager that was part of the study understands the "content of the questionnaire and the importance of participating in the study". The researcher visited almost every training session; meeting or seminar attended by managers and asked them to complete a questionnaire survey before their sessions come to an end. This was achieved through the assistance of Mrs. Julie Moloto who was working as the manager in the Human Resource Utilization and Capacity Development unit. Before the researcher could start gathering data, Regenesys (2010) points out "a respondent is entitled to sufficient information about the nature of the study, the kinds of information or behaviour expected of him or her and the use to be made of the results so that he or she can decide whether or not to participate".

The collected data in this research was captured using Microsoft Excel. Two components of validity that were considered by the researcher ahead of data collection were face validity and content validity.

4.4.13 Pilot study

A pilot study was done, following the recommendation by Saunders et al. (2012) that it is essential for researchers to pre-test questionnaires. They maintain that this helps to determine whether the questions are relevant and meaningful, constructed appropriately, not too long and monotonous, and not very ambiguous.

A suggestion was made that researchers ought to administer the research instrument to a small pilot group in order to examine the user-friendliness, comprehensiveness and adequacy of the data-collection procedures and instruments (Valsiner, 2000).

Before administering the questionnaire to participants in the study, the researcher "tested it on a pilot sample of 16 managers" of Riba-Cross District Office of the Limpopo DoE. The pilot study indicated that the instrument did not seem to require any adjustments or changes. According to Saunders et al. (2012), the pilot study enables the researcher to achieve the following:

make necessary amendments to maximise "returns and minimise the error rate on answers"
"categorise open-ended questions to a reasonable degree"
"perform questionnaire analysis on the pilot sample"
"test out all the computational procedures and produce some initial hypotheses"
"evaluate the adequacy of the data for the research questions"

Testing a research instrument using a pilot survey is also known as pretesting (Saunders et al. 2012), which refers to testing the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents, often "15 to 30", to "identify and eliminate potential problems". According to Saunders et al. (2012), he makes a point that pretesting can improve even the good questionnaires. He states that researchers must not make use of questionnaires in the field study without "extensive pretesting".

Saunders et al., (2012) suggest that all the aspects of questionnaires must be pretested, including "question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty, and instructions". In addition, pretesting should be done with a subdivision of the respondent group. The pre-test groups should be similar to the respondents with regard to their "background characteristics, familiarity with the research topic" and so on.

Saunders et al. (2012) make a point "Pre-tests are best done by personal interviews, even if the actual survey is to be conducted by telephone, mail, or electronically, so that interviewers can observe respondent reactions and attitudes". Regenesys (2010) indicates that "after the necessary changes have been made, another pre-test could be administered using the actual data-collection approach, if it is to be mail, telephone, or electronic". The above indicated stage of pretesting will disclose any potential or available difficulties in the interviewing approach that will be used during the actual survey.

Saunders et al. (2012) suggest “the pre-test should be conducted in an environment and context similar to that of the actual survey”. With reference to the feedback from the pre-test, “the questionnaire should be edited and the identified problems corrected”. They further suggest that another pre-test should be conducted immediately after each questionnaire amendment, this time through the use of a different sample of respondents. The process of pretesting must be sustained until no more changes are required. The final step of this process is that the responses received during the pre-test ought to be coded and well-analysed. Saunders et al. (2012) point out “the analysis of pre-test responses can serve as a check on the adequacy of the problem definition, and provide insight into the nature of the data as well as analytic techniques that will be required”.

The outcomes of the pre-test after importantly revising the structured questionnaire, which is the research tool for this study – pointed out that there was no necessity for questionnaire-adjustments. In conjunction with the consultant for statistics, the researcher managed to code and analyse all responses obtained in the pre-test using SPSS. In Gorman and Clayton (2005:43), they argue that the “analysis of pre-test responses can serve as a check on the adequacy of the problem definition, and provide insight into the nature of the data as well as analytic techniques that will be required”.

4.4.13.1 Validity and reliability of the data-collection instrument

Validity

Gratton and Jones (2004, p. 87) point out two questions which requires the researcher to consider in order to introduce validity in the study. Namely: “How do I know that the method I am using is really measuring what I want it to measure”? And “are my conclusions drawn from these measurements therefore valid conclusions”? Two components of validity, as pointed out by Gratton and Jones, were considered ahead of the data collection:

- Face validity, which refers to the question of whether the research method is appropriate enough to measure what the researcher wants to measure at first glance
- Content validity, which refers to the initial assessment from the expert’s point of view

These “two components of validity” seem relevant to the research “since at the time the study was conducted the researcher was working as the Training Officer in the Limpopo DoE”. It is

also emphasise that the expert should be aware of some of the "more subtle issues and nuances" of the concept and be able to critically assess whether this has been accounted for (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 87).

Powell and Connaway (2004: 43) make a point that the research can be viewed as valid only when the conclusions are true. They moreover indicate that the concept of validity "refers to the question of whether the researcher measures what he/she is supposed to measure with the selected instruments." Powell and Connaway (2004:43) state that validity is categorised into internal validity and external validity.

According to Powell and Connaway (2004:43), "internal validity refers to the extent to which the research confirms the existence of a cause-effect relationship" i.e. a cause-effect relationship between the "dependent and the independent variable". If the researcher is determined to know whether there is a (cause-effect) relationship between the "dependent and the independent variable and he can find an alternative explanation for his or her results", then the researcher's internal validity is threatened. For example: Company X wants to determine if a salary increase for the sales representatives leads to an increase in "sales figures". However, the regions whereby the sales representatives operate may also influence the "sales figures" and this could create confusion on the side of research results. With reference to this instance, it may be possible to "introduce the influence of the area on the sales figures as an additional independent variable". The researchers should expand the framework of "internal and external validity" in quantitative research (Onwuegbuzie, 2003).

Table 4-4 lists certain factors which are viewed as threats to internal validity:

Table 4.7 Factors that threaten internal validity

History	Uncontrolled events that influence the outcome of the research. It may confuse the causal relationship between the dependent and the independent variable and threatens the validity of the research results.
Maturation	Research subjects may undergo physical or psychological changes called maturation, which are not part of the independent variable, but will confuse the research results.
Instrumentation	For example, The questionnaire used to measure the dependent variable may change during the research and will threaten the validity of the results.
Selection	If the research involves the comparison of two or more groups in terms of the dependent variable, the selection of research subjects for each group could bias the study.
Mortality	Some research subjects not continuing with the research – but dropping out before it is completed. These may be different from those who complete the research and this could impact on the validity of the results.
Regression effects	A tendency of extreme scores to move towards the average upon testing.
Testing effect	Participants may become familiar with the testing procedure- or more aware of certain issues after the pre-test. This may influence their responses to the actual test.

(Source: Powell & Connaway, 2004: 44).

External validity refers to the extent to which the research results can be generalised to other populations or conditions (Powell & Connaway, 2004:45). For external validity, the researcher has to decide whether his/her research findings would be true (valid) for other research subjects, other times, or other circumstances. According to Powell and Connaway (2004:44), this shows that selection poses a serious threat to external validity and, therefore, the research subjects selected for an investigation have to be representative of a larger population.

- Reliability

Saunders et al. (2012) define reliability of a research instrument as "the consistency or repeatability of the measurement of some phenomena. The observed score is one of the major components of reliability." Saunders et al. list three types of reliability, as follows:

- "Parallel forms of reliability". This refers to a measure of equivalence and it includes administering two different forms of measurements to the same group of participants and obtaining a positive correlation between the two forms.
- Test–retest reliability. This type of reliability essentially involves administering the same research instrument at two different points at once within the same participants and "obtain a correlation between the two sets of responses".
- "Inter-rater reliability". This is a "measure of homogeneity" (Saunders et al. 2012). In addition, they maintain that with "inter-rater reliability" is where the researcher measures the amount of arrangement between two individuals regarding the manner in which they rate object, behaviour or phenomenon.

Powell and Connaway (2004:43) indicate that the reliability of the research can be considered when the findings of the very research are repeatable after using the very same instrument. The meaning of this is that the "repeated application of the same research method and instrument" must produce the same outcome every time. In quantitative studies, mathematical instrument are used and they produce the same result when repeatedly used.

Reliability is more focussed on the consistency of measures. Any research instrument that yields dissimilar scores each time it is used to measure an unchanging value has low rate of reliability (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000, p. 126) According to Regenesys (2010), reliability can be both internal and external. They state that internal reliability refers to the extent that

data collection, analysis and interpretation are consistent, given the same conditions, while external reliability is more focussed on the question of whether or not independent researchers can replicate previous studies in similar settings. This is asking a significant question that relates to whether the researcher will be able to repeat studies; and if so, will the results be consistent?

In order to guarantee reliability throughout this research, structured questionnaires were used and they ensured consistency in the way research questions were asked. Questionnaires also helped to ensure consistency in the way participants' views were presented. According to Powell and Connaway (2004:47), reliability can also be established by "[keeping] notes consistently during the application of the research method: for example, during observation or while conducting the interview. Another way is to conduct the research method, especially observation, over an appropriate time span or at different times of the day." This will enable the researcher to "see how behaviour could perhaps differ at different times." Bless and Higson-Smith (2000, p. 126) state that reliability can also be achieved when the researcher compares his or her research to other studies that other researchers have carried out.

4.4.14 Data analysis

All the data gathered using the structured questionnaires in this research was analysed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 246). They recommend that the statistical expert will assist concerning the statistical analysis and calculations that will be conducted during the research process. Below are the objectives of the statistical technique in this research:

- To determine Cronbach's Alpha reliability of aspects researched in the structured questionnaire
- To determine the means of items in section B and C
- Percentage importance of items in section B and C where percentage importance is the mean divided by the maximum response X 100
- "Percentage application" by managers of question items in section C where the percentage application is the mean divided by the maximum response X 100
- To determine frequency response of managers who view aspects of reporting to SETA on the implemented WSP as necessary

- To determine practical significance between the importance and application of items in section B and C through applying Cramer's O

  Powell and Connaway (2004, p. 246) suggest that it becomes crucial for researchers to take a decision regarding whether they will be able to personally conduct all the data analysis, or perhaps they will require an assistance of "experts in statistical analysis". At this stage – the researcher will also have to keep in mind the nature of the research approach. For a "quantitative research approach", analysing data will require some calculations to be conducted and more statistical analysis will be conducted. Conducting a research these days; whether it is "qualitative or quantitative" in nature requires that the researcher ought to be equipped with computer skills (Bazeley, 2006). This is because an assortment of "statistical software packages" is available for researchers to take into consideration. These "statistical software packages" involve popular programs including "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS), "Micro-Case and Stat-Pac for Windows" etc. (Powell & Connaway, 2004:246).

This quantitative study involved all the "quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires" which were completed by participants and were "statistically analysed" by the researcher with the assistance of the statistical consultant. This data analyses was done through the use of SPSS. The below provides further details regarding the "SPSS and other programs such as Micro-Case and Stat-Pac for Windows":

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

The SPSS package is perhaps the very well-known and most commonly utilized software across the globe (Powell & Connaway, 2004:246). They point out that it provides a variety of "statistical procedures, colour graphics and interaction between the data and the user".

The SPSS software is usually run on a mainframe computer, but there are versions available for personal computers such as the SPSS/PC+ System on the website (http://www.spss.com /spss/). Figure 4-3 gives a screenshot of SPSS:

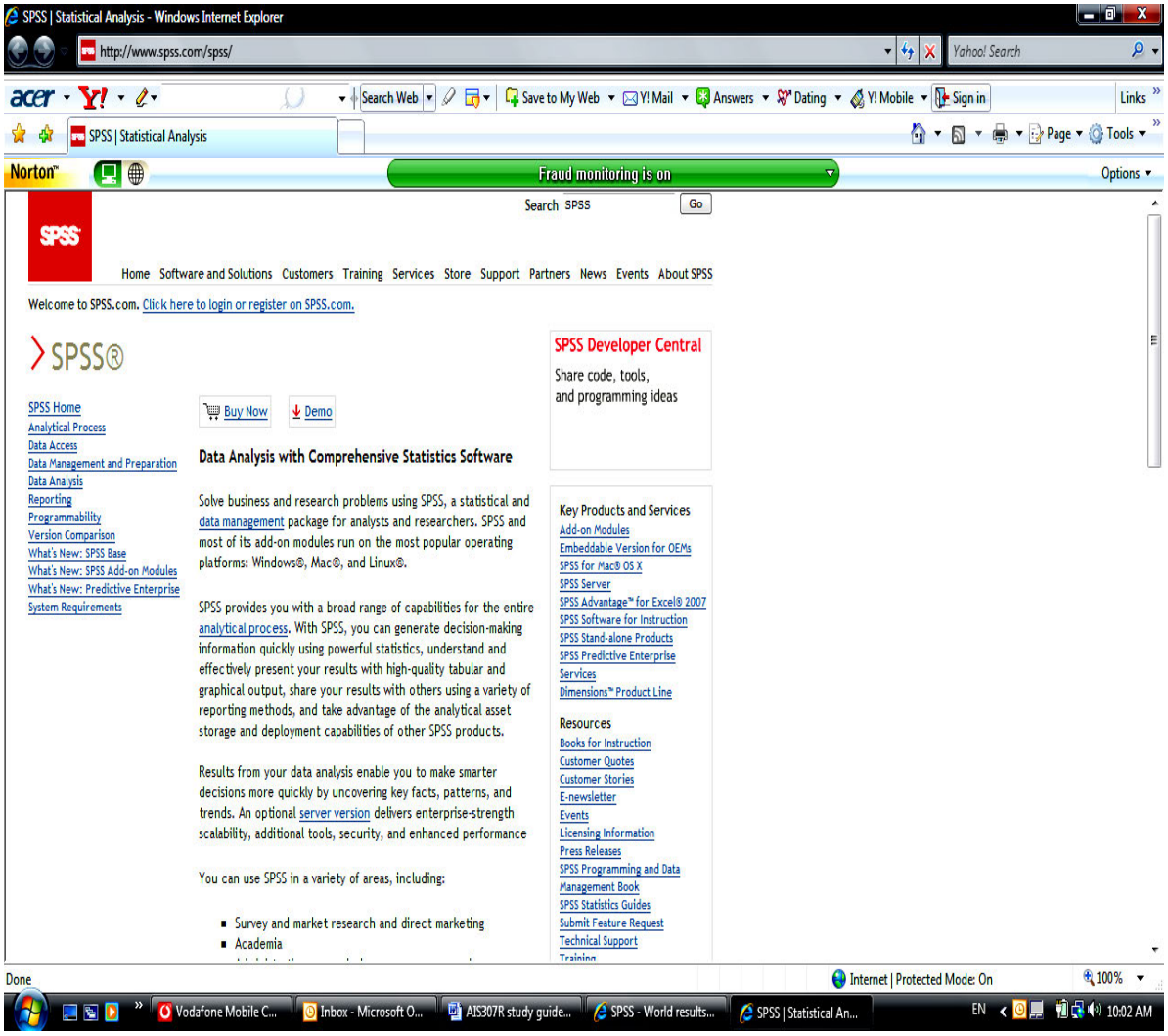


Figure 4-3 Screenshot of SPSS

Micro Case is a "statistical analysis and data management system which is developed for social science researchers".

It is a collection of "databases and software" which enable the researcher to conduct a "wide range of analyses" (http://www.microcase.com/analysis/mc45des.html). Figure 4-4 gives a screenshot of the website:

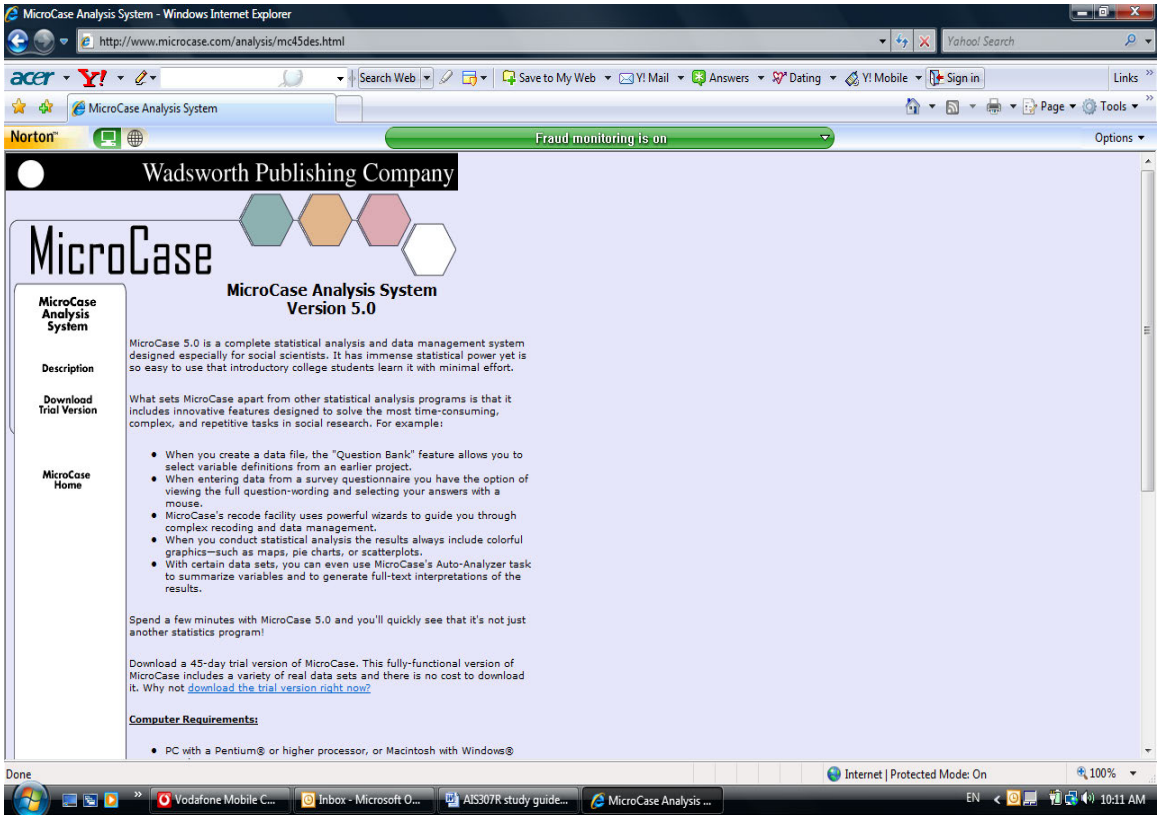


Figure 4-4 **Screenshot of the Micro-Case web site**

Stat Pac for Windows is "a software package that was developed for marketing and survey research and provides several statistical methods".

It moreover comprises of software to assist in guiding and designing questionnaire and interview (http://www.statpac.com/). Figure 4-5 gives a screenshot of the website:

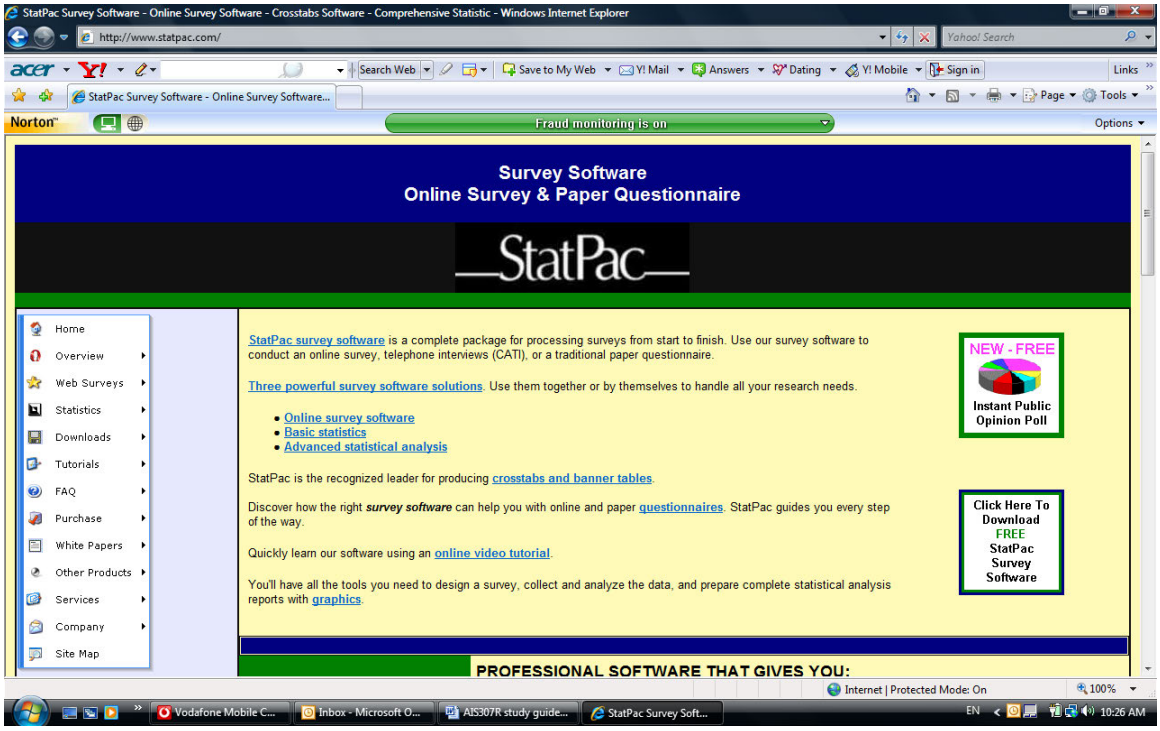


Figure 4-5 Screenshot of the Stat-Pac web site

Many of the "statistical analysis software packages include trial downloads from their web sites and tutorials" which assists a researcher in order to study the manner in which to make use of the programs (Regenesys, 2010). It is essential for researchers who will want to make use of the program more "extensively and for a longer period" to purchase it. The provision for such expenditure must be made in the research budget. When researchers use "computers and statistical software", they must be cautious of not being too excited by the rest of the functions performed by the software. The danger in this is that the researcher might end up generating all sorts of unnecessary analyses unrelated to the research objectives.

Regenesys (2010) agrees that it is essential for the researcher needs to keep the research objectives constantly in mind and make sure that she or he is equipped with the in-depth knowledge related to statistical procedures. If the researcher is going to use experts, he or she will have to provide them with a copy of the research proposal clearly stating the research problem and research objectives. The researcher moreover ought to present them with his or her "draft designs of the data-collection instruments" such as the questionnaire. This will help them to provide the researcher with knowledge regarding any adjustments required to be made in order to accommodate precise analysis later on.

4.4.15 Descriptive statistics

Biographical information

The researcher made use of descriptive statistics in order to "represent the distribution of the biographical and other relevant information". Descriptive analysis was based on the frequencies (%).

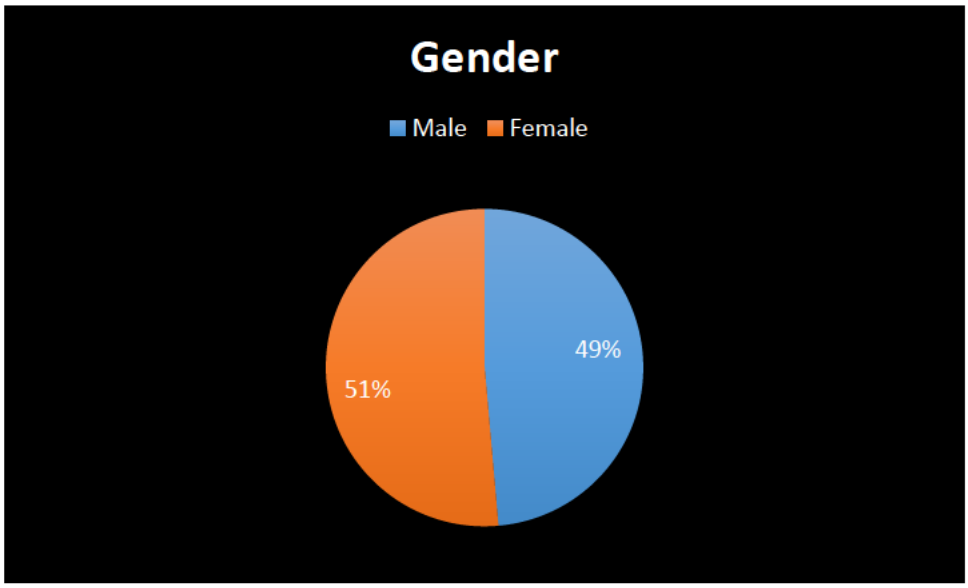


Figure 4-6 Gender

According to Figure 4-6, the studied sample is made of 51% of female and 49% of male

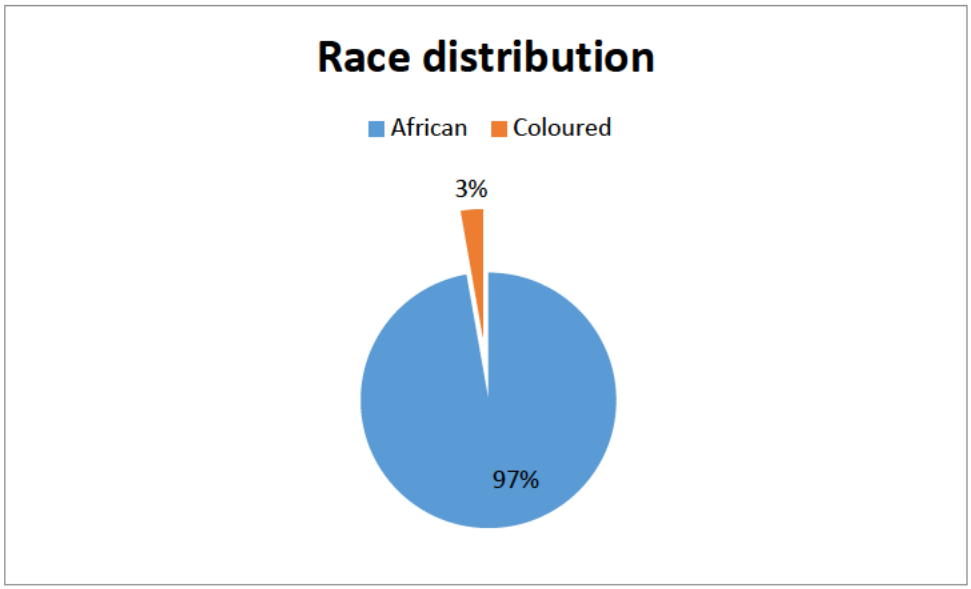


Figure 4-7 Race distribution of research participants

The information regarding the employment of managers who participated in the study on the "key success factors for a Workplace Skills Plan implementation" may be viewed as follows:

Figure 4-8 Employment information for participating managers

The information regarding the work experience of the managers (research participants) is as follows:

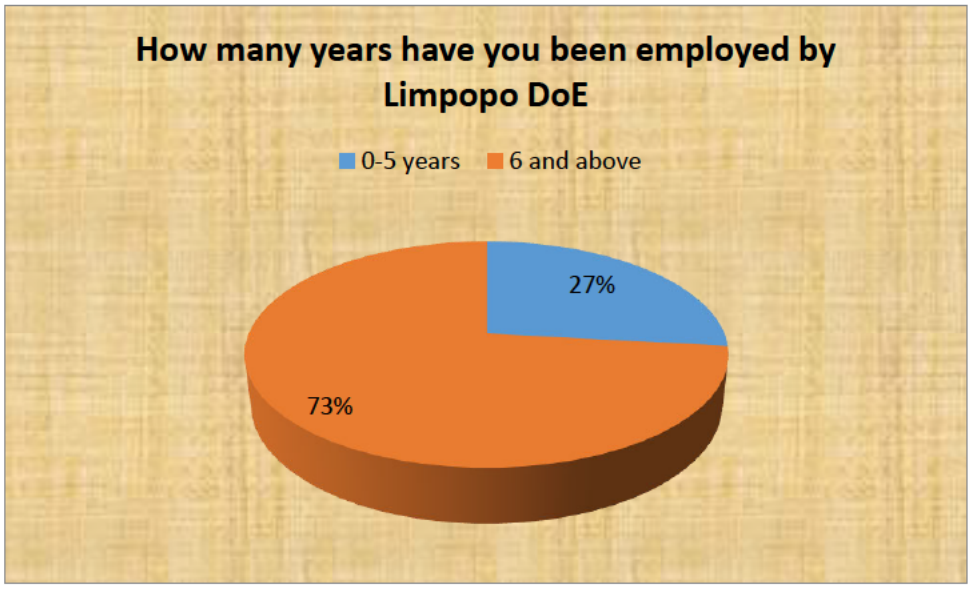


Figure 4-9 Years of work experience in the Limpopo DoE of participating managers

The level of academic qualifications by the managers was provided as follows:

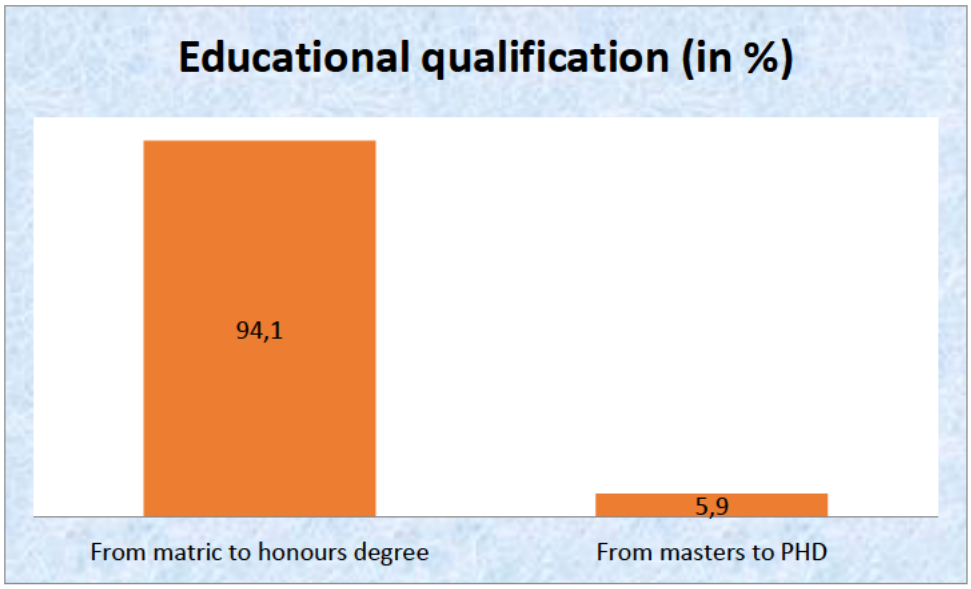


Figure 4-10 Educational qualification of participating managers

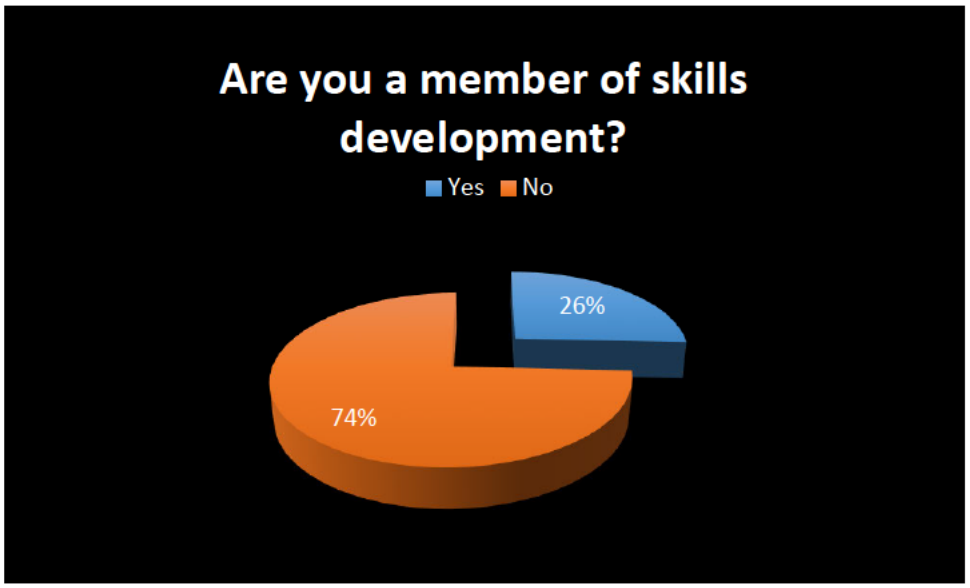


Figure 4-11 Membership of skills development committee

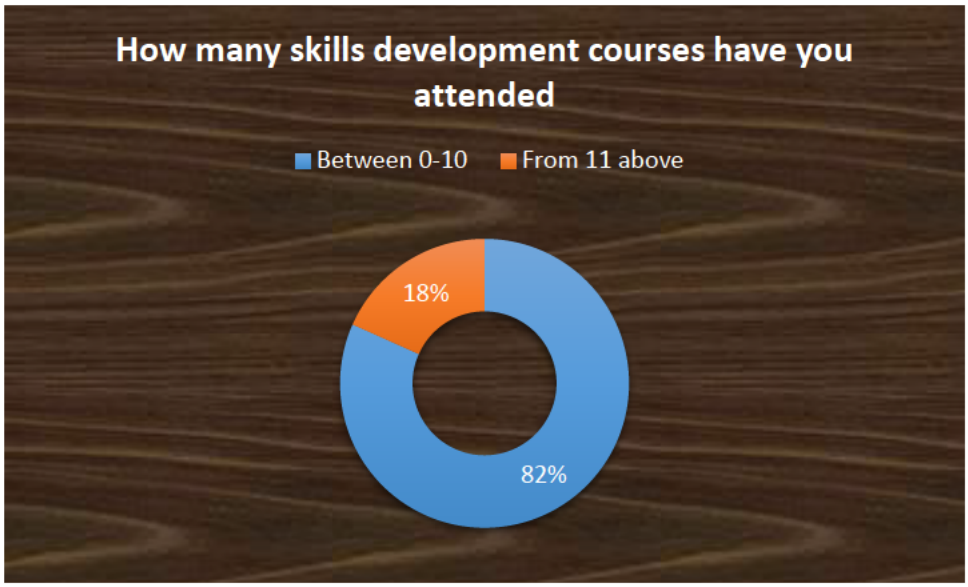


Figure 4-12 Skills development courses attended

4.4.16 Reliability of the measuring instrument

Reliabilities of various constructs were assessed through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient generated by SPSS. The results for the internal consistency of each construct.

Table 4.8 Reliability of scale used to assess information gathering

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.874	.878	5

Table 4.8indicates a good reliability of the scale used to assess aspects of information gathering, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.878) is above.7

Table 4.9 Reliability of scale used to assess skills auditing

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.882	.884	6

Table 4.9 indicates a good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.884) is above.7.

Table 4.10 "Reliability of scale used to assess compiling and submitting a WSP"

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.742	.746	5

Table 4.10indicates a good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.746) is above.7.

Table 4.11 {"Reliability of scale used to assess WSP implementation, monitoring & evaluation"

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.894	.896	8

Table 4.11 indicates a good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.896) is above.7

Table 4.12 "Reliability of scale used to assess reporting on WSP implementation"

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.881	.887	8

Table above indicates a good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.887) is above.7.

4.4.17 Practical significance

The "practical significance" for the research was done.

The "measures of central tendency such the mean, the mode and the standard deviation were used to meet the research objectives". The following are the results of the analysis.

Objective 1: Investigate aspects of information gathering to inform the WSP.

Table 4.13 "Results of analysis for information gathering"

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, to what extent is gathering information for a WSP perceived as necessary in your organisation?	67	5	2.90	4	1.046
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the external environment factors in the department?	67	.5	2.82	3	.968
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the internal environment factors in the department?	68	4	2.81	3	.890
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the employee information in the department?	69	3	2.83	3	.890
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the relationships between training units and other units of the organisation in the department?	69	3	2.77	3	.910

Although a large number of people scored 4, the average score of the whole sample on the first question is 2.90 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP is perceived as necessary in the organisation. However, the high standard deviation (1.046) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the second question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.82 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the external environment factors. However, the significant standard deviation (.968) indicates that the opinions about the question are different across the sample.

On the third question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.81 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the internal environment factors. However, the significant standard deviation (.833) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the fourth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.83 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the employee information. However, the significant standard deviation (.890) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the third most important (70.75%) on the list.

On the fifth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.77 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the relationships between training units and other units of the organisation. However, the significant standard deviation (.910) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the third most important (69.25%) on the list.

Objective 2: To determine aspects of "skills auditing" in the Limpopo DoE.

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.61 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing is properly conducted in the organisation. However, the significant standard deviation (.853) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the second question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.56 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing takes into consideration the human resource planning. However, the standard deviation (.890) indicates that this opinion is not shared by everybody in the sample.

Statistics

Table 4.14 Results of analysis for skills auditing

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, to what extent do you think Skills Auditing is properly conducted within your organisation	71	1	2.61	3	.853
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Human Resource Planning in your organisation:	71	1	2.56	3	.890
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Job and competence profiling in your organisation:	70	2	2.60	3	.858
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider Finding the skills gap in your organisation:	69	3	2.64	3	.907
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider the link between an employee qualification and his or her current job in your organisation:	70	2	2.41	3	.876
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Competencies of the members of skills development committee in your organisation	70	2	2.24	2	.939

On the third question in this section, the "average score of the whole sample is 2.60" (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing integrates the job and competence profiling. However, the significant standard deviation (.858) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample.

Concerning the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.64 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing takes finding the skills gap into consideration. However, the standard deviation (.907) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.41 (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to a "small extent" skills auditing take into consideration the link between an employee qualifications and their current job in the organisation. However, the significant standard deviation (.876) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the sixth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.24 (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to a "small extent" the competencies of the members of skills development committee is taken into consideration by skills auditing. However, the significant standard deviation (.939) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample.

Section D: Aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP

The third objective of this research was to determine aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP. Its primary aim was as follows:

Table 4.15 Results of analysis for compiling and submitting a WSP

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, do you think your organisation is committed in compiling a WSP?	69	3	2.83	3	1.014
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Employees are always consulted on needs identified in the compiled WSP"	69	3	2.45	2	.867
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Members of Skills Development Committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP"	70	2	2.30	2	.998
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organisation' management"	69	3	2.48	3	.901
To what extent do you agree with the statements "The Limpopo DoE always submit its WSP on time to SETA"	68	4	2.84	4	1.016

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.83 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents believe that to "some extent" their organisation is committed in compiling a WSP. However, the "high standard deviation (1.014) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample".

On the second question in this section, the "average score of the whole sample is 2.45" (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents agree that to a "small extent" employees are always consulted on needs identified in the compiled WSP Skills. However, the significant standard deviation (.867) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample.

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.30 (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents agree that to a "small extent" members of skills development committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP". However, the

significant standard deviation (.998) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.48 (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents agree that to a "small extent" activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organisation's management. The standard deviation (.901) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.84 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents agree that to a "some extent" the Limpopo DoE always submit its WSP on time to SETA. However, the high standard deviation (1.016) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

Section E: Aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP

The fourth research objective of this research was to determine aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP. Its primary aims were as follows:

Table 4.16 Results of analysis for implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, to what extent do you think actions of a WSP are well implemented in your organisation?	67	5	2.58	3	.907
To what extent do you agree with the statement "Implementation of a WSP in your organisation includes accredited formal trainings"	67	5	2.93	3	.910
To what extent do you agree with the statement "A WSP of your organisation includes the implementation of workplace based trainings"	65	7	2.75	3	.884
To what extent do you agree with the statement "Training methods are designed to suit each particular training implemented"	67	5	2.72	3	.934
To what extent do you agree with the statement "A WSP is properly monitored within your organisation"	66	6	2.82	3	.821
To what extent do you agree with the statement "Results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes"	66	6	2.61	3	.802
To what extent do you agree with the statement "Management encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP"	66	6	2.62	3	.873
To what extent do you agree with the statement "The quality of implementing a WSP improves every financial year in your organisation"	68	4	2.34	3	.971

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.58 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to a "some extent" actions of a WSP are well

implemented in the organisation. However, the standard deviation (.907) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the second question in this section, the “average score of the whole sample is 2.93” (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to a “some extent” implementation of a WSP in the organisation includes accredited formal trainings. However, the “high standard deviation (.910) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample” .

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.75 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to a “some extent” A WSP of the organization take into consideration the implementation of workplace based trainings. However, the high standard deviation (.884) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.72 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” a WSP is properly monitored in their organization. Standard deviation (.934) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

Concerning the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.82 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” a WSP is properly monitored in the organization. However, the standard deviation (.821) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the sixth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.61 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes. However, the high standard deviation (.802) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the seventh question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.62 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” management encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP. However, the high standard deviation (.873) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

Section F: Aspects of reporting on a WSP

Objective 5 of this research was to investigate the extent which the Limpopo DoE report on a WSP. The aim of this research objective was as follows:

Table 4.17 Results of analysis for reporting on a WSP

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, to what extent does your organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year?	69	3	2.86	3	.989
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA"?	68	4	3.01	4	.938
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA"?	67	5	3.04	3	.860
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR”	66	6	2.68	2	.914
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR"	64	8	2.33	3	1.055
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All units who train employees in your organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted"?	67	5	2.75	3	.823
To what extent do you agree with the statements "A report of a WSP of your organization include other trainings conducted by other units"	67	5	2.78	3	.850
To what extent do you agree with the statements "All reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in your organization"	67	5	3.12	4	.946

1.”Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown”

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.86 (close to 3). Meaning globally, “respondents think to “some extent” their organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year”. However, the high standard deviation (.989) indicates that the opinions about this question are “significantly different across the sample”.

With reference to the second question of this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.01 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” the Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA. However, the high standard deviation (.938) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.04 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to “some extent” The Limpopo DoE has a good

relationship with SETA. However, the high standard deviation (.860) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.68 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to "some extent" the skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR. However, the standard deviation (.914) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the fifth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.33 (close to 2). Meaning globally, respondents think that to "small extent" members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR. However, the high standard deviation (1.055) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the sixth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.75 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents agree that to "some extent" all units who train employees in the organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted. The standard deviation (.823) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

On the seventh question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.78 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to "some extent" a report of a WSP of the organization include other trainings conducted by other units. However, the standard deviation (.850) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample.

On the eighth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.12 (close to 3). Meaning globally, respondents think that to "some extent" all reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in the organization. However, the high standard deviation (.946) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample.

4.4.18 Ethical aspects or considerations

It is extremely important for the researcher to be "ethically responsible in his or her dealings with both individuals and organizations that are involved in any research that he or she undertakes" (Neuman, 2003). "Ethical considerations are crucial in research and this is regardless of whether the research approach is quantitative or qualitative" (Gorman & Clayton, 2005:43).

Regenesys (2010) states that “all research subjects have ethical rights. These rights include the right to be consulted, to give or withhold consent and the right to confidentiality”. Regenesys note in addition that “researchers investigate the subjects in some depth and often have access to their personal information.” Sometimes the researcher prompts information that has potential to compromise either an individual or an organization, which may lead to misuse. The implication is that there should be mutual trust between the researcher and the participants. Participants should be voluntarily and knowingly involved.

In considering these requirements in this study the researcher needed to be certain that all managers participated voluntarily and had not perhaps been instructed by a superior to participate. In addition, all managers had to append their signature in a letter of consent in which they assented to the statement “I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire”.

The ethical clearance application form from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) points out that UKZN Research Ethics Policy is applicable to all graduates, staff members and undergraduate students who are involved in research on or off the campuses of University of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, any individual who has no affiliation with UKZN but is willing to undertake research with UKZN students and/or staff is bound by the same ethics framework. Each individual member of the community of the university is responsible for executing this policy with reference to “scholarly work” in which he or she is involved and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be violating this policy. By the same token, in the present study on “key success factors for WSP implementation in the Limpopo DoE”, the researcher had to begin by familiarising himself with, and signing an undertaking to comply with, the university’s Code of Conduct for Research.

In arrangement with the researcher’s supervisor, the data contained in questionnaires will be kept in a protected location in the UKZN Graduate School of Business and Leadership.

The research data will be disposed of by incinerations not less than 5 years after the research study has been completed. Gorman and Clayton (2005:43) indicate the following as some of the very important aspects related to ethics in research:

Informed consent

This is often challenging in survey research whereby the participants' observation is essential without alerting them about being under scrutiny, which may possibly change their behaviour.

The researcher should alert the participants about the research procedures to be followed and indicate any possible "disadvantages" to them so that they can make an informed decision whether to participate in the research. This step was undertaken prior to the commencement of the study and the researcher assured the participants that they will be provided with the results and also explained how the results will be communicated and used.

Deception

When research participants are willing to take part in the study, they should do so without being deceived. This could be done through withholding some of the important information that participants should know, or through "non-disclosure of the full intentions of the researcher". With reference to particular sensitive studies, more specially in "survey research" whereby the researcher may find himself or herself having to resort to deception so as to collect the required information.

It should therefore be borne in mind that "moral and ethical standards" should be observed, also that those who take part in the study should be advised after the study concerning reasons and nature of deception that has occurred.

Right to privacy

Researchers have a responsibility to respect the participant's right to privacy, so as the identity and the personal details of research participants should not be made known. "Anonymity" means that the participants remain "nameless", whereas "confidentiality" means that the identity of participants remain concealed. For example, Anonymity is more practical when participants ought to complete a questionnaire without furnishing their names. "The use of recording media to record participants' actions and words without their express permission should be strictly controlled and subject to informed consent."

Confidentiality

In the process of conducting this study - the researcher guaranteed all participants (managers of Limpopo Department of Education) that "confidentiality will be maintained". Any information gathered from or about subjects of the research will be kept confidential and anonymous. Only the researcher should have access to the respondents' names and responses, and the data gathered must not be able to be linked back to the respondents' names in any final report.

Cultural sensitivity

There is a significant need for researchers to take into consideration the "social mores and sensitivities", mainly in studies which cross "cultural boundaries and where there may be cultural sensitivity" (Gorman & Clayton, 2005:43). Moreover, they point out that the researcher ought to be "sensitive, prepared and non-judgemental" concerning responses whereby "different cultural groups form part of the research study".

Disclosure of findings or results

The gatekeepers gave the researcher certain conditions to comply with in order to be allowed to conduct the study on "Key Success Factors for implementing a Workplace Skills Plan" in the Limpopo Department of Education. One of such conditions was to make sure that all research findings are made known to the Limpopo DoE, and also to its participants. "Every research participant should receive a copy of the completed study, either in its full form or in a shorted form that the researcher has prepared for publication". Gorman and Clayton (2005:43) indicate the importance of giving participants the guarantee that their confidentiality has been maintained by the researcher (Gorman & Clayton, 2005:43).

4.4.19 Limitations of the study

The study on the "Key Success Factors for implementing a Workplace Skills Plan" specifically paid attention on members of staff who are permanently appointed as managers within the Limpopo DoE. Moreover, the study excluded employees from lower levels working in the division of skills development, as well as the personnel and managers stationed at the office of the Premier within the unit of skills development. In addition, the study excluded "school managers or principals in primary and secondary schools, managers stationed at head office, or circuit managers".

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated on the “research approach, design and strategy” used in the research on the key success factors for implementing the WSP. It identified and explained the positivist research paradigm as the chosen paradigm for this quantitative study among Limpopo DoE managers. It indicated why the post positivism research paradigm was chosen as a suitable paradigm for this study.

After outlining other research paradigms available in the field of research, the chapter explained the research methodology used in this research. It gave an account of the structured questionnaire as a data-collection tool, the manner in which it was developed, as well as its validity and reliability as a research tool. “Independent and dependent variables” were the 2 types of variables discussed in this chapter. The chapter using this data-collection method also indicated how the collected data was captured using Microsoft Excel and statistically analysed using the SPSS. The next chapter focuses on the research results and recommendations.

Chapter 5
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the results of the empirical research on the key success factors for WSP implementation and shows how the questionnaires were analysed. The key success factors were determined through reflection on the research results. The chapter also shows how the managers of the Limpopo DoE ranked the key success factors for WSP implementation, from highest to lowest, and from most important to least important.

5.2 Empirical research

The empirical research for this study was conducted in August 2015 in the provincial office and the Sekhukhune district. This research was conducted by the researcher who was stationed at the "Riba-Cross District Office in the Sekhukhune district" which is one of the 5 new district offices introduced towards the end of 2011, giving a total of ten district offices of the Limpopo DoE. All managers who took part in this study were located in these two settings, permanently working for the Limpopo DoE, and willing to participate in the study. The following research instruments were used to conduct the research.

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine key success factors that managers of Limpopo DoE regard as important for WSP implementation, and the extent to which the managers apply those aspects.

In Chapter 1, the research problem was stated as follows: "What are the key success factors the Limpopo DoE can use to implement a workplace skills plan?" In this regard 5 research objectives were established. The research methods used in the research have been discussed With reference to the "literature study and the empirical research", and the manner in which the empirical research was conducted has been described – namely use of a structured questionnaire, determination of a target population, and the statistical techniques used to analyse the empirical data. The chapter further explained the structure of the research, and important concepts frequently used throughout the study were also clarified.

Chapter 2 outlined the development of a WSP through contextualising skills development in a historical perspective and reflecting on the contemporary situation of skills development

across the country of South Africa. Various institutions facilitating and supporting the implementation of skills development in organizations were discussed. These include PALAMA, SAMDI, PSETA and other training academies. Chapter 2 also discussed the failures of the development of skills across the country of South Africa, its challenges, strategic human resource management, and the role of workplace skills planning. Strategic human resource management was discussed together with the criteria for workplace skills planning and the key success factors for WSP implementation: information gathering to inform a WSP; skills auditing; compiling and submitting a WSP; implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP, and the aspects of reporting on the implementation of a WSP. The chapter also indicated why the researcher regarded the above-mentioned aspects as important in relation to strategic human resource management.

In Chapter 3 the key success factors for WSP implementation were further elaborated. These were identified as important aspects that the Limpopo DoE can apply for proper implementation of a WSP. The nature of each aspect was argued, followed by discussion of processes that result from each aspect. Each of the 5 main aspects for implementing a WSP was concluded with a synthesis which in turn was used as basis for development of the structured questionnaire as a data-collection instrument.

In Chapter 4 the research approach, design and methodology were discussed together with different types of research paradigms. A positivist research paradigm, or quantitative research approach, was identified for this research, and questionnaires as a research measuring instrument were motivated. Advantages and disadvantages of structured questionnaire were provided, together with reasons why a structured questionnaire was chosen as a suitable research instrument for the study.

The structure of the questionnaire and the process of the pilot study were explained. Target population, study site, sampling strategies, and sample size, data-collection method, data quality control (reliability and validity of the research instrument) and data analysis. The statistical methods used to analyse the data were outlined, the responses to the questionnaires were interpreted and possible success factors were derived from aspects that managers of Limpopo DoE regard as very important and largely apply. The key success factors were concluded from a combination of success factors that managers regard as important and success factors that managers apply in implementation of a WSP in the Limpopo DoE. These key success factors were motivated and discussed.

This chapter presents analysis of the questionnaires were analysed and reflection on the results of the empirical research in order to determine key success factors for WSP implementation. The success factors are ranked from highest to lowest and from most important to least important as rated by the study participants. In chapter six, conclusions and recommendations are given in relation to the effective significance of the key success factors for WSP implementation.

5.3 Interpretation of the responses

5.3.1 Section A: Biographical information

The researcher researched the biographical data to obtain insight into different responses of certain items regarding the capacity in which the research questionnaire is completed.

Gender

The aim of determining the gender of managers was to delineate the age group of most managers who participated in the study.

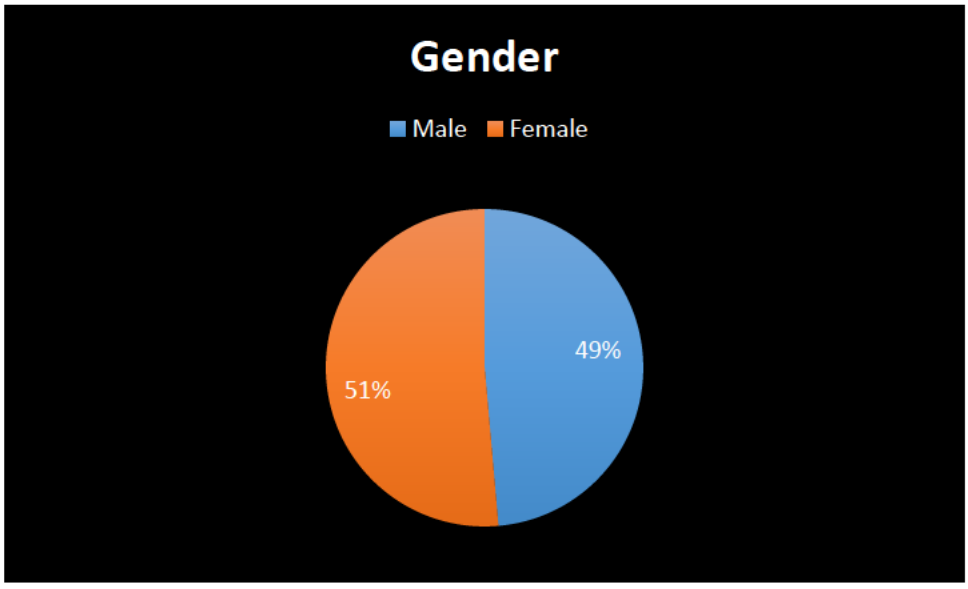


Figure 5-1 Gender of the research population

Figure 5-1 shows 51% of the target population were male and 49% were female.

Race

The aim of determining the race of the research population was to outline the race of most managers who participated in this study.

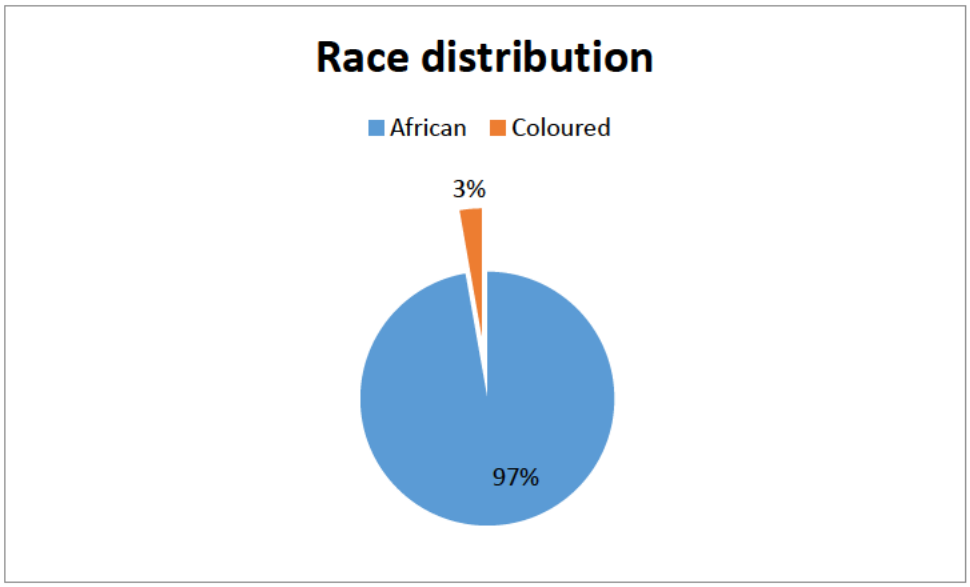


Figure 5-2 Race of the research population

Figure 5-2 shows that a majority of the population (97%) were African 3% were coloured.

Employment status

The purpose of this question in the questionnaire was to determine the employment status of the research participants in the Limpopo DoE.

Figure 5-3 Employment status

Figure 5-3 shows that 97% of the target population were permanently employed, and 3% population were not permanently employed.

Organizations in which research participants are employed

This question was included in the research questionnaire for the researcher to determine the organizations in which the managers (research participants) were employed.

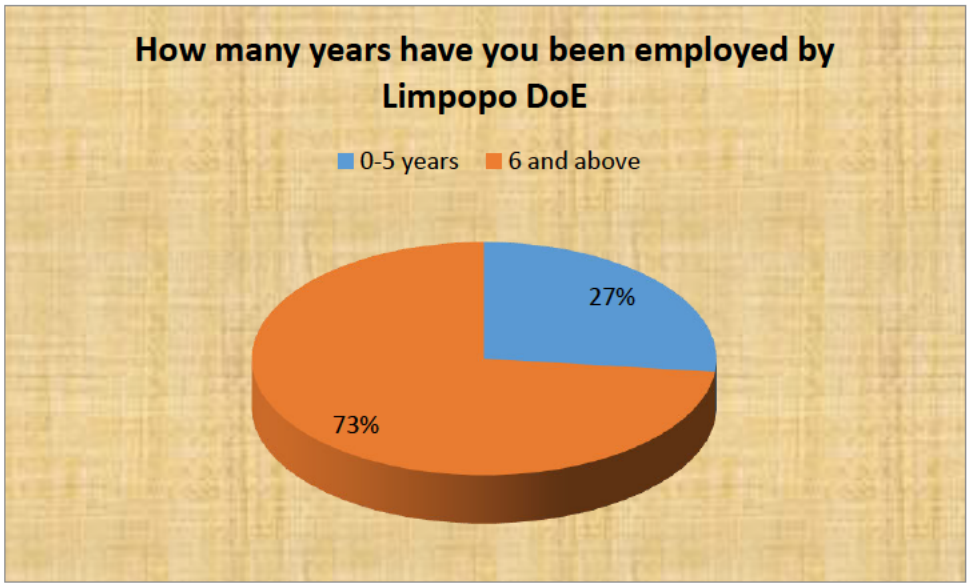


Figure 5-4 Organizations in which the research population are employed

Figure 5-4 shows that 73% of the population samples were employed by the Limpopo DoE, while 27% were not employed by the Limpopo DoE.

Academic qualifications of the research participants.

This item was included in the questionnaire to determine "academic qualifications of the managers".

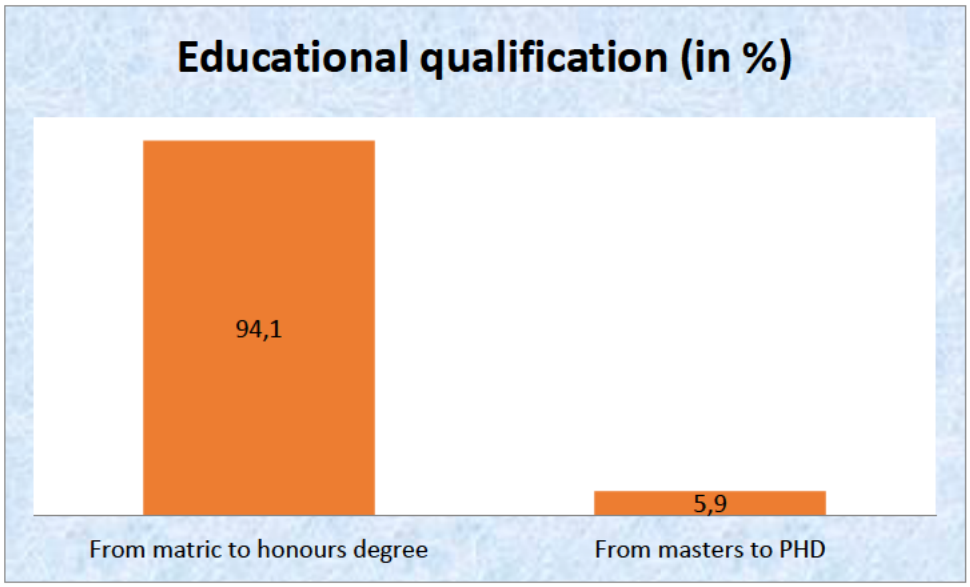


Figure 5-5 Academic qualifications

Figure 5-5 shows that 94.1% of the target population ranged from matric to an honours degree in terms of their academic qualification, while the remaining 5.9% ranged from a master's degree to a PhD degree.

Skills development committee membership

This item was included in the questionnaire to determine whether the managers were part of the skills development committee in the Limpopo DoE.

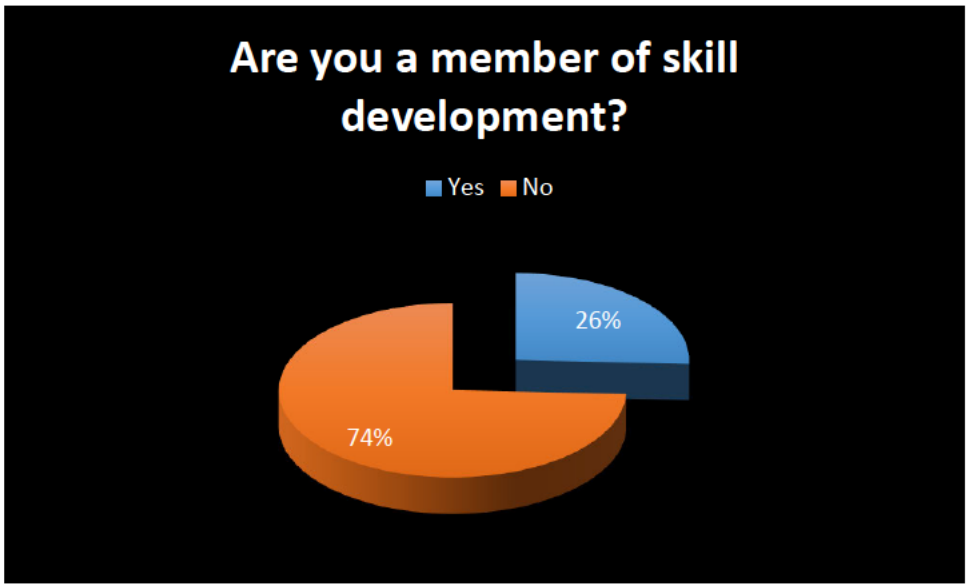


Figure 5-6 Members of skills development committee

Figure 4-11 shows that 74% the of target population were members of the skills development committee in the Limpopo DoE, and 26% were not members of the skills development committee.

Skills development programmes attended

The purpose of this question item in the questionnaire was to determine whether the employees of the organization were attending skills development programmes.

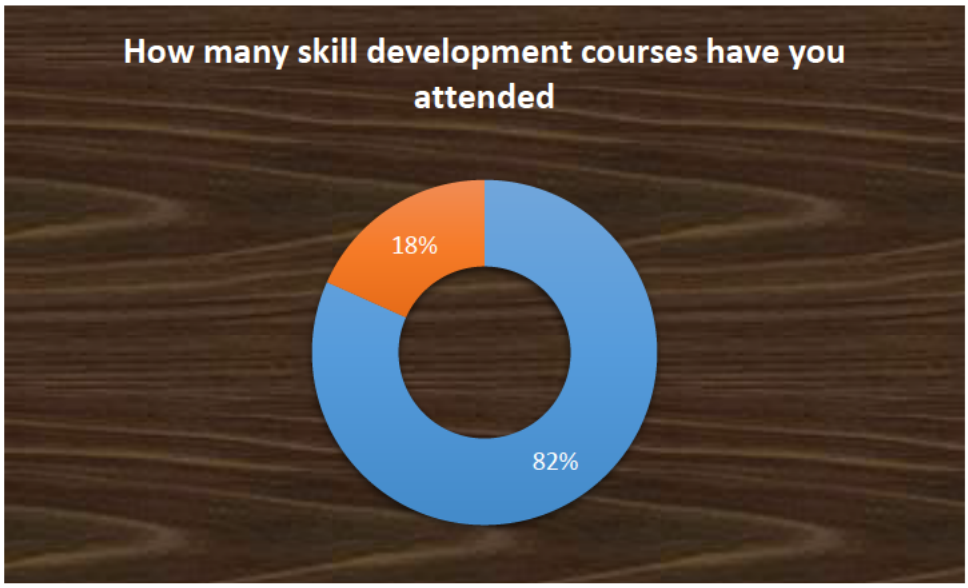


Figure 5-7 Skills development programmes attended

Figure 5-7 shows that 82% of the sample population had attended specific skills development courses, while 18% had not attended any skills development courses.

5.3.2 Section B: aspects of information gathering to inform a WSP

Question B1: To investigate aspects of information gathering which inform the WSP.

Table 5.1 Reliability of the scale used to assess information gathering

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised Items	N of Items
.874	.878	5

Findings: Based on Table 5.1, the reliability statistics indicate good reliability on the scale used to assess information gathering. The 3 standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.878) was used.

Table 5.2 Statistics for various aspects of information gathering

	N		Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
	Valid	Missing			
In your view, to what extent is gathering information for a WSP perceived as necessary in your organization?	67	5	2.9	4	1.046
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the external environment factors in the department?	67	5	2.82	3	0.968
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the internal environment factors in the department?	68	4	2.81	3	0.833
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the employee information in the department?	69	3	2.83	3	0.89
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the relationships between training units and other units of the organisation in the department?	69	3	2.77	3	0.91

Table 5.3 Level of importance of various aspects of information gathering

Items	Level of importance	Rank
In your view, to what extent is gathering information for a WSP perceived as necessary in your organization?	72.50%	2
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the external environment factors in the department?	70.50%	2
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the internal environment factors in the department?	70.25%	3
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the employee information in the department?	70.75%	1
To what extent do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the relationships between training units and other units of the organisation in the department?	69.25%	4

Although a large number of managers scored 4, the average score of the whole sample on the first question is 2.90 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP is perceived as necessary in the organisation. However, the high standard deviation (1.046) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the second most important (at 70.5%) on the list.

On the second question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.82 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the external environment factors. However, the significant standard deviation (.968) indicates that the opinions about the question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the second most important (at 70.5%) on the list.

On the third question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.81 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers

the internal environment factors. However, the significant standard deviation (.833) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the third most important (at 70.25%) on the list.

On the fourth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.83 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the employee information. However, the significant standard deviation (.890) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the third most important (at 70.75%) on the list.

On the fifth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.77 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" gathering information for a WSP considers the relationships between training units and other units of the organization. However, the significant standard deviation (.910) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. In terms of importance, this item is the third most important (at 69.25%) on the list.

5.3.3 Section C: Aspects of skills auditing

The aim of this section was to determine to what extent aspects of skills auditing are implemented in the Limpopo DoE.

Table 5.4 Reliability of the scale used to assess skills auditing

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised Items	N of Items
.882	.884	6

Table 5.4 indicates good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.884) is above.7

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.61 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing is properly conducted within the organization. However, the significant standard deviation (.853) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5, this aspect (of skill auditing) is ranked second.

On the second question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.56 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing takes into

consideration the human resource planning. However, the standard deviation (.890) indicates that this opinion is not shared by everybody in the sample. According to Table 5, this aspect (of skill auditing) is ranked fourth.

Table 5.5 Statistics for various aspects of skills auditing

	N		Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
	Valid	Missing			
In your view, to what extent do you think skills auditing is properly conducted within your organization?	71	1	2.61	3	0.853
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider the human resource planning in your organization:	71	1	2.56	3	0.89
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider the job and competence profiling in your organization:	70	2	2.6	3	0.858
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider finding the skills gap in your organization:	69	3	2.64	3	0.907
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider the link between an employee qualification and his or her current job in your organization:	70	2	2.41	3	0.876
To what extent do you think the aspects of skills auditing consider the competencies of the members of skills development committee in your organization:	70	2	2.24	2	0.939

Table 5.6 Level of importance of various aspects of skills auditing

Items	Level of importance	Rank
In your view, to what extent do you think Skills Auditing is properly conducted within your organization?	65.25%	2
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider Human Resource Planning in your organization:	64%	4
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Job and competence profiling in your organization:	65%	3
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Finding the skills gap in your organization:	66%	1
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the link between an employee qualification and his or her current job in your organization:	60.25%	5
To what extent do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the Competencies of the members of skills development committee in your organization:	56%	6

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.60 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing integrates the job and competence profiling. However, the significant standard deviation (.858) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample. According to Table 5, this aspect (of skills auditing) is ranked third as well applied.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.64 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" skills auditing takes finding the skills gap into consideration. However, the standard deviation (.907) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.6, this aspect (of skill auditing) is ranked first as well applied.

On the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.41 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to a "small extent" skills auditing takes into consideration the link between an employee qualifications and their current job in the organization. However, the significant standard deviation (.876) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. With references to Table 5, this aspect of "skills auditing" is ranked fifth as well applied.

On the sixth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.24 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to a "small extent" the competencies of the members of skills development committee is taken into consideration by skills auditing. However, the significant standard deviation (.939) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample. According to Table 5, this aspect (of skills auditing) is ranked sixth as well applied.

5.3.4 Objective 3: To determine aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP.

- Reliability of the scale used to assess compiling and submitting a WSP.

Table 5.7 Reliability of the scale used to assess compiling and submitting a WSP

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised Items	N of Items
.742	.746	5

The table above indicates a good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.746) is above.7.

Table 5.8 Statistics for compiling and submitting a WSP

	N				
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation
In your view, do you think your organization is committed in compiling a WSP?	69	3	2.83	3	1.014
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Employees are always consulted on needs identified in the compiled WSP"	69	3	2.45	2	0.867
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Members of skills development committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP"	70	2	2.3	2	0.998
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organization' management"	69	3	2.48	3	0.901
To what extent do you agree with the statements "The Limpopo DoE always submit its WSP on time to SETA"	68	4	2.84	4	1.016

Table 5.9 Level of importance of various aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP

Items	Level of importance	Rank
In your view, do you think your organization is committed in compiling a WSP?	70.75%	2
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Employees are always consulted on skills needs identified in the compiled WSP"	61.25%	4
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Members of Skills Development Committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP"	57.50%	5
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organization' management"	62%	3
To what extent do you agree with the statements "The Limpopo DoE always submit its WSP on time to SETA"	71%	1

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.83 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents believe that to "some extent" their organization is committed in compiling a WSP. However, the high standard deviation (1.014) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample. According to Table 5.9, this aspect (compiling and submitting WSP) is ranked second as well applied.

On the second question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.45 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents agree that to a "small extent" employees are always consulted on skills needs identified in the compiled WSP Skills. However, the significant standard deviation (.867) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample. According to Table 5.9, this aspect (compiling and submitting WSP) is ranked fourth as well applied.

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.30 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents agree that to a "small extent" members of skills development committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP". However, the significant standard deviation (.998) indicates that the opinions about this question are very different across the sample. According to Table 8, this aspect (compiling and submitting WSP) is ranked fifth as well applied.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.48 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents agree that to a "small extent" activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organization's management. The standard deviation (.901) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 8, this aspect (compiling and submitting WSP) is "ranked third as well applied".

On the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.84 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents agree that to a "some extent" the Limpopo DoE always submit its WSP on time to SETA. However, the high standard deviation (1.016) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 8, this aspect (compiling and submitting WSP) is ranked first as well applied.

5.3.5 Objective 4: To determine aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP

Table 5.10 Reliability of scale used to assess implementing, monitoring & evaluating of WSP

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised Items	N of Items
.894	.896	8

Table 5.10 indicates good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.896) is above.7

Table 5.11 Statistics for implementing, monitoring and evaluating WSP

	N			Standard
	Valid	Missing	Mean	deviation
In your view, to what extent does your organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year?	69	3	2.86	0.989
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA"	68	4	3.01	0.938
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA"	67	5	3.04	0.86
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR"	66	6	2.68	0.914
To what extent do you agree with the statements “Members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR"	64	8	2.33	1.055
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All units who train employees in your organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted"	67	5	2.75	0.823
To what extent do you agree with the statements “A report of a WSP of your organization include other trainings conducted by other units"	67	5	2.78	0.85
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in your organization"	67	5	3.12	0.946

Table 5.12 Levels of importance in implementing, monitoring and evaluating WSP

Items	Level of importance	Rank
In your view, to what extent do you think actions of a WSP are well implemented in your organization?	64.50%	7
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Implementation of a WSP in your organization includes accredited formal trainings"	73.25%	1
To what extent do you agree with the statements "A WSP of your organization includes the implementation of workplace based trainings"	68.75%	3
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Training methods are designed to suit each particular training implemented"	68%	4
To what extent do you agree with the statements "A WSP is properly monitored within your organization"	70.50%	2
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes"	65.25%	6
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Management encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP"	65.50%	5
To what extent do you agree with the statements "The quality of implementing a WSP improves every financial year in your organization"	58.50%	8

On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.58 (close to 3). This means that in general, respondents think that to a “some extent” actions of a WSP are well implemented in your organization. However, the standard deviation (.907) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect “implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP” is ranked seventh as well applied.

Concerning the second question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.93 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to a “some extent” implementation of a WSP in the organization includes accredited formal trainings. However, the high standard deviation (.910) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked first as well applied.

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.75 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to a “some extent” A WSP of the organization take into consideration the implementation of a workplace based trainings. However, the high standard deviation (.884) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is the third well applied on the list.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.72 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to “some extent” a WSP is properly monitored in their organization standard deviation (.934) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 11, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked fourth well as well applied.

Concerning the fifth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.82 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to “some extent” a WSP is properly monitored in the organization. However, the standard deviation (.821) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked second as well applied.

On the sixth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.61 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to “some extent” results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes. However, the high standard deviation (.802) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked sixth as well applied.

On the seventh question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.62 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to “some extent” "management encourage

monitoring and evaluation of a WSP. However, the high standard deviation (.873) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked fifth as well applied.

On the eighth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.34 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" "The quality of implementing a WSP improves every financial year in your organization". However, the high standard deviation (.971) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.12, this aspect (implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP) is ranked eighth as well applied.

Table 5.14: analysis and the Reliability of the scale used to assess aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP.

5.3.6 Objective 5: To investigate the extent which the Limpopo DoE report on a WSP to SETA

Table 5.13 Reliability of the scale used to assess reporting on the implementation of a WSP

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised Items	N of Items
.881	.887	8

Table 5.13 indicates good reliability of the scale, as the standardised Cronbach's Alpha (.887) is above.7

Table 5.14 Statistics for assessing reporting on the implementation of a WSP

	N			Standard
	Valid	Missing	Mean	deviation
In your view, to what extent does your organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year?	69	3	2.86	0.989
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA"	68	4	3.01	0.938
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA"	67	5	3.04	0.86
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR"	66	6	2.68	0.914
To what extent do you agree with the statements “Members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR"	64	8	2.33	1.055
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All units who train employees in your organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted"	67	5	2.75	0.823
To what extent do you agree with the statements “A report of a WSP of your organization include other trainings conducted by other units"	67	5	2.78	0.85
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in your organization"	67	5	3.12	0.946

Table 5.15 Level of importance of various aspects of reporting on a WSP to SETA

Items	Level of importance	Rank
In your view, to what extent does your organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year?	71.50%	4
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA"	75.25%	3
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA"	76%	2
To what extent do you agree with the statements “The skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR"	67%	7
To what extent do you agree with the statements "Members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR"	58.25%	8
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All units who train employees in your organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted"	68.75%	6
To what extent do you agree with the statements “A report of a WSP of your organization include other trainings conducted by other units"	69.50%	5
To what extent do you agree with the statements “All reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in your organization"	78%	1

“On the first question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.86” (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think to “some extent” their organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP on yearly basis. However, the high standard deviation (.989) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked fourth as well applied.

On the second question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.01 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" the Limpopo DoE meets deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA. However, the high standard deviation (.938) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked third as well applied.

On the third question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.04 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" The Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with SETA. However, the high standard deviation (.860) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked second as well applied.

On the fourth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.68 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" the skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an ATR. However, the standard deviation (.914) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked seventh as well applied.

On the fifth question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.33 (close to 2). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "small extent" members of skills development committee are trained to compile an ATR. However, the high standard deviation (1.055) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked eighth as well applied.

On the sixth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 2.75 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents agree that to "some extent" all units who train employees in the organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted. The standard deviation (.823) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked sixth as well applied.

On the seventh question, the average score of the whole sample is 2.78 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" a report of a WSP of the organization include other trainings conducted by other units. However, the standard deviation (.850) indicates that the opinions about this question are different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked fifth as well applied.

On the eighth question in this section, the average score of the whole sample is 3.12 (close to 3). Meaning in general, respondents think that to "some extent" all reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in the organization. However, the high standard deviation (.946) indicates that the opinions about this question are significantly different across the sample. According to Table 5.15, this aspect (of reporting to SETA) is ranked first as well applied.

5.4 Key success factors for WSP implementation

5.4.1 Important aspects of information gathering

Information gathering is a vital aspect in the implementation of WSP because it provides relevant information required for a WSP. The managers ranked the items for the above indicated aspects as follows (Table 5.16):

Table 5.16 Important aspects of information gathering

Rank	Item no.	Item	Means	Percentage Importance
1	B2c	Information gathering for a WSP must consider employee information	2.83	70.75%
2	B1	Information gathering for a WSP is necessary in an organization	2.90	72.50%
2	B2a	Information gathering for a WSP must consider external environment factors	2.82	70.50%
3	B2b	Information gathering for a WSP must consider internal environment factors	2.81	70.25%
4	B2d	Information gathering for a WSP must consider training units and other units	2.77	69.25%

Table 5.16 shows that item B2c (information gathering for a WSP must consider employee information) was ranked highest with a percentage importance of 70.75%. Item B2d was ranked fourth with a percentage importance of 69.25%. Although some managers believe that information gathering for a WSP must consider training units and other units, the reason for this low ranking may be that they also believe that it must consider many other issues such as internal environment, external environment, employee information, etc.

5.4.2 Important aspects of skills auditing

The aspects of skills auditing plays an essential role in the implementation of a WSP in an organization. It determines the skills gap between the skills that an organization has, and the skills that an organization supposed to have. The participant managers ranked the items in the aspects as follows (Table 5.17):

Table 5.17 Important aspects of skills auditing

Rank	Item no.	Item	Means	Percentage Importance
1	C2c	Skills auditing must consider finding the skills gap	2.64	66%
2	C1	Skills auditing must be properly conducted within the organization	2.61	65.25%
3	C2b	Must consider job and competence profiling	2.60	65%
4	C2a	Must consider human resource planning	2.56	64%
5	C2d	Consider The link between an employee qualification and his or her current job	2.41	60%
6	C2e	Consider competencies of the members of skills development committee	2.24	56%

Table 5.17 shows that item C2c was ranked the highest in the table with a percentage of 66%, which means that managers believe that skills auditing must consider finding the skills gap. Question item number C2e was ranked lowest with a percent importance of 56%. Managers may consider that competencies of the members of skills development committee do not have an effective role in the processes of conducting skills audit in the organization. This may be due to the level of participation of the skills development committee members in the process.

5.4.3 Important aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP

After the process of gathering information for a WSP is completed, with the skills auditing process to identify skills gap in the organization being finalised, a WSP is compiled. This is the point where the WSP is endorsed by the skills development facilitator or other person appointed as the head of skills unit in an organization. After a WSP has been endorsed by the chairperson of the skills development committee, it will then be endorsed by the head of the organization before it can be submitted to the relevant SETA. Table 5.18 indicates how the managers responded and ranked the items in this section:

Table 5.18 Important aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP

Rank	Item no.r	Item	Means	Percentage Importance
1	D2d	A WSP must be submitted on time to SETA	2.84	71%
2	D1	Organizations must be committed in compiling a WSP	2.83	70.75%
3	D2c	Activities of compiling a WSP must receive adequate support from the organization's management	2.48	62%
4	D2a	Employees must be consulted on skills needs identified	2.45	61.25%
5	D2b	Members of skills development committee must be well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP	2.30	57.50%

Table 5.18 shows that managers agree that a WSP must be submitted on time to the SETA, also that organizations must be committed in compiling a WSP. It also shows that question

item D2b was ranked fifth with a percentage importance of 57.50%. The reason for this low ranking may be that managers feel that training the skills development committee members will add little value because they are not effective enough in the processes of implementing a WSP.

5.4.4 Important aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP

Aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP are crucial. This can be regarded as an execution phase because it is where the skills planning document in the form of the WSP is put into action. The monitoring and evaluation of this process is done to ensure that these aspects yield the desired results. Table 5.19 shows how the managers ranked the question items on these aspects:

Table 5.19 Important aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluation of a WSP

Rank	Item no.	Item	Means	Percentage Importance
1	E2a	Implementation of a WSP must include accredited formal trainings	2.93	73.25%
2	E2d	Implementation of a WSP must be properly monitored in an organization	2.82	70.50%
3	E2b	A WSP must include the workplace-based trainings	2.75	68.75%
4	E2c	Training methods must be designed to suit each particular training implemented	2.72	68%
5	E2f	Management must encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP	2.62	65.50%
6	E2e	Results of monitoring and evaluation must be used to improve future implementations of training programmes"	2.61	65.25%
7	E1	actions of a WSP must be well implemented in the organization	2.58	64.50%
8	E2g	The quality of implementing a WSP must improve every financial year in the organization	2.34	58.50%

With a percentage importance of 73.25%, question item E2a was ranked first in terms of the level importance. Most managers agree that the implementation of a WSP must include accredited formal trainings. Question item number E2g received lowest ranking with a percentage importance of 58.50%. The reason for this low ranking may be that managers acknowledge that the organization does not implement a WSP according to the identified critical aspects. Another reason may be that managers understand that for the quality of implementing a WSP to improve every financial year, the organization must have well-trained members of skills development committee who can be given more responsibilities in the processes of implementing a WSP.

5.4.5 Important aspects of reporting on a WSP

The skills development facilitator is required to report to the organization on the implemented WSP of the previous financial year. This form of reporting can be done in any format identified as suitable for the organization. However, another critical report on the implemented WSP is made to the SETA. Organizations are required to report to their relevant SETA, using the reporting format stipulated by the SETA, by 30 June every year. The question items on these aspects were ranked by the managers as indicated in Table 5.20:

Table 5.20 Important aspects of reporting on a WSP

Rank	Item no.	Item	Means	Percentage Important
1	F2g	All reports of a WSP must be approved by the skills development committee in the organization	3.12	78%
2	F2b	The Limpopo DoE must have a good relationship with SETA	3.04	76%
3	F2a	The Limpopo DoE must meet deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA	3.01	75.25%
4	F1	Organization report must be relevant to SETA on the implemented WSP every year	2.86	71.50%
5	F2	A report of a WSP of the organization must include other trainings conducted by other units	2.78	69.50%
6	F2e	All units who train employees in the organization must submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted	2.75	68.75%
7	F2c	The skills committee must play a critical role when compiling an ATR	2.68	67%
8	F2d	Members of skills development committee must be trained to compile an ATR	2.33	58.25%

Table 5.20 shows that question item F2g was ranked first with 78%, level of importance, followed by item F2b with 76% level of importance. Thus managers agree that all reports of a WSP must be approved by the skills development committee in the organization, and also that the Limpopo DoE must have a good relationship with SETA. Question F2d received lowest with a percentage importance of 58.25%. The reason for this low ranking may be that although some managers believe that members of skills development committee must be trained to compile an ATR, they also feel that they are not effective enough in the processes of implementing a WSP in the organization. Therefore such training may not be necessary.

5.4.6 Success factors that manager's regard as important for implementing a WSP.

The rankings by the participant managers on the key success factors for WSP implementation indicate that variety of aspects are important to very. The respondents regarded 12 aspects as very important (70%+). Aspects that are ranked 1-4 are rated 71%+ and aspects that are ranked 6-10 are rated 58%+ important. The aspects that the respondents regarded as important success factors for implementing a WSP are set out in Table 5.21

Table 5.21 Success factors that managers regard as important for implementing a WSP

Rank	Item no.	Item	Means	Percentage importance
1	F2g	All reports of a WSP must be approved by the skills development committee in the organization	3.12	78%
2	F2b	The Limpopo DoE must have a good relationship with SETA	3.04	76%
3	F2a	The Limpopo DoE must meet deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA	3.01	75.25%
4	E2a	Implementation of a WSP must include accredited formal trainings	2.93	73.25%
5	B1	Information gathering for a WSP is necessary in an organization	2.90	72.50%
6	F1	organization report must be relevant to SETA on the implemented WSP every year	2.86	71.50%
7	D2d	A WSP must be submitted on time to SETA	2.84	71%
8	B2c	Information gathering for a WSP must consider employee information	2.83	70.75%
9	D1	Organizations must be committed in compiling a WSP	2.83	70.75%
10	B2a	Information gathering for a WSP must consider external environment factors	2.82	70.50%
11	E2d	Implementation of a WSP must be properly monitored in an organization	2.82	70.50
12	B2B	Information gathering for a WSP must consider internal environment factors	2.81	70.25%
13	F2	A report of a WSP of the organization must include other trainings conducted by other units	2.78	69.50%
14	B2d	Information gathering for a WSP must consider training units and other units	2.77	69.25%
15	E2b	A WSP must include the workplace-based trainings	2.75	68.75%
16	F2e	All units who train employees in the organization must submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted	2.75	68.75%
17	E2c	Training methods must be designed to suit each particular training implemented	2.72	68%
18	F2c	The skills committee must play a critical role when compiling an ATR	2.68	67%
19	C2c	Skills auditing must consider finding the skills gap	2.64	66%
20	E2f	Management must encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP	2.62	65.50%
21	C1	Skills auditing must be properly conducted within the organization	2.61	65.25%
22	E2e	Results of monitoring and evaluation must be used to improve future implementations of training programmes"	2.61	65.25%
23	C2b	Must consider job and competence profiling	2.60	65%

The next chapter gives conclusions and recommendations from the research, the effect size, and interpretation of the responses.

Chapter 6
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study on the key success factors for WSP implementation and presents conclusions and recommendations on key success factors for WSP implementation. It also indicates the effect size and the key success factors for WSP implementation.

6.2 Conclusions and recommendations

6.2.1 Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn regarding the research on the key success factors for implementing a workplace skills plan are presented in the following subsections.

6.2.1.1 Conclusions on information gathering to inform a WSP (research objective 1)

Information gathering is a vital aspect because it furnishes the related information needed in the execution of a Workplace Skills Plan. It lays a "critical foundation for the rest of the key success factors to follow in the implementation of a WSP". The information collected gives an organization an adequate evidence of the "nature of the organization, its stakeholders and employees, and the skills required to achieve the set goals and objectives". Below are the focal conclusions with respect to research objective 1:

- Information gathering for a WSP is necessary in an organization because it considers employees information.
- The information gathering takes into consideration both the external and internal environmental factors.
- It is assumed that information gathering for a WSP also considers training units and other units in an organization.

- Organizations that conduct proper processes of information gathering obtain a better understanding of the skills planning document they need to compile in planning for the development of their employees.

6.2.1.2 Conclusions regarding aspects of skills auditing (research objective 2)

Skills auditing determines the skills gap between the skills that an organization has and the skills that an organization needs to have. The organization's WSP is therefore compiled largely on the bases of the first 2 key aspects: information gathering and skills auditing. The following are the main conclusions with respect to research objective 2:

- The aim of skills auditing is to find the skills gaps in an organization. It indicates the skills that an organization has and the skills that an organization needs to have.
- A properly planned and conducted skills auditing process considers job and competence profiling.
- It considers human resource planning in the organization.
- It considers the link between an employee qualification and his or her current job.
- It also considers competencies of the members of skills development committee.

6.2.2 Conclusions regarding aspects of compiling and submitting a WSP (research objective 3)

After collecting all the relevant information relating to the previous 2 aspects, a skills development facilitator (or an organization) needs to consult widely on the identified skills-development priorities. It is also advisable to compile a draft WSP, together with the interventions for addressing the needs and associated budgets for implementing these interventions. The final step in preparing the WSP is to get it signed by the relevant authorities of the organization before submitting it to the relevant SETA. The following are the main conclusions with respect to research objective 3:

- It is assumed that organizations are able to determine what the WSP should be, and what it should not be.
- A WSP is signed by the relevant authorities of the organization before submitting it to the applicable SETA.
- "Management of the organization and employees are consulted on training needs identified".

- "Organizations compile a WSP for review".
- "A WSP is submitted to the relevant SETA".
- "It is assumed that the organization is committed in compiling a WSP".
- It is assumed that a WSP is always submitted on time to SETA.
- The management of the organization seem not to be doing enough to support activities of compiling a WSP.
- It was found that managers and supervisors take decisions for employees regarding skills development programmes that employees "can attend".
- "Members of skills development committee" have not been sufficiently trained on compiling a WSP.

6.2.2.1 Conclusions regarding aspects of implementing, monitoring and evaluating a WSP (research objective 4)

These aspects constitute the WSP execution in the organization. It is at this stage that the outcomes of what a WSP was planned to achieve, and the monitoring of such implementation become evident. The following are the main conclusions with respect to research objective 4.

- Employees do not participate voluntarily in attending skills development programmes, but are chosen by their immediate supervisors.
- The organization implements a WSP through formal trainings.
- It is assumed that on-the-job trainings are also organised for employees.
- The organization tries to monitor the implementation of a WSP.
- It is assumed that the organization also tries to make use of the results of monitoring and evaluation in order to improve future implementations of training programmes.
- It is assumed that the organization is not doing enough follow-ups on how the training was received by the attendees.

6.2.2.2 Conclusions regarding aspects of reporting on an implemented WSP (research objective %)

The skills development facilitator (or other official appointed for this purpose) must submit a report on a WSP to the relevant SETA by 30 June of every year.

- It is assumed that the organization follows annual training report criteria for acceptance.
- It is assumed that the Limpopo DoE has a good relationship with the SETA.

- It is concluded that the report on the organization's WSP includes other trainings conducted by other units.
- The skills development committee plays a critical role in compiling an annual training report ATR.

6.2.3 Recommendations

Recommendations can be made regarding the implementation of a WSP and on further research:

6.2.3.1 Recommendations for implementing a WSP

The following are made on implementation of a WSP in an organization:

An organization must appoint a registered skills development facilitator (skills development facilitator) who will act as the link between the organization and the SETA regarding issues of skills development. The skills development facilitator must have broad knowledge of skills facilitation, background experience in skills development. It is recommended that an organization supplies training for the skills development facilitator in instances where the skills development facilitator lacks the necessary training. The ETDP SETA provides training for individual employees to become accredited skills development facilitators in a course consisting of six unit standards used to identify competence as an accredited skills development facilitator.

In order for the skills development facilitator and the organization to implement a WSP, they must determine both the "internal and external stakeholders, involve all relevant stakeholders and clearly specify their roles and responsibilities, support implementation of skills development strategies such as the HRD-SA and NSDS III, and make sure that the systems, structures and processes through which to address skills needs are properly understood". It is also recommended that determine the nature of the different environment systems in which the WSP functions should be determined, and that a good relationship between all employees and their supervisors should be developed and maintained.

It is recommended that organizations establish skills development committees whose members can be adequately trained regarding the implementation of a WSP. "Skills development committee members" must be employees' representatives from "labour unions, HR Equity, employee wellness, labour relations" and so on., who have the capability to

inspire and recruit the organization's workforce to take advantage of skills development opportunities provided to them by the organization.

Organizations are advised to have sound strategic human resource management that can incorporate workplace skills planning in the strategic direction of the organization. The primary purpose of the WSP is to organise the planning and implementation of skills interventions so that employees are sufficiently skilled, knowledgeable and capable to achieve the organization's main goals. Implementing a workplace skills plan also suggests that an organization must prepare a workplace for learning, register a skills development facilitator, set up a skills development committee, make a case for workplace skills planning, understand the meaning and need for a WSP, consider the sector skills plan, understand the role of environmental skills plan, align its WSP with the current National Development Strategy, and ensure adequate resources for workplace skills planning.

Information gathering indicates the nature and scope of skills programmes and projects that must be comprised within a Workplace Skills Plan. Employee information is vital and needs to be collected carefully and discreetly since it may include sensitive information such as age, salary level, race, etc. Developing the skills of employees means that the organization is investing in its human resources. Information such as age of an employee enables the organization to determine the projected number of years that an investment may last and also indicates the period during which an employee will be able to give the skills and knowledge back to the employer. The information gathered must also include information about the internal and external environment in which a WSP functions.

It is recommended that organizations implementing a WSP should conduct a skills audit. This will give the skills development facilitator an opportunity to determine the skills that the organization either has or should have. The skills auditing must cover three fundamental areas: human resource planning, job and competence profiling, and finding the skills gap.

It is recommended that compiling a WSP should be preceded by gathering of all the required information and completion of the skills audit. A compiled WSP must observe the following requirements:

- It must include all sections and units of the organization.
- It must be supported by all relevant stakeholders involved.

- It must be signed by the skills development facilitator, the skills development committee members, and the head of the organization.
- It must be submitted to the relevant SETA.

Further recommendations are as follows: the WSP must be submitted on time to SETA; skills development facilitators must represent their organizations and show commitment in compiling a WSP; compilation of the WSP must receive adequate support from management; employees must be consulted on skills needs identified; and members of the skills development committee must be adequately trained in compiling a WSP.

A WSP needs appropriate implementation to deliver the "desired results, but this is not simply a matter of following a plan that has been compiled and endorsed". Employees must also participate willingly in attending skills development programmes, supervisors must give adequate support to employees selected to attend these programmes, formal training events must take place, the skills development facilitator must organise off-the-job training, and an environment must be created that allows employees to use the skills and knowledge they acquire from training programmes.

Sound monitoring tools are needed to ensure that the implementation of a WSP happens as planned. Monitoring is also needed in the information gathering, in the skills audit, and in compilation of the WSP and its submission to the relevant SETA. This will help the skills development facilitator and the organization to achieve the desired outcomes of the WSP. Management encouragement in monitoring and evaluation of the WSP will also improve the implementation.

An annual training report (ATR) of an organization must be compiled and endorsed by all members of the skills development committee, relevant stakeholders, the skills development facilitator and the head of the organization. The ATR must be submitted to the relevant SETA not later than 30 June each year and must be in SETA format so as to furnish all the needed information. All units who equip personnel within the organization must submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted. The members of skills development committee must also be trained in compiling an ATR.

Both the WSP and the ATR are submitted to SETA on 30 June every year. The following information needs to be included:

- particulars of the company that is submitting the WSP

- particulars of an organization submitting the ATR
- prioritisation of skills development interventions by the organization
- employed workers in structured programmes leading towards NQF 1 (ABET)
- the organization's banking details, physical address and personal details of the SDF
- definition of the occupational groups
- reporting on education and training interventions provided to beneficiaries

An ATR will show whether the organization managed to implement its skills programmes and projects as "indicated in its WSP submitted to SETA the previous year". The SETAs are more interested to see in the ATR whether the skills grant it provided to the organization was used accordingly, and whether the organization was able to "develop the skills of its employees as indicated in the WSP". It is therefore recommended that organizations implement their skills development interventions in relation to their WSP. In this way the ATR will also be in line with the WSP.

6.2.3.2 Recommendations regarding further research

New facts regarding the WSP implementation need to be documented. Relevant research literature on key success factors for WSP implementation is very limited, and much of what is available is outdated. Additional training institutions or academies should be established across the country to equip skills development facilitators and skills development committee members for WSP implementation. Although many skills development facilitators and their organizations are registered with their relevant SETAs, many also remain unregistered.

Research is also needed on how to determine the impact of a WSP in the organization and on the academic qualifications and skills-related experiences of the members of the skills development committee. Many employees also fail to take advantage of training opportunities that an organization may support and research is needed to determine how they can be motivated to take skills development interventions seriously.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTING A WORKPLACE SKILS PLAN: A CASE STUDY OF LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Demographical information
Please mark with a √ or x

A1	**Gender**	Male		Female	
A2	**Race**	African		Coloured	
		Indian		White	
A3	**Are you permanently employed?**	Yes		No	
A4	**How many years have you been employed by Limpopo Department Of Education?**	0-5 years		From 6 years above	
A5	**What is your highest educational qualification?**	From matric to honours degree	From masters to PHD	No	
A6	**Are you a member of skills development committee?**	Yes		No	
A7	**How many Skills development courses have you attended**	Between 0 to 10		From 11 above	

SECTION B: ASPECTS OF INFORMATION GATHERING TO INFORM A WSP

		Not at all	**Small extent**	**Some extent**	**Great extent**
B1	In your view, to what extent is gathering information for a WSP perceived as necessary in your organization?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
B2	To what extend do you think the aspects of information gathering consider the following in the department?				
B2a	External environment factors	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

B2b	Internal environment factors	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
B2c	Employee information	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
B2d	Relationships between training units and other units of the organisation	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

SECTION C: ASPECTS OF SKILLS AUDITING

		Not at all	**Small extent**	**Some extent**	**Great extent**
C1	In your view, to what extent do you think Skills Auditing is properly conducted within your organization?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
C2	To what extend do you think the aspects of Skills Auditing consider the following in your organization:				
C2a	Human Resource Planning	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
C2b	Job and competence profiling	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
C2c	Finding the skills gap	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
C2d	The link between an employee qualification and his or her current job	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
C2e	Competencies of the members of skills development committee	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

SECTION D: ASPECTS OF COMPILING AND SUBMITTING A WSP

		Not at all	**Small extent**	**Some extent**	**Great extent**
D1	In your view, do you think your organization is committed in compiling a WSP?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
D2	To what extend do you agree with the statements below				
D2a	Employees are always consulted on needs identified in the compiled WSP	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
D2b	Members of Skills Development Committee are well-trained on processes of compiling a WSP	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
D2c	Activities of compiling a WSP receive adequate support from the organization' management	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
D2d	The Limpopo Department of Education always submit its WSP on time to SETA	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

SECTION E: Aspects of Implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions of a WSP

		Not at all	Small extent	Some extent	Great extent
E1	In your view, to what extend do you think actions of a WSP are well implemented in your organization?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2	To what extend do you agree with the statements below				
E2a	Implementation of a WSP in your organization includes accredited formal trainings	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2b	A WSP of your organization includes the implementation of work-place based trainings	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2c	Training methods are designed to suit each particular training implemented	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2d	A WSP is properly monitored within your organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2e	Results of monitoring and evaluation are used to improve future implementations of training programmes	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2f	Management encourage monitoring and evaluation of a WSP	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
E2g	The quality of implementing a WSP improves every financial year in your organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

SECTION F: ASPECTS OF REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A WSP

		Not at all	Small extent	Some extent	Great extent
F1	In your view, to what extent does your organization report to the relevant SETA on the implemented WSP every year?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2	To what extend do you agree with the statements below				
F2a	The Limpopo Department of Education meets	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

	deadlines for submitting a WSP report to SETA				
F2b	The Limpopo department of Education has a good relationship with SETA	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2c	The skills development committee play a critical role when compiling an Annual Training Report	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2d	Members of skills development committee are trained to compile an Annual Training Report	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2e	All units who train employees in your organization submit their reports on trainings that they have conducted	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2f	A report of a WSP of your organization include other trainings conducted by other units	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
F2g	All reports of a WSP are approved by the skills development committee in your organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE INPUT.

Appendix 2: Consent letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mr. PL Shange 013 231 0100

Supervisor: Thea van der Westhuizen 031 260 8673.

Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

CONSENT

I…… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

_____ _____

This page is to be retained by researcher

Appendix 3: Informed consent letter

Informed Consent Letter 3C

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

Dear Respondent,

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Mr. PL Shange 013 231 0100
Supervisor: Thea van der Westhuizen 031 260 8673.
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-2603587

I, Protus Lucky Shange an MCOM student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership of the University of KwaZulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Key success factors for implementing a Workplace Skills Plan: A case study of Limpopo Department of Education".
The aim of this study is to identify and explore key success factors for implementing a Workplace Skills Plan, and to determine if such Key Success Factors are implemented within the Limpopo Department of Education.
Through your participation I hope to understand the best ways in which a Workplace Skills Plan can be implemented in order to enhance the skills of the employees of the Limpopo Department of Education. The results of the survey are intended to contribute to the effective planning and execution of skills activities aimed at growing competencies of employees through proper implementation of a WSP.
Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gains from participating in this survey/focus group. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The survey should take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely

Investigator's

Date_____ signature_____

This page is to be retained by participant

Appendix 4: Request for permission to conduct research

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Enquiries: Dr. Makola MC, Tel No: 015 290 9448. E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP
PRIVATE BAG X 54001
DURBAN
4000

SHANGE PL

RE: Request for permission to Conduct Research

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved- **TOPIC: KEY SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTING A WORKPLACE SKILLS PLAN: A CASE STUDY OF LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
3. The following conditions should be considered

   3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

   3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Offices and the schools concerned.

   3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

   3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

   3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

   3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

5. The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.

[redacted]

30/06/2014

Date

Dederen K.O

Acting Head of Department

Appendix 5: Editing certification

grammarline
editing services

22 December 2016

This is to certify that I have performed a language edit of the Master of Commerce thesis "Key Success Factors for Implementing a Workplace Skills Plan" by Protus Lucky Shange.

Additional information can be provided on request.

David Newmarch BA (Hons)(Natal), M Phil (York)
Associate: South African Professional Editors' Guild

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