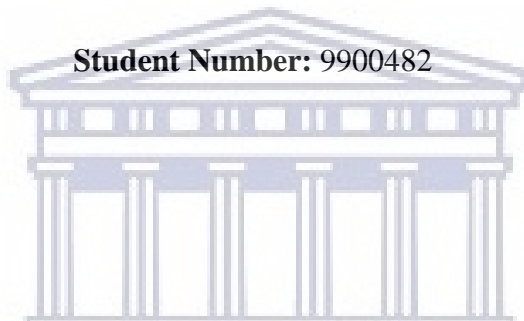


UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY IN A RURAL MUNICIPALITY
IN THE WESTERN CAPE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree,
Masters in Development Studies, in the Institute for Social Development,
Faculty of Economics and Management Science

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Supervisor: Dr Cornel Hart

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ABSTRACT

Local governments worldwide are invariably faced with challenges of human capacity constraints, corruption, lack of operating transparency and accountability, dysfunctional ward committees, poor public participation, non-compliance with legislation and by-laws, poor prioritisation of community needs, unaligned budget processes, unauthorised and wasteful expenditure, tensions between politicians and administrators, as well as weak financial viability. A strong legal framework, clearly defining authority and accountability, backed by relevant skills development training, are necessary foundations for service delivery; however, without the appropriate training, staff performance could remain inadequate. Various countries have reached varying levels of local government effectiveness; however, all too often municipalities do not have the adequate skills required, to deliver the services needed, to ensure community development.

Despite being well structured, South Africa's institutional arrangements are often deeply flawed, while local government still needs to transform from passive service provider to proactive facilitator. Skills development legislation forms part of government policies to enable transformation; however, many local municipalities are burdened by poor service delivery, corrupt staff, and no accountability. Therefore, there is a desperate need to explore the best way of addressing local government challenges and skills shortcomings of their human resources.

In this current study, the researcher conducted a case study to explore varying aspects of local government skills development, particularly the implementation of a training programme in a rural municipality. Data collection was conducted with key informants, as well as trainees, through in-depth, individual, semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, present the findings relevant to the strategies, as well as make recommendations on the required enhancements, for improved implementation of local government skills development initiatives.

KEY WORDS

Local government capacity building

Local government context

Local government functions

Local government skills needs

Public sector legislative frameworks

Sector Education Training Authority (SETA)



ABBREVIATIONS/GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AG | Auditor-General of South Africa |
| COGTA | Department of Cooperative Governance & Traditional Affairs |
| DHET | Department Higher Education and Training |
| DPLG | Department of Provincial and Local Government |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| IDP | Integrated Development Plan |
| LG | Local Government |
| LGSETA | Local Government Sector Education Authority |
| NSDS | National Skills Development Strategy |
| QCTO | Quality Council for Trades and Occupations |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| SA | South Africa |
| SALGA | South African Local Government Association |
| SAQA | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SDA | Skills Development Act |
| SDF | Skills Development Facilitator |
| SETA | Sector Education Training Authority |
| UWC | University of the Western Cape |
| WSP | Workplace Skills Plan |



DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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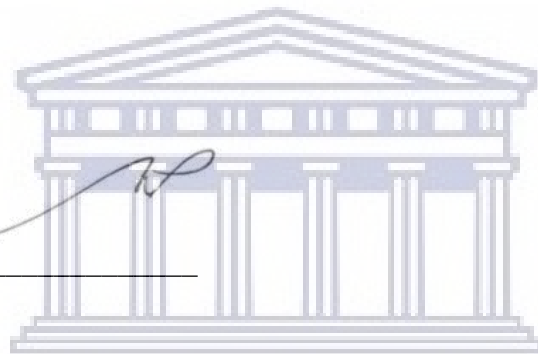
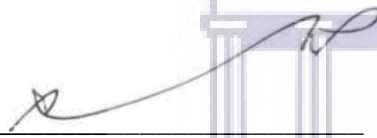
Degree: Masters in Development Studies

An Exploratory Case Study in a Rural Municipality in the Western Cape: Local Government Skills Development

I declare that the above thesis is my own original work, and all the sources, which I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

Date: 18 November 2020

Signature: _____



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Western Cape LGSETA Team and Skills Development Facilitators, who continuously strive to fulfil a vision of creating a better life for all, through skills development in the Local Government sector.

This research project is dedicated in loving memory to my mother, Olga Patricia Pelston who sadly passed away on 1 January 2021.



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The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of a few special people:

I give thanks to my Creator who has given me the strength, drive and courage to complete this research project successfully.

My parents, Olga, my mom who sadly passed away on 1 January 2021 and Alec Pelston, for all the support and encouragement, and for never stopping to believe in my ability to succeed, and achieve my goals. May my mom's soul rest in eternal peace and having known that I passed my degree before her passing.

The best supervisor any student could ask for, Dr Cornel Hart, my sincere appreciation and gratitude for your continuous motivation, guidance, and support throughout this research process.

To my language editor, Mr Eddi Londt who critically and meticulously edited my thesis whilst adhering to tight timeframes. Thanks for providing your professional editing service which have contributed to the finalizing of this thesis.

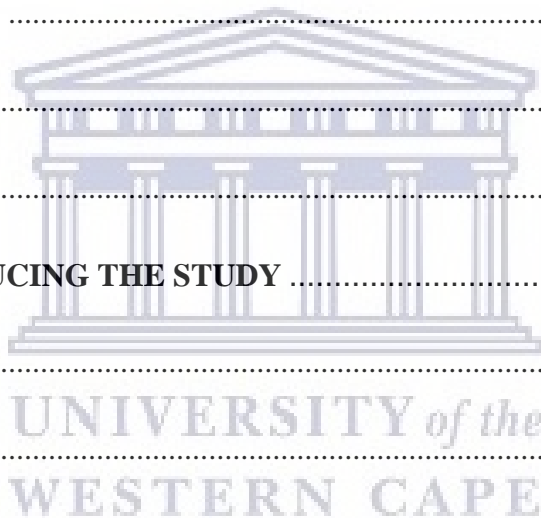
My children and granddaughter, Danian, Ebrahim-Che, Leilah and Kaia, for all the encouragement, love, checking up, and reminding me of deadlines.

To my family and friends, for their loving support, encouragement, and motivation, for me to reach completion.

Lastly, to my soulmate and husband, Faiez Jacobs, your selfless and constant support, unwavering encouragement, commitment, patience, and understanding, in my endeavours to pursue my academic interests, are appreciated.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

For ages, educated people have been required to run the institutions of democracy for the benefit of its citizens. This involved increasing the knowledge, skills, capacities, and capabilities of all the people involved in service delivery, a need that gave rise to the concept of Human Resource Development [HRD] (Sydhagen & Cunningham, 2007). Originating in the United States of America, from the 1960s, HRD moved to Europe, with a focus on corporate settings (McLean, Kuo, Budhwani, & Yamnill, 2006, p. 27). Countries such as the United Kingdom (Britain), Nigeria, Singapore and the United States of America, have all embraced skills development, as a critical need panacea to poor service delivery in local government (Taylor, 2013, p. 5).

The South African HRD strategy has been designed to address the *triple challenge* of inequality, unemployment, and poverty (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2017). Economic competitiveness is measured by the aggregate skills of a country's workforce, as well as the flexibility and capacity of that workforce, to adjust to the rapid changes in technology, production, trade, and work organisation (Hamid, 2017, p. 3). The ability to respond to these changes with efficiency has recently become the area, in which many countries seek a competitive advantage. In sub-Sahara African countries that have addressed HRD, five emerging national HRD models have been adopted: (a) centralised; (b) transitional; (c) government initiated; (d) decentralised/free market; and (e) small nation (McLean, 2004, p. 270). According to the researcher, although various countries may have adopted a different model, each often borrowed aspects from other nations. South Africa, however, has adopted a blended approach, based on a government initiated HRD model, with a strong emphasis on partnerships with industry and organised labour.

The Auditor-General (AG) of South Africa, in a 2017/18 report, stated that only 18 municipalities had received clean audit results, while 63 had regressed, and only 22 had improved from the previous year (The Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2018). The 2018-19 AG report, again narrates a story of only 20 municipalities that received clean audits, which is

a slight improvement on the previous financial year, and highlights how the efforts of these diligent municipalities had been overshadowed by the overall regression in audit outcomes (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2020). Evidently, these reports of the AG directly linked inadequate skills levels, lack of oversight by councils (including mayors), and insufficient implementation, as well as maintenance of financial and performance management systems by administrations, as contributors to the accountability failures, and the regression in audit outcomes (RSA, 2018; RSA, 2020).

Therefore, in this current study, the researcher aimed to explore the lessons that could be learned from international, as well as national examples, to develop effective skills training programmes in local government, which meet the developing needs of its citizens and communities.

1.2. Problem statement

Local governments worldwide have been, and are invariably faced with challenges of human capacity constraints and corruption, lack of operating transparency, dysfunctional ward committees, lack of accountability, poor public participation in governance, non-compliance with legislation and by-laws, poor prioritisation of community needs, unaligned budget processes, tensions between politicians and administrators, as well as weak municipal financial viability (Majekodunmi, 2012, p. 91; Bell & Bland, 2014, p. 2; Bohler-Muller et al., 2016, pp. 3-4; Uche, 2014, p. 132; Madumo, 2015, p. 154). Frequently, municipalities lacked the human resource skills required to deliver good access to clean water, sanitation, housing, transport, and education (Uche, 2014, p. 133; Madumo, 2015, p. 163; Wilson, 2013, p. 136; Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa [IDASA], 2010). Therefore, the aim of this current study was to focus on addressing these local government challenges, as well as skills-shortcomings, in the best possible manner.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this current research study was to explore various aspects of HRD skills improvement and staff capacity building in the local government sector, with particular focus on implementing learnerships through Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). In addition, the researcher sought to identify strategies and enhancements that were geared

towards improved implementing skills development initiatives, and ultimately, make recommendations to address the skills deficit within the local government sector.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The study objectives were to:

- i. explore staff capacity challenges, skills development approaches, training content, and implementation within the local government sector, based on a literature review;
- ii. conduct a case study of the role of key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a learnership (SETA training) at a rural municipality in the Western Cape, for the purpose of conceptualizing the experiences of the stakeholders with its implementation;
- iii. analyse the collected case study data, using thematic analysis, to synthesize the findings with the literature review results, obtained with objective 1; and
- iv. report the findings related to human resources development and skills training (e.g. SETA learnerships) in local government, and make recommendations for further research.

1.5. Research question and sub-questions

In this current study, the researcher attempted to explore the following research question, “What are the critical success factors that ensure successful implementation of learnerships in local government in the furtherance of skills development?” Based on the research problem and objectives, the following sub-questions were raised:

- i. What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships successfully?
- ii. Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners?
- iii. What was the impact of the learnerships that were implemented at the rural municipality under study?

1.6. Delimitations and limitations of the study

In this current case study, the researcher aimed to explore the skills development practices, challenges, and implementation experiences of the key stakeholders within the selected

municipality. The study was focused on a single rural municipality in the Western Cape, South Africa. The collected responses of the participants were their reflections and opinions, confined to their personal conceptualisations. As a result, the study findings may not be generalised to other rural-based municipalities, nor could its findings be interpreted contextually for urban, peri-urban, and metropolitan municipalities.

1.7. Significance of the study

This current research was significant to the broader local government sector in its critically objective assessment, review, reflection, as well as consolidation of areas of strategic strengths and weaknesses in local government skills development. If local government staff members could be capacitated through skills development, they could become the required strategic drivers of transformation, through improved productivity, which will enhance service delivery in municipalities. The findings of this current study could contribute to existing research, regarding the implementation of skills development in the local government sector.

1.8. Chapters outline

The study comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1 – Introduction: contains the introduction, problem statement, purpose, objectives limitations, significance, and outline of the research project.

Chapter 2 – Literature review: consists of a literature review of the local government legislative framework, local government contexts, both global and local, skills development legislative framework and institutional landscape, role players in skills development in local government, as well as the challenges of local government with the implementation of skills development.

Chapter 3 – Research methodology: comprises the presentation of the research methodology and the design of the field of study, as well as a detailed discussion of the sampling, data collection, and data analysis processes.

Chapter 4 – Presentation and discussion of the findings: encompasses the presentation of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis, as well as the interpretation of the results of the empirical study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations: The researcher provides a summary of the study, culminating in the conclusions of the research project, and offers recommendations for future action, as well as areas of future research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher reviews the available literature on local governments, the contexts in which they operate their legislative frameworks, as well as their capacities for service delivery. In addition, related literature on skills development for human resource capacity building are reviewed. Within this main aim, local government structures and operations in South Africa (SA) are examined, together with the structures in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Nigeria, and Singapore, regarding their historical relativity to South Africa. In this chapter, the researcher also provides a brief description of local government, regarding its context, legislative framework, and capacity to deliver services.

Additionally, an overview of pertinent literature on the implementation of skills development in South Africa is provided, and the way in which a SETA (e.g. LGSETA) supports skills development in the local government sector is explored, in relation to comparable countries, namely, Nigeria, the United States of America [USA], the United Kingdom [UK], and Singapore. In the context of the way in which the South African Local Government SETA (LGSETA) supports skills development, attention is paid to other researchers' literature on skills development implementation in local government, in their attempts to respond to features underlying the implementation of skills development initiatives. The limitations of their approaches assisted in developing the primary research question and its related sub-questions for this current study. A summary of legislation and social theories that were relevant to this current study are presented, as well as the conceptual framework selected to guide the research process, including the explanatory framework, used for the interpretation of the findings.

2.2. Local government in its context and legislative framework

2.2.1. History and roles of local government

Three spheres of government are in common use: 1) federal/national, 2) state/provincial, and 3) local (Steytler, 2005, p. 1). In most western and industrialised countries, local

governments are creations of their national governments, statutory bodies created, modified, suspended, or eliminated at will, by the state (Taylor, 2013, p. 45; Needham & Mangan, 2014, p. 25; Booth-Smith & Leigh, 2016, p. 35). Meanwhile, the institutions of local government could, and do, vary greatly from one country to the next; even where national governments are similar, the role of the local government could still vary (Steytler, 2005, p. 89; Dalton, 2014; Local Government Association [LGA], 2016, p. 9). In some countries, such as South Africa, local government is recognised constitutionally, while in others, it is merely a competence of a recognised sphere of national or state/provincial government (Steytler, 2005, p. 1). In most African countries, political systems are derived from their earlier colonial structures, many of which remained intact after independence (Olowu, 2012, p. 42; Dalton, 2014; Abutudu, 2011, p. 20). In the UK's Anglo-Saxon tradition, these institutions are referred to as *local authorities*. Even in countries where similar institutions of local government are in place, the terminology often varies (Olowu, 2012, p. 42). The country comparisons are reviewed below. IDASA

2.2.2. Local government in United States of America [USA]

Local government in the USA is located in the sphere below state, and consists of two tiers, namely, counties and municipalities. In some states, counties are divided into townships, while “city”, “town”, “borough”, and “village”, are all types of municipalities (Martin, Levey, & Cawley, 2012, p. 18S; Watts, 2013, p. 7). Government structures also vary, with some places centralised and others decentralised. In the decentralised (eleventh largest) state of Michigan, for example, there are 83 county clerks, 274 city clerks, 1240 township clerks, and 93 village clerks (Michigan Legislature, 2019; Michigan Township Association [MTA], 2019).

However, the importance of Michigan's local government lies in the skills levels of officials, who are key to ensuring responsive activities, to address the wishes of their citizens. Officials need to know local government laws, such as the charter, which sets out their responsibilities, powers, and functions (MTA, 2019). The MLG framework requires all personnel, tasked with local government matters, to be capable of managing adversity, and hostility, as well as displaying ethical behaviour (MTA, 2019). In addition, local government in the USA had to contend with the effects of globalisation, the banking crises, and the effects of the great recession on the economy in 2008, which gave effect to job losses in the sector and reduced skills level (Ingraham, 2007, p. 5; Martin et al.,

2012, p. 17S). This required local government to devise strategies to deal with the “new normal in local government”, such as the reskilling and upskilling of employees, exploring shared services, and reviewing services offered by local government. These mandatory requirements have a significant relevance to local government development in South Africa.

2.2.3. Local government in the United Kingdom [UK]

Local government in the UK is decentralised to local area councils, in terms of the Local Government Act of 1974 (United Kingdom [UK], 1974). Although there is no written constitution, or constitutional provision for local government (Booth-Smith & Leigh, 2016, p. 35), the main framework is informed by legislation in the various Local Government (LG) Acts from 1972 to 2010, namely: the Greater London Authority Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no. c 24 of 2007); the Regional Assemblies Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.10 of 2003); the Care Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.23 of 2014); the 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c. 28 of 2007); the Local Democracy, Economic Development & Construction Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.20 of 2009); the Local Government Finance Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.17 of 2012); the Infrastructure Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.7 of 2015); the Localism Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.20 of 2011); the Cities and Devolution Act (United Kingdom [UK], Act no c.1 of 2016).

Functions, related to complaints against councils, adult social care providers, as well as provision for guidance and advice on good administrative practice, are enshrined in the legislation (Needham & Mangan, 2014, p. 25). Reviewed every three years (Dalton, 2014), these laws establish the skills and competencies of staff in the local councils, who are responsible for the effective and efficient service deliveries required of them, whether urban, peri-urban, or rural. Local councils are mandated to implement and co-produce clear workforce strategies, intended to enhance autonomy and quality of service delivery, together with mechanisms to reward initiative, hard work, and innovation (LGA, 2016, p. 9). There are several initiatives that include Sector Skills Councils tasked with developing: a) forward looking competencies; b) national occupational standards that stipulate performance standards important in planning personnel requirements; c) sector qualifications strategies, which consider all opportunities and qualifications available; and d) combining these developments with the Office of Qualifications and Examinations

(Equal) that regulates and maintains standards, as well as confidence in qualifications in England (Booth-Smith & Leigh, 2017, p. 36).

UK local authorities and central government are expected to implement mechanisms to reward initiative, hard work, and innovation, ensuring competence across all sectors. However, local government in the UK faces an uncertain future for funding and growth; therefore, the current workforce is expected to deliver, using fewer resources (Needham & Mangan, 2014, p. 26). Consequently, it is essential to retain an indispensable workforce, with key competencies and skills to implement the modern ways of executing tasks, crossing boundaries, operating collaboratively, as well as able to go beyond ordinary human limits (Dalton, 2014). Skills development, therefore, is key to enhanced service delivery.

2.2.4. Local government in Nigeria (Africa)

The local government framework in Nigeria is informed by the country's 1979 Constitution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, this constitution stipulates local government reforms, which plunged the system into a crisis of identity, with the main thrust being one of ensuring that every state provides for the local councils, in terms of structure, establishment, finance, composition, and functions (Abutudu, 2011, p. 20). According to Wilson (2013, p. 136), this was criticised, as it compelled local councils to remain under the dictates of local governments. Additionally, the 1979 Constitution remained silent on the functions and responsibilities of local government, although it allowed local government to receive federal allocations (Section 149). This resulted in the 1999 Constitution modifications, which set out the functions of local government in Nigeria, namely: health provision and maintenance; agricultural development; education provision and maintenance; as well as other functions that may be conferred by the state (Abutudu, 2011, p. 20). The constitutional provisions, therefore, form the local government legislative framework.

The Nigerian 1976 Guidelines on Local Government Reforms granted powers to local government, to recruit, promote, train, and discipline local personnel (Local Government Nigeria, 2018, p. 14). Additionally, the Constitution further provides for the structure, composition, expenditure, revenue, and staff, among other relevant matters for local government (Abutudu, 2011, p. 23). Through various Local Government Service

Commissions, the state directed and controlled personnel matters (Minis & Jibrin, 2011). Based on the Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy and Development project (LEAD) initiative, Local Government was expected to build the local government workforce, as well as enhance community collaboration (Wilson, 2013, p. 136). This was intended to strengthen the local government capacity for service delivery. LEAD staff performance assessments were implemented to cover the strengths and weaknesses of staff, which subsequently, would be addressed through training and development (Wilson, 2013).

2.2.5. Local government in Singapore (Asia)

Local government in Singapore is well-known as an example of successful and continuous up-skilling of its workforce over the last forty years. Administered by the central government, in collaboration with the private sector, the Singapore system appears to debunk the conventional wisdom that governments are notoriously poor at organising and administering skills development, particularly on a national scale (Kuruvilla, Erickson, & Hwang, 2012, p. 1462). The system is anchored in enabling legislation, within a policy framework; a levy grant system, which funds skills development initiatives, industry partners (fully participating and articulating industry needs), and training institutions (dealing with quality higher and vocational training).

The skills levy grant system relates to the South African skills development approach. Additionally, the full participation of industry partners (stakeholders), and the incorporation of training institutions to deal with quality higher and vocational training, are factors significant to this current study.

2.2.6. Local government in South Africa

Local government in South Africa shifted to a new paradigm in 1994, when the South African Government was tasked with transformation of the former colonial *cum* Apartheid system, to a democratic, inclusive and non-racial system of government, in which all citizens would be treated equally (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs [COGTA], 2009). This was similar to the Nigerian local government concept of addressing challenges in service delivery, following colonialism; however, unlike the UK, with its 18th century local government origins, or the USA with its state-based variegated systems (Local Government Nigeria, 2018, p. 13; Dalton, 2014). South Africa's transformation from Apartheid to democracy

required a sound policy and legislative framework, which could be relied on to deliver relevant and meaningful services, to a variety of urban, peri-urban, and rural communities. There was an evident need for revised local government structures in the nine provinces, with new staffing and operating policies that required a new approach to human resource capacity building. Post 1994 the need to transform the South African labour market was amplified. Therefore, it was mandatory to draft and promulgate enabling legislation that would outline the strategy, mechanisms, and funding, to transform human resource capacity in the country (RSA, COGTA, 2009).

According to Davids (2011, p. 3570), service delivery at a local level impacts on the public, as well as the private sector. The development and maintenance of local infrastructure, such as roads, electrical reticulation systems, and others, have a direct influence on the local economy; therefore, it is imperative that municipalities are functioning effectively and efficiently (Peters & Van Nieuwenhuyzen, 2012). However, currently, the local level is fraught with problems that negate effective, efficient, and economic operations at this level. Local operational efficiency is directly influenced by the presence or absence of organisational capacity. In a large country, such as South Africa, with a wide range of needs and challenges, staff is the most crucial resource in municipalities, to ensure service delivery and effective infrastructure (Davids, 2011). Therefore, it is of negative consequence for any organisation to lack capacity in the area of human resources (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2012, p. 217).

Consequently, it could be submitted that the key to building the overall capacity of municipalities, is the capacity building of municipal employees. Ndevu and Muller (2017, p. 16) concur that every organisation needs to have well-equipped and articulate human resources, if it is to execute its activities, effectively, and fulfil the constitutional mandate. Davids (2011, p. 3572) asserts that the devolution of functions to local government, must be accompanied by the necessary capacity to carry out the constitutional mandate.

An individual's knowledge, experience, and skills, constitute that individual's ability to perform a task, successfully (Fox, 2016, p. 126). However, public sector transformation and change is a complicated process, requiring long-term creative ideas, as well as the formulation of policies, translated into action, through a knowledgeable, skilful, and

dedicated workforce (Kroukamp. 2017, p. 85). Local authorities need to use the instruments of recruitment, selection, and training, to ensure that appropriate human resource capacity is available, when required. Through training, municipal officials acquire knowledge and skills regarding specific municipal matters. This creates opportunities to explore and use new ideas, as well as ways of performing tasks, thereby developing creativity, and productivity. Creativity is the ability to interpret situations and provide solutions that add new value to the environment (Minnaar & Bekker, 2015, p. 67).

The Government in South Africa comprises three separate, but inter-dependent spheres: national, provincial, and local, with local government currently having an enhanced status and dynamic role, as an instrument of service delivery (South African Local Government Association [SALGA], 2017a). Municipalities are the core institutions within the sphere of local government. Municipalities are organs of the state that comprise the political structures and administration of the municipality, as well as the community within the municipal area (South African Local Government Association [SALGA], 2017b, p. 15). A municipal council is a body that comprises directly, or directly and indirectly elected councillors/members. A municipal council is, therefore, one of the political structures of a municipality. The South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 108 of 1996, S152 [1]) requires that a local municipality to be able to: a) provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; b) ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; c) promote social and economic development; d) promote a safe and healthy environment; and e) encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

Municipalities are further required to structure and manage their administration, budgeting, and planning processes, in such a manner that they prioritise the basic needs of the community; promote social and economic development, and participate in national and provincial development programmes (RSA, 1996). This has created a demand for new skills, as well as for skills upgrading (South African Local Government Association [SALGA], 2016, p. 44). The legislation governing skills development in the local government section is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

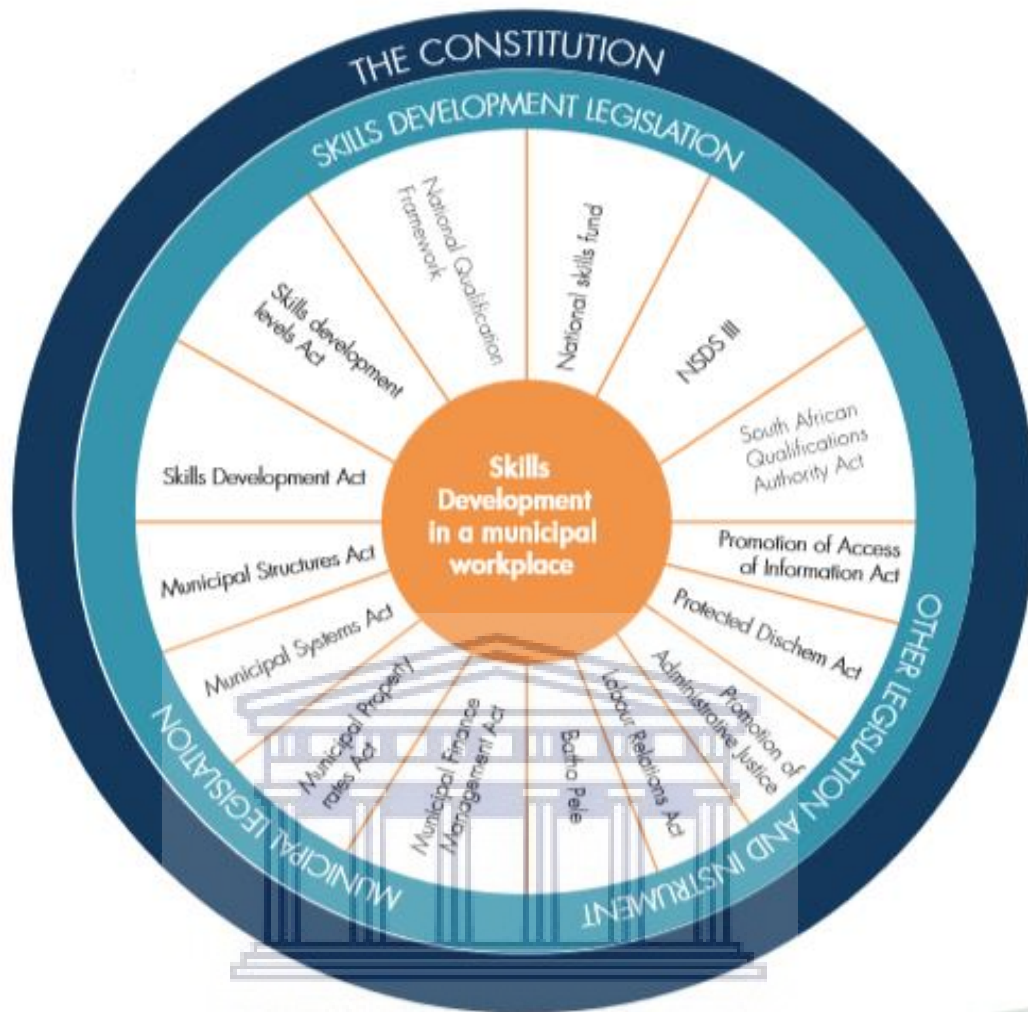


Figure 1: Skills development legislative framework
 Source: LGSETA Skills planning and Development Handbook, 2019
 (Local Government Sectoral Education Training Authority [LGSETA], 2019a).

The various legislative measures on local government skills training and quality assurance are discussed in the following sections.

2.2.6.1. White Paper on Local Government

The South African Government White Paper on Local Government (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1998a) is the first policy document to pronounce matters of developmental local government, and lays the foundation for local government. Accordingly, the White Paper highlights knowledge and information acquisition, promoting continuous learning and accessibility of learning opportunities, as the key element of developmental local governance. This, by implication, requires municipalities to grow their administrative capacity, to support development, as without the capacity to strategize, integrate, and interface with non-municipal

groups and interests, innovative new approaches to the traditional functions exercised by local government administrations, are unlikely to be sustainable. The White Paper suggests that the development of new capacities and approaches should go hand-in-hand with measures to “...enhance the accountability of the administration and build relationships of mutual respect and confidence between all stakeholders within the administration...” (RSA, 1998a, p. 80).

The main pieces of legislation on local government municipalities and skills training are: the Municipal Systems Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 32 of 2000); the Municipal Structures Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 117 of 1998b); the Skills Development Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 97 of 1998c); which also established the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO, 2010); the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 58 of 1995); and the National Qualification Framework [NQF] (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 67 of 2008). Relevant information on each piece of legislation follows immediately hereafter.

2.2.6.2. The Municipal Systems Act

The Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) echoes the importance of local government ensuring all citizens universal access to essential services, specifically the poor and disadvantaged, who were neglected under Apartheid. It further acknowledges the social and economic development orientation of local government, which ensures that municipalities fulfil their obligations, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996). The Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) outlines that municipalities should prepare Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), linking their developmental priorities to municipal budgets, as well as implement a Performance Management Systems (PMS), to guide their decision-making, operations, and their execution. In addition, the IDPs must be supported by capacity and skills development. Section 68 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) stipulates that a “municipality must develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions and exercise its powers in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way”. The Annexure A of the Act includes the “Local Government: Competency Framework for Senior

Managers”, which clearly outlines the core competencies required of local government managers.

2.2.6.3. The Municipal Structures Act

This Act outlines the role of district municipalities to achieve the sustainable and equitable social and economic development of its area by: a) ensuring integrated development planning for the district as a whole; b) promoting bulk infrastructural development and services for the district as a whole; c) building the capacity of local municipalities in their area, to perform their functions and exercise their powers, where such capacity is lacking; and d) promoting the equitable distribution of resources between the local municipalities in their area, to ensure appropriate levels of municipal services (RSA, 1998b).

2.2.6.4. The Skills Development Act

Post 1994, the need to transform the South African labour market was amplified by the need to bring in effective non-racial structures that would serve all citizens equally. Consequently, it has become mandatory to draft and promulgate enabling legislation, which would outline the strategy, mechanisms, and funding mechanisms needed, to transform human resources capacities in the country.

The Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c), including the Skills Development Regulations (section 36) were enacted to ensure a skilled, competent, and knowledgeable South African workforce, as well as promote equity in the workplace. These Acts clearly articulate the intention to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector, and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce, thereby empowering, up-skilling, and re-skilling new entrants into the labour market (Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority [LGSETA], 2019a).

The SETA Grant Regulations (Republic of South Africa [RSA]. Department of Higher Education [DoHC], Act No 98 of 1997) provide the framework for SETAs to allocate skills levies, once employers comply with the Mandatory and Discretionary grant requirements, as articulated in the legislation and the applicable SETA’s grant policy. Therefore, Sector Education and Training Authorities

(SETAs) were established for each economic sector, to respond to the education, training, and development needs of a specific industry, by developing and implementing a sector skills plan, within the framework of the national skills development strategy (LGSETA, 2019a).

The South African SETA system functions on principles similar to that of the Arbeidsmarkt and Opleidings Fonds for Gemeente (A+O fonds), which was established in the Netherlands, in 1993, by the social partnership of organised labour, municipalities, and the relevant employer bodies (Cloete, 2016, p. 79). The primary mandate of the Netherlands fund was to ensure that the local government sector had the required skills and functions, for it to become a career choice for graduates entering the labour market (Cloete, 2016, p. 58). Such a partnership approach has a lesson for developing countries, such as South Africa (Cloete, 2016, p. 117; Kraak, 2008, p. 3).

Similarly, the levy grant system in South Africa is managed by the National Skills Authority, which is the primary source of funding for skills development in South Africa, via the SETAs. South Africa's skills development legislation also established the office of the Skills Development Facilitator [SDF], as a key person to: a) ensure that targeted ongoing training is implemented within municipalities; and b) increase the quantity and quality of training transpiring in workplaces. For South Africa to become globally competitive and address historical inequalities, simultaneously, investment in human capital is essential (LGSETA, 2019a, 19–32). To increase training in the workplace, employers need to display a growing commitment with more human and financial investment (Nda & Fard, 2013)

Along with the introduction of SETAs, developments to encourage the quantity and quality of workplace related training, in an enabling environment, include: (1) new skills planning techniques, aligned with sectoral, organisational, and business objectives, linked to the Workplace Skills Plan [WSP], the Sector Skills Plan [SSP], and the National Skills Development Strategy [NSDS]; (2) new learnerships and skills, occupational and workplace directed learning programmes; and (3) a skills levy grant scheme to encourage employers to increase investment in the training and skills of their workforce (Powell, Reddy, & Juan, 2016).

2.2.6.5. South African Qualifications Authority Act

The South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA] Act (RSA, 1995) was introduced primarily to address the changing needs of education and training in South Africa. The Act regulates the accreditation and alignment of qualifications for the implementation of training programmes, such as learnerships, and apprenticeships. SAQA regulates two important pieces of legislation, the National Qualification Framework [NQF] (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No. 67 of 2008), and the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c). SAQA advances the objectives of the NQF, oversees further NQF development, co-ordinates the NQF sub-frameworks, as well as strengthens relationships with key stakeholders in education and training, in the formulation and implementation of the NQF (Gerber, Nel, & Van Dyk, 1998, p. 444).

2.2.6.6. The National Qualifications Framework Act

The National Qualifications Framework [NQF] Act allows training to become more flexible, efficient, and accessible, by ensuring integrated training systems in South Africa (RSA, 2008). The NQF Act comprises an integrated ten level framework, capable of recognising and linking distinct forms of learning in South Africa. Simultaneously, it differentiates between three broad sectors of learning, served by three Quality Councils [QCs]: (1). Basic education and training [served by Umalusi]; (2). Higher education and training [served by the Council on Higher Education – CHE]; and (3). Trades and occupation [served by the QCTO] (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], 2015, p. 3).

2.2.6.7. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations [QCTO] is a further key service level quality control, established in 2010, in terms of the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c). The QCTO oversees the design, implementation, assessment, and certification of occupational qualifications, including trades, in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework [OQSF], in terms of both the NQF Act (RSA, 2008) and the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c). *Inter alia*, the QCTO offers guidance to accredited development providers, develops occupational qualifications for SAQA registration, certifies learner achievements, commissions and conducts research, maintains a database of learner achievements, and submits

learners' achievements data to SAQA for recording on the National Learner Records Database [NLRD] (Quality Council for Trade and Occupations [QCTO], 2016, p. 17).

This realignment of historically registered qualifications was aimed at ensuring that the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework [OQSF] consisted of occupational qualifications, as determined by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. This was aimed at ensuring that the historically registered qualifications, which have currency in industry, conform to the QCTO model (Quality Council for Trade and Occupations [QCTO], 2014).

2.3. Importance of a skilled workforce for local government

In the USA, the local government officials are expected to employ the most responsive activities in their respective functions, to ensure effective service delivery (MTA, 2019). Elected officials need to demonstrate knowledge of local government laws, such as the charter, responsibilities, powers, and functions of local government (MTA, 2019). This is considered imperative, to ensure effective communication, consensus building, and ethical behaviour. In addition, considering the diversity in the USA, there is a need for officials, who effectively handle local government matters, to be capable of managing adversity and public hostility (MTA, 2019). Therefore, skills development is an ongoing and important function, within the USA Local Government system.

Needham & Mangan (2014, p. 26) postulate that, as the local government in the UK faces an uncertain future funding and growth, the current workforce is being expected to deliver the same services, with fewer resources. Consequently, it is essential for the local government in the UK to have a reliable workforce, with key competencies and skills, to implement the modern ways of executing tasks. Additionally, a dynamic and fluid workforce is important, to cross boundaries, operate collaboratively, and be able to go beyond ordinary human limits (Dalton, 2014). Therefore, the implementation of skills development is key to enhanced service delivery.

In Nigeria, Wurim (2012, p. 94) observed that training is an important aspect of human resource management. In the public sector, such as the local government, training was deemed necessary to enhance employee effectiveness, as well as psychomotor, and cognitive skills, for higher

productivity (Devi & Shaik, 2012, p. 2277). Human resources is the foundation of all resources; therefore, the way human resources are employed has a bearing on local government accomplishments (Wurim, 2012). Although the growing importance of technology is not in question, even in the first world countries, manpower development remains very essential. Consequently, training holds the key to unlock improved service delivery from employee effectiveness (Wurim, 2012, p. 93).

Singapore is the best-known example of a country that has successfully and continuously upskilled its workforce, over the past 40 years. The Singapore system, which is anchored and administered by the government, in collaboration with the private sector, appears to debunk the conventional wisdom that governments are notoriously poor at organising and administering skills development, particularly on a national scale (Kirkville et al., 2012, p. 1462). The system is based on an integrated and collaborative effort between government and the private sector. In addition, the system is anchored in enabling legislation and policy framework; a levy grant system, which funds the skills development initiatives, industry partners (fully participating and articulating industry needs), and training institutions (dealing with quality higher and vocational training).

Employees are the most crucial of resources in municipalities, as they are mandated to ensure that basic services are delivered, and infrastructure, such as water, roads, and electricity, are maintained and improved, where necessary. For a country, such as South Africa, with its wide spaces, varied topography, and differing peoples, service delivery must be enhanced, by equipping human resources with appropriate skills. It is of negative consequence for any organisation to lack capacity in the area of human resources (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2012, p. 217). The key to building the general capacity of the municipalities, is capacity building of municipal employees. Ndevu et al., (2017, p. 159) concurs that every organisation needs to have well-equipped and articulate human resources, if it is to execute its activities, effectively.

According to Fox (2016), an individual's knowledge, experience, and skills constitute his/her ability to perform a task, successfully. Therefore, it could be concluded that the capacity of municipal officials, is key to the improved performance of individual officials, and the municipalities at large. According to Kroukamp (2017), public sector transformation and change, is a complicated process that requires the generation of creative ideas, and the formulation of policies into action, by a knowledgeable, skilful, and dedicated workforce.

Through training, municipal officials acquire knowledge and skills on specific municipal matters. This offers them the opportunity to explore and use new ideas, as well as new ways of performing tasks; thereby developing creativity and enhanced productivity. Minnaar and Bekker (2015) refer to creativity as the ability to interpret situations instantly, and provide solutions that add maximum new value to the environment. In addition, local government needs to ensure that it has implemented the required skills and competences in strategic leadership, fit-for-purpose organisational structure, skilled and competent management capital, technology, procurement of goods and services, credit control, and public participation. (Davids, 2011, p. 3575).

The environment in which municipal officials operate, in most instances, is very fluid, dynamic, and ever changing. By adopting, coping, and dealing with changes, in an effective manner, capacitated and skilled municipal officials are required to respond, continuously, and act proactively. Additionally, human resource management focuses on the development of policies, aimed at retaining staff and developing an organisational culture that is conducive to individual's growth and career development (Davids, 2011, p. 3575). These changes, *inter alia*, were meant to draw attention to, and address the critical skills shortage within the local government sector (Davids, 2011, p. 3575). Effective, capacitated, and empowered municipal officials are also required to embrace lifelong learning, and be well informed, updated, and responsive. To respond to this South African constitutional mandate, the National Development Plan, 2030 was developed with aims to grow an inclusive economy, build capabilities and enhancing the capacity of the state. (SA-NDP, 2014: 14) The National Development Plan in chapter 13 clearly articulate that the public service and local government careers should be promoted as careers of choice and this should be done by: (i) establish a formal graduate recruitment scheme for the public service with provision for mentoring, training and reflection; (ii) formulate long-term skills development strategies for senior managers, technical professionals and local government staff. (SA-NDP, 2014:410). Moreover, the National and Provincial Governments have developed the Strategic Plan 2005 to 2010 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Department of Provincial and Local Government [DPLG], 2008a) to provide crucial hands-on support, as well as monitoring and intervention functions to build capacitated municipalities. The National Capacity Building Strategic Framework (NCBSF) document (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Department of Provincial and Local Government [DPLG], 2008b) also attempts to address this Constitutional mandate. Senior staff members in municipalities are appointed on a performance management contract

(RSA, 2000, Section 57). The rationale is that performance management contracts provide the municipality with an avenue to end the services of non-performing managers; however, the effectiveness of contract appointments depends on the ability of local government to develop systems and processes to monitor the activities and functions of their managers (Davids, 2011, p. 3575).

2.4. Entities responsible for the skills development

The World Forum for Local Economic Development advises of a growing consciousness that only through inclusive economic growth, could a more just and liveable future be provided for all (United Cities and Local Governments of Africa [UCLGA], 2017). Local government plays a critical role, at the proverbial *coalface* of service delivery. Based on the premise that the skills level of officials in local government, impacts on the effectiveness of organisations to carry out their mandates, skills and competencies represent significant factors, which influence the quality of life of citizens, and the prospects for economic growth.

In the UK, the local government is expected to implement mechanisms to equip employees with skills (LGA, 2016, p. 9). Several bodies, including the National Occupational Standards Board, and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Equal), formulate regulations and maintain standards pertaining to the qualifications of local government employees (Opposs & He, 2011). Agencies, such as the Skills Funding Agency, which is sponsored by the UK Department of Business, offer further education, collaborating with over a thousand (1 000) institutions (Booth-Smith & Leigh, 2016, p. 40). It offers apprenticeship training in areas such as electrical, plumbing, water processing (technicians), accountancy (assistants), and mechanical engineering. However, life-long learning covers work-based learning in areas such as vocational training, and further education (Dalton, 2014).

In Nigeria, the Public Service Staff Development Centre (PSSDC), which was established in 1994, by the Lagos State Government, researches capacity building, development, and learning, to promote superior public service delivery (Abutudu, 2011, p. 24). It has provided niche and cutting-edge development, consistently, as well as learning programmes, aimed at Nigeria's ambitious transformation programme and capacity building objective. The PSSDC has re-directed its relevance, by developing other strategic institutional objectives, such as partnering with all arms of government, including local government, in designing and

implementing value-adding training initiatives (Wilson, 2013, p. 137). More importantly, for capacity building, it collaborates with frontline professionals on local, national, and international levels, for example, the Nigerian Institute for Training and Development (NITAD), the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN), and the Galilee International Management Institute (GIMI), Israel (Abutudu, 2011, p. 24).

In South Africa, the Local Government SETAs derive their legislative mandate from the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c). The SETA is tasked with registering, promoting and implementing learnerships, identifying workplaces for practical work experience, as well as the quality assurance of training providers, who will be offering registered qualifications. In addition, the SETAs are responsible for collecting and disbursing the skills development levies, reporting quarterly to the Director General of Higher Education and Training on income and expenditure, as well as the implementation of sector skills plans. These functions are delivered in the local government sector, which is the focus of this current research study (Local Government Sectoral Education, Training Authority [LGSETA], 2019c).

2.5. Challenges in local government skills development

In the UK, Booth-Smith and Leigh (2016, p. 40) observed that local government jobs were becoming unstable, considering the loss of an estimated 700,000 jobs between 2010 and 2016. Consequently, many employees were becoming frustrated, pressured, and feeling undervalued. The main challenge that has emerged is maintaining the morale of local government employees, as they consider training initiatives a waste of time, which will not prevent ongoing job losses (LGA, 2016, p. 9). According to Booth-Smith & Leigh (2016, p. 40), local government requires a solid strategy, especially at present, to restore employee confidence in training programmes, motivation, and productivity. More importantly, local government should engage the existing, as well as the future workforces, to address impending challenges.

In Nigeria, it was observed that one of the key challenges facing local government, is unqualified and uneducated employees (Abutudu, 2011, p. 24). According to Wurim (2012, p. 2), local government has the highest number of employees with low qualification levels on its payroll, which is leading to inefficiencies. Additionally, leadership is often appointed on political grounds. Wilson (2013, p. 137) asserts that there is need to use regular performance assessments, to gauge employee competencies for the roles they occupy. The leadership was

urged to exercise due diligence, and integrity, as well as ensure accountability in areas of public service. This need applies to South Africa, as well, particularly with its service delivery problems.

In South Africa, where institutional arrangements are often deeply flawed, local government has to be transformed from passive service providers, to proactive facilitators of democratic and developmental local government, in terms of its founding mandate in the Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996). An increasing number of employees are being implicated in corruption and fraud, as well as ineffective service delivery, which is associated with a lack of required competencies to execute the expected tasks. According to Davids (2011, p. 3574) this lack of skills is becoming chronic in local government. As in any organisation, human resource capacity is the life blood; therefore, it is a great cause for concern. The availability of adequate and skilled human resources, at the right time, to carry out the functions of the organisation, is one of the key factors in the process of ensuring that service delivery materialises. Local government is influenced by institutional, organisational, and human resource dimensions of capacity, which are interrelated and interdependent. In order for local government to be effective and efficient, it is imperative that these dimensions must be strengthened (Davids, 2011, p. 3576).

The post-democracy period in South Africa has seen the development of various policies, through extensive consultation and public participation. Skills development legislation has formed part of a suite of policies, which has been approved by government, as enablers for transformation in the country; however, there has been increased anger and frustration at the poor service delivery of municipalities. Political meddling in the appointment process of local government has resulted in the appointment of the inadequately skilled individuals, which increases the capacity constraints in the local government sector. The political process of deployment has exacerbated the capacity crises. A further challenge is the retention of skilled and capable employees in the local government sector, due to non-competitive salaries, which has highlighted the need for an appropriate remuneration policy, to retain staff and reduce the rate of attrition (Davids, 2011, p. 3575).

2.6. Conclusion

The reviewed literature on the various origins and paths of local government development and service delivery, demonstrates the extent to which effective, efficient, and meaningful local government service delivery, relies on a strong legal framework in effective government structures, a clear delegation of authority, and high standards of accountability, all backed by relevant skills development and training. The countries reviewed, revealed progress at different speeds, as well as different degrees of effective achievement of the required levels of service delivery. Literature on the US State of Michigan, and the former colony of Singapore, revealed that high political will, a strong structural framework, and good skills development, could achieve the desired results. Literature on the United Kingdom, with its long-established tradition of local councils, revealed that, despite such history, changing circumstances could create new problems. Nigeria's literature revealed what transpires with an inadequate framework, poorly defined devolution of authority, insufficient education, and unsatisfactory skills development. The summative conceptual framework below in Figure 2.1 depicts the literacy engaged which guided the development of the data collection tool for this study.

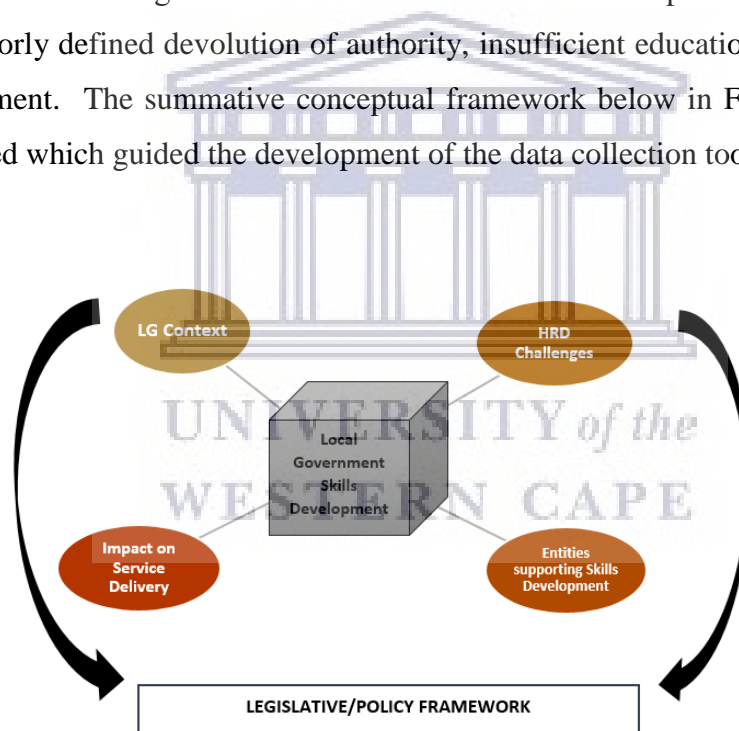


Figure 2: Summative conceptual framework
Source: own compilation

South Africa's literature revealed that the legal framework was well structured, but the institutional arrangements were often deeply flawed, while the local government still needed to be transformed from being a passive service provider, to becoming a proactive facilitator of democratically, accountable, community development. Although skills development legislation formed part of the government's suite of policies, to enable transformation in the

country, there are many local municipalities with poor service delivery records, lack of accountability, staff involved in corruption, and the number is growing. Currently, the evidence indicates that inadequate education and skills training, combined with low levels of morality, are instigating a lack of the much-needed levels of in-house competencies, to execute the expected tasks.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, substantial theoretical evidence was established regarding challenges with service delivery, low skills levels, and the implementation of skills planning interventions, such as learnerships in the local government sector. Social research could serve many purposes, such as exploration, description, and explanation. In this chapter, the researcher presents the research methodology of this current study, including the research objectives, research question, and sub-questions. An exploratory case study design was applied to ensure the attainment of the research purpose (section 1.3), and objectives (section 1.4). The research methodology provided the blueprint for the study process, and enabled the researcher to ensure the validity of the study's results. This current study was centred in the qualitative research paradigm, with defining characteristics, aimed at a detailed account of the study, which was conducted at a rural municipality in the Western Cape of South Africa. In this chapter, the researcher also discusses the interview guide, and its implementation, as well as the study setting and research sample.

3.2. The Three Worlds framework

The research problem of local government challenges and skills shortcomings, which is empirical in nature, will be unpacked by means of the "Three-Worlds Framework". According to Botes (2002, p.8) and supported by Mouton (2002, p7), the different worlds we live in involve different stocks of knowledge and strategies. Mouton (2002) further explains that knowledge attained, has various functions, such as, enriching people's lives, broadening their horizons, and assisting them to understand the world they live in. In addition, the knowledge attained, enables people to make informed decisions, and assists them to cope with daily challenges.

Several authors refer to the "three worlds" classification for the 'stages' of the research enquiry process that is used to determine whether the research is empirical, or non-empirical in nature (Botes, 2002, p. 8; Mouton 2002, p8 & Thomas et al., (2011:5;16-17). The Three Worlds

Framework can be described as follows: (i) *World 1* – the knowledge acquired through learning, experience, and self-reflection (knowledge production), could be situated in the world of everyday life. The knowledge is focused on pragmatic interests, such as social and physical reality, and lay knowledge; (ii) *World 2* – the world of science, and the search for truth by means of scientific research; (iii) *World 3* – the world of meta-science. The knowledge relates to understanding and reflecting on issues such as the philosophy and sociology of science, research methodologies, and ethics.

Research is conducted in *World 2*, and the objects of enquiry for this current study were selected from *World 1*. When the object of study is a real life object (from World 1), the research problem is considered to be empirical in nature (Mouton, 2002). The aim of this current research, as derived from the reviewed literature, was to explore the critical success factors that are required to ensure successful implementation of human resource capacity, and building learnerships in the local government sector. Therefore, the purpose of this study is the implementation of learnerships, as a training intervention in a rural municipality, as experienced by the skills development facilitator, managers, councillors, and beneficiaries of the training interventions. All these are related to *World 1*, as they are focused on social realities. The research problem, which changes the world of everyday life, into objects of systematic investigation (the search for truth, World 2), is considered to be empirical in nature.

3.3. Research methodology

This current research study was positioned in the qualitative research paradigm. One of the major distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher attempts to understand people, in terms of their own definition of their world (Mouton 2002, p. 130). Therefore, this current research focusses on an “insider perspective”, rather than an “outsider perspective”. In qualitative research the natural and subjective components of the sampled units of analysis are emphasised.

The research methodology of this current research, consequently, refers to the approach adopted to follow, by gathering and analysing the data. This current research was conducted by means of a literature review, as set out in Chapter 2, and empirical research, as set out in chapter 4. Therefore, in this thesis, an explorative approach was used, to determine the critical success factors that ensure successful implementation of learnerships, as a training intervention

in local government. For this purpose, the semi-structured interview, with its related interview guide, was used to collect data. The data collection questions were aligned with the literature review data, to develop the semi-structured interview guide.

3.4. Research setting

The term, *rural areas*, from a development management perspective, refers to all areas outside the physical outer boundaries of existing built-up areas and settlements, no matter how small. The Western Cape Province, one of the nine provinces in South Africa, incorporates five, mainly rural Districts, namely: (i) *West Coast District*, comprises towns, such as Vredendal, Clanwilliam, Piketberg, Saldanha Bay, Moorreesburg, and Malmesbury; (ii) *Cape Winelands District* comprises towns, such as Stellenbosch, Paarl, Wellington, Franschhoek, Ceres, Worcester, Bonnievale, and Robertson; (iii) *Overberg District* comprises towns, such as Caledon, Swellendam, Hermanus, Bredasdorp, and Grabouw; (iv) *The Central Karoo district* comprises Beaufort West, Prince Albert, Leeu Gamka, and Laingsburg; v) *The Garden Route District* comprises Plettenberg Bay, Mossel Bay, George, Knysna, Riversdal, Oudtshoorn, and Calitzdorp. The map (Figure 1) clearly depicts the five districts in the Western Cape (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Western Cape Government, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (2019)). The research setting for the current study was a rural local municipality within the Western Cape Province, the name of which is not disclosed, in an attempt to adhere to the ethical anatomy of the participants in the study.

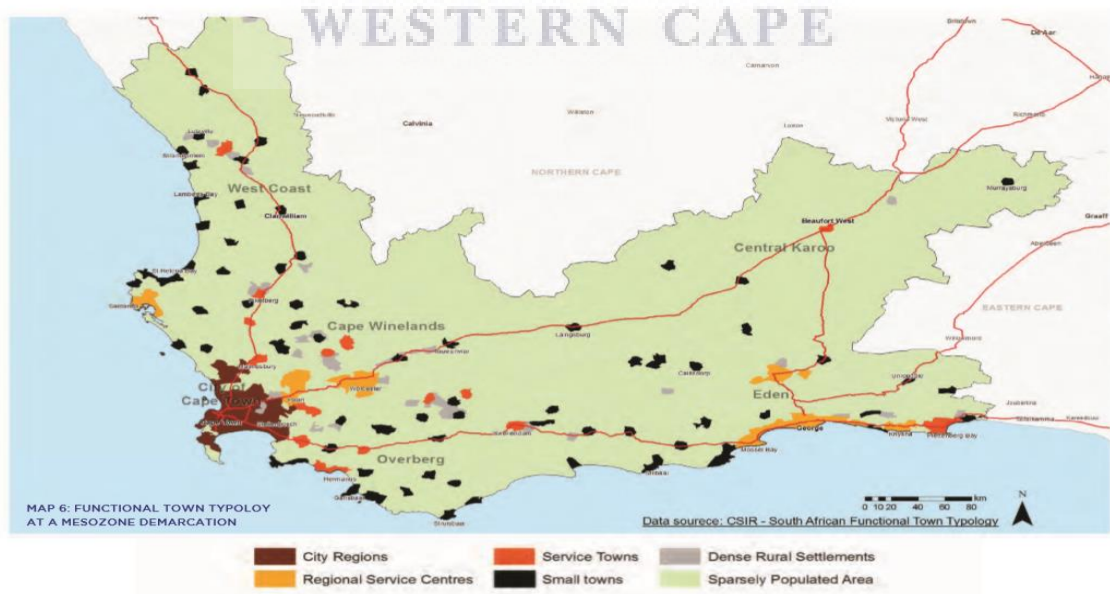


Figure 3: Map of Western Cape districts

Source: RSA, Western Cape Government, Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, 2019

3.5. Study population

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015, p. 42) and Babbie (2010, p. 199) assert that the study population refers to the aggregate of elements, capable of informing the research, from which the sample is selected. In this current study, the researcher selected employees and management from the technical, as well as support service departments of the same rural municipality that was involved in the skills planning process, as part of the planning process, the implementation, and/or as beneficiaries of training.

3.6. Sample

The application of purposeful sampling assisted the researcher to identify specific individuals as information-rich sources (Yin, 2016, p. 94). Mouton (2016, p. 132) describes sampling in social research as involving “some form of random selection of elements from a target population”. The aim of sampling in social research is to produce a representative selection of the population elements. Therefore, the units of analysis, as the sample in this current study were selected, based on their knowledge, involvement, and experience of skills development in the local government sector. The municipality’s organogram was used as the sampling frame, and nineteen participants were selected, based on the following criteria: (1) Ten key participants, based on their knowledge of, and involvement in skills development in the municipality; (2) nine participants selected from officials, who were beneficiaries of the LGSETA skills development training; and (3) An equal number of male and female participants. Additionally, the number of participants was viewed as sufficient, as it was representative of the broader population, within the municipality (Yin, 2016, p. 95).

3.7. Study design

Punch (2013, p. 45) highlights that the research design provides a blueprint which the researcher follows, for valid and reliable study outcomes. Mouton (2016, p. 106) describes a research design as a set of guidelines and instructions, when addressing the research problem. A research design focuses on the end-product, and all the steps in the process to achieve that outcome. Consequently, a research design is viewed as the functional plan, in which certain research methods and procedures are linked together, to acquire a reliable and valid body of data, for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions, and theory formulation. The research design provides the researcher with a clear research framework, guides the data collection and analyses methods, as well as decisions, setting a basis for interpretation (Vosloo, 2014, p. 316).

The main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be, to maximise the validity of the eventual results. Therefore, the research design is applied so that suitable research sampling, data collection and analysis methods are used, to ensure the attainment of the research study objectives (Vosloo, 2014, p. 299).

Based on the literature reviewed, the most suitable study design for this exploratory research study question, was a *case study* design. According to Yin (2016, p. 68), the significance of a “... case study approach is that it deals directly with the individual case in its actual context...” Robson (2002, p. 145) defines case study design as “...a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation within its real context...” Noor (2008, p. 1602) concurs, and describes case studies as being concerned with how and why incidents occur, allowing the investigation of contextual realities, and the differences between planned, and actually occurrences. Therefore, the value of a case study design is that it deals directly with the sampled individual cases (units of analysis), in their actual context. This contributed to a better understanding of the primary research problem of staff capacity building, through learnership implementation within local government.

Case study design has been criticised by some scholars as lacking in scientific rigour and reliability, and that it did not provide for data generalisability (Starman, 2013). However, Mouton (2016, p. 108), Noor (2008, p. 1603), Yin (2009, p. 93), and Babbie (2010, p. 336) emphasise the strengths of the design, in its ability to provide the researcher with an in-depth and detailed understanding of a series of events (objects of study), through detailed descriptions that provide a holistic picture of the study problem under investigation. According to Creswell (2013, p. 76), exploratory designs are employed where scarce knowledge exist about the study objects of investigation. In order to arrive at sound conclusions for this current study, the researcher applied an exploratory case study design, with the semi-structured interview as a data collection tool, to gain insights from the sampled key participants, regarding their experiences of the implementation of learnerships in their municipality.

3.8. Research study question

The main exploratory research question in this current study was: “What are the critical success factors that ensure successful implementation of learnerships in local government in the furtherance of skills development?” Secondary questions to the main study question were:

- i. What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships successfully?
- ii. Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners?
- iii. What was the impact of the learnerships that were implemented at the rural municipality under study?

The researcher, consequently, investigated the nature and extent of the skills development function, the planning process to implement learnerships, the workplace readiness for implementation, the role of the various stakeholders in the learnership implementation process, and the support provided by the LGSETA.

3.9. Reliability and Validity

In the qualitative research paradigm, validity and reliability are concerns that could be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization, as well as the way in which the data are collected, analysed, interpreted, and the findings presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 285). Yin (2016) concurs by asserting that, in a valid study, the data are properly interpreted, and the conclusions accurately reflect, as well as represent the real world that was studied. According to Mouton (2002), data are analysed by identifying patterns and themes, and drawing certain conclusions from them. Therefore, it is emphasised that *validity* is an epistemic criterion, which implies that it is a quality of the elements (data, statements, hypotheses, theories and methods) of knowledge (Mouton, 2002, p. 109). These knowledge elements are the products of the various stages of decision making in research. Mouton (2002, p. 109) argues that research uses objective methods, consisting of conceptualising, operationalisation, sampling, data collecting and analysing. This process was developed into a framework by Mouton (2002) and referred to as the Validity Framework (see Table 3.1).

The outcome of the analysis/interpretation is the conclusions, which must follow, logically, from the empirical evidence, to be regarded as *valid* results/conclusions. Mouton (2002) describes five dimensions of validity: (i) *theoretical validity* refers to logically systematising

the most important meanings of theoretical concepts, which relate to the literature review conducted for this current study; (ii) *construct validity*, is linked to the current study design (for example, case study design used in this current study); (iii) *measurement validity*, relates to how well an empirical indicator, and the conceptual definition of the construct that the indicator is supposed to measure, fit together, which, for this current study relates to the semi-structured interview guide that was compiled, aligned with the literature review data findings; (iv) *representativeness* refers to the appropriate and unbiased sampling, for which purposeful sampling was applied, using the selection criteria mentioned earlier; (v) *inferential validity* refers to the drawing of valid inferences from the data, to support the conclusion.

Table 3.1: The Validity framework

| Stage in research process | Sources of error | Methodological 'move' or 'strategy' (objective research) | Outcome/goal/end-product | Epistemic (validity-related) quality or criterion |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Conceptualisation (conceptual analysis) | Complex notions Vagueness Ambiguity Abstract concepts | → Thorough literature review → Clear and logical definitions | Concepts/ definitions | Theoretical validity (clarity/scope) |
| Operationalisation | Poor sampling of items Leading questions Scaling errors | → Scale validation → Face validity → Pilot test | Measuring instruments | Measurement validity (construct validity) |
| Sampling | Bias Heterogeneous populations Incomplete sampling frame | → Probability sampling → Stratification → Optimal sample size | Sample | Representativeness |
| Data collection | Observation effects Interviewer bias Respondent bias Context effects | → Multi-method → Proper training of fieldworkers | Data sets | Reliability |
| Analysis/ interpretation | Competing/rival conclusions or explanations | → Appropriate techniques of analysis → Thorough understanding of literature | Conclusions/ results/ findings | Inferential validity |

Source: Mouton (2002, p. 111)

The above indicated validity aspects were taken into consideration in the conceptualisation, operationalisation, analysis, and presentation of this current research study. The authenticity and trustworthiness of the research was ensured thereby, as well as adherence to the following criteria: (i) *Credibility*: engagement with the data (recordings, notes, research diary and transcripts) was done intensively, to demonstrate clear links between the data and the interpretations; (ii) *Dependability*: ensuring that the research process was logical, traceable, and clearly documented, in a reflexive manner, by providing a detailed account of the research process; (iii) *Authenticity*: the compilation of an interview guide was based on a substantial literature review, as outlined in Chapter 2. An interview guide was compiled, and appointments were set up for the semi-structured, individual interviews, to ensure the collection of reasonable, unbiased, and valid data; (iv) *Confirmation*: An audit process was implemented by working forward, as well as backward, throughout the research process, to ensure that the data and interpretations of the findings were sound and confirmed. The intention during the

interpretation process was not to generalize findings to a population, but to identify accepted principles and trends, related to the research topic (Mouton 2002, p. 110).

Therefore, outlining the research process of: “What was done; how it was done; and why it was done”, as well as adherence to the identified criteria for qualitative research, ensured the authenticity and trustworthiness of this current research. Additionally, validity was the primary concern of the researcher, when designing the study, the data collection tools, as well as the gathering of the data, as it refers to the extent to which an empirical measure, accurately, reflects the concept it is intended to measure.

3.10. Data collection method

Data collection methods for the study were: (i) compile an interview guide with open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews, to elicit responses from the sampled population; (ii) interviews with key participants; and (iii) interviews with the beneficiaries of training as described in section 3.6. Punch (2013, p. 47) described semi-structured interviews as the face-to-face engagement of participants, based on an interview guide, to facilitate structure and openness. Semi-structured interviews are important to uncover the beliefs and feelings of the participants (Saunders et al. 2016, p. 43). The interview questions were derived from the conceptual framework, as well as the main literature constructs, relevant to this current study, and divided into three categories, namely: (i) experience questions; (ii) opinion questions; and (iii) knowledge questions. Examples of the questions that were included in the interview guide (Annexure 1), for the individual interviews of this current study, are displayed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Three categories of questions

| EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS | OPINION QUESTIONS | KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How often do you engage in the Municipality to discuss Skills Development? Who leads these engagements in the Municipality? ■ Does the Municipality have a policy/strategy on HRD? Does it include areas relating to learning and ways to support learning? If not, how do you think this could be done? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What factors inhibit the SDF to play a pivotal role to support learnerships/ learning interventions implemented in the Municipality? ■ What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is your understanding of the Competency Framework for Local Government? How does this link to the Skills Planning process in the Municipality? ■ What is your understanding of The Learning Framework for Local Government and how does this find expression in the Policies of the Municipality? – qualification mapping |

Source: Own compilation

3.11. Ethics considerations

The researcher was aware of the ethics considerations to be taken into account, and has taken the necessary steps to ensure that the integrity of the research process was protected. Therefore, this current study was conducted according to the University of the Western Cape's [UWC] ethics practices, pertaining to the treatment of the participants, during the research process. Additionally, the aim of the research was not to reveal how well, or badly, a municipality was managing the implementation of skills development interventions, namely, learnerships, instead, the aim was to highlight the emerging themes in a rural municipal environment.

Consequently, the following steps were adhered to: (1) apply and obtain ethical clearance from the university (2) written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the municipal manager; (3) all the participants were informed of the purpose and nature of the study; (4) all information obtained was treated as confidential, through; (5) password protection of electronic data captured; (6) the researcher ensured the safe and secure locked storage of all data and documents, when not in researcher's authorised use; and (7) the names of the participants in this current study are not mentioned in this thesis, for anonymity purposes. All the participants were informed that their participation in the study would be on a voluntary basis, without remuneration. The right of each participant to withdraw from the study, at any time, without consequence or penalty, was clarified. During the interviews, one participant withdrew, and another requested that s/he not be recorded, but completed the interview. At all times, the participants were treated with dignity and respect, while the researcher ensured that no unethical techniques were employed during the interviews. No risks were perceived or expected during this current study and the research was conducted, verbally in either English or Afrikaans, depending on the preference of the respondents. The end result of the research was to showcase the emerging trends in a rural municipality setting, when the planning and implementation learnerships were initiated. The findings of this current study (with the permission of the research study municipality) will be made available to the municipal councils, management teams, skills development facilitators, and training committees in the local government sector. These results are presented in the next chapter.

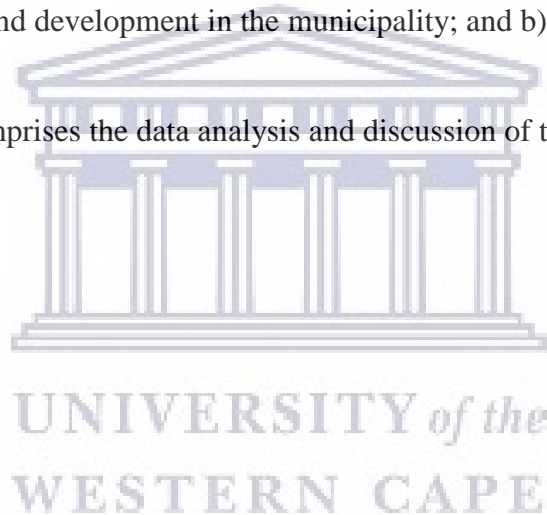
3.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher described the research methodology of this current study, including the study objectives and research study question and sub-questions. The exploratory

case study design was applied to ensure the attainment of the research purpose (section 1.3) and objectives (section 1.4), set out in Chapter One. The blueprint for the study informed by the research methodology and the operationalisation enabled the researcher to ensure the validity of the study results. The characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm was explained, as well as the context, and setting in which, as well as the sample with which, the study was conducted.

The purpose for conducting in-depth interviews with key informants, was to ascertain the participants' understanding of the skills development legislative framework, organisation policy, levels of participation in the organisation in the skills planning process, the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of learnerships, and the obstacles or challenges experienced with the implementation thereof. This was important to arrive at recommendations for: a) the improvement of training and development in the municipality; and b) future research.

The following chapter comprises the data analysis and discussion of the findings.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the analysis and findings of the qualitative data collected from the sampled interviewees. It articulates the six-stage process followed for the data analysis and presents the findings under the five respective themes that emerged from the thematic data analysis process. Additionally, the findings are synthesized with previous empirical research findings, and non-empirical literature, presented in Chapter 2, with the aim of identifying similarities, differences, and extended findings, between this current research project, previous studies, and existing non-empirical literature. As this current research study is a single case study of a rural municipality, it is important that the researcher reflects on the background of the rural district, in which the municipality is located, as it forms an important part of the context of this research project. Two rural districts in the Western Cape Province, namely, the Central Karoo District (CKD), and the West Coast District (WCD) are described to further ensure for the anonymity of the selected municipality in this current study, as per the ethical considerations of the study.

4.2. Context

The Central Karoo District (CKD) is situated in the northeast of the Western Cape Province with two bordering provinces, the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape. The District Management area has a 38 853 km² surface area, and consists of a district municipality, namely, Central Karoo District Municipality (CKDM), and three local municipalities namely, (i) Laingsburg Municipality, (ii) Prince Albert Municipality, and (iii) Beaufort West Municipality. These municipalities are mandated to provide basic services to a population of 75 695 in the mainly rural towns of Beaufort West, LeeuGamka, Prince Albert Road, Klaarstroom and Prince Albert (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Western Cape Government [WCG], 2018a; Statistics South Africa [StatsSA], 2020). A large proportion of the households (95%) have access to piped water, either in their dwelling, or in the yard, and 92,0% of the households have access to electricity for lighting. The CKD is rendered the smallest district in the Western Cape (RSA,

WCG, 2018a; StatsSA, 2020). The economic drivers for the Central Karoo District are agriculture and agri-processing, transport, and tourism (RSA, WCG, 2018a).

The West Coast District (WCD) is located on the Atlantic coast of the Western Cape, which borders the Northern Cape Province. The District Management area of the West Coast District Municipality (WCDM) is 31 119 km², and comprises five local municipalities, namely: (i) Matzikamma, (ii) Cederberg, (iii) Bergrivier, (iv) Saldanha Bay, and (v) Swartland Municipality. These municipalities are mandated to provide basic services to a population of 450 610, in the mainly rural towns of Vredendal, Vanrhynsdorp, Piketberg, Vredenburg, Clanwilliam, Citrusdal, Morreesburg, and Malmesbury (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Western Cape Government [WCG], 2018b). A large proportion of households (96%) have access to piped water, either in their dwelling, or in the yard, and 92,0% of households have access to electricity for lighting (RSA, WCG, 2018b; StatsSA, 2020).

The economic profile of the district is an important link in the context of this current research study. In 2001, the CKDM was identified as one of the Presidential Poverty nodes (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Department of Provincial and Local Government [DPLG], 2007). It has been established that most of the population in the CKDM, aged 20 years and older, have low levels of education, with 7,3% having completed primary school, 20,7% having completed matric, and 7,4% having some other form of higher education (StatsSA, 2018). Various development programmes have been initiated by the government, to address the underdevelopment in this rural district, one of most severely impoverished areas in the province. The economic drivers for the West Coast District are agriculture, tourism, forestry and fishing, wholesale and retail trade, as well as manufacturing. Although this district has recorded low education levels, it has not been identified as a poverty node by the national government of South Africa (RSA, WCG, 2018b; StatsSA, 2020). According to Statistics South Africa (2018), in the West Coast District, only 20,8% of the population has completed matric, and 7,7% have completed some form of higher education.

In both districts, economic activity is important, as it reveals the extent of human development, as well as the living standards of district communities (RSA, WCG, 2018a; RSA, WCG, 2018b; StatsSA, 2020). Both these rural districts are reliant on agriculture, agri-processing, and tourism to grow and stimulate their economies. However, as a result of the low education levels in both districts, the population endures limited mobility, and high unemployment rates. The West

Coast district recorded an unemployment rate of 14%, and CKDM, as high as 30.6% (StatsSA, 2018).

Both districts have recorded that more than 90% of its citizens have access to potable water, basic sanitation, safe energy sources, and refuse removal services, which ensures a decent standard of living (StatsSA, 2018). However, the ageing infrastructure requires maintenance from skilled and competent municipal officials, while the population of both these districts rely on the municipalities to render these services.

4.3. Process of data analysis

Qualitative data analysis procedures entail thematic ordering and systematisation of the information generated, using qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). This method of analysis was employed in this current study. The process of data analysis is described by Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 202) as the process of making sense of the data, which involves the process of consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the information that the participants had disclosed, as well as what the researcher had seen and read; a process of creating meaning. Mouton (2002, p. 161) adds that data analysis is a two-step process of, firstly, reducing the data collected to manageable proportions, and secondly, identifying patterns and themes in the data. Additionally, Babbie (2016, p. 395) describes data analysis as the examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. However, Yin (2016, p. 185) unpacks the data analysis process in a five-phased cycle: (i) Compiling, (ii) Disassembling, (iii) Reassembling, (iv) Interpreting, and (v) Concluding exhibit.

The explanations offered by these scholars infer that data analysis is a complex process that involves moving between the data collected, abstract concepts, interpreting data, identifying underlying themes, and eventually, crafting findings and recommendations. The qualitative data analysis of this current research study, based on the responses from the semi-structured interviews, was conducted according to the process described by Mouton (2002, p. 161), Babbie (2016, p. 395), Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 202) and Yin (2016, p. 185), with the addition of the theme identification stage, resulting in the six-stage data analysis process applied in this current study.

4.4. Six-stage data analysis process

The qualitative content analysis involved the following six-stage process:

4.4.1. Recording of data

All the interviews were audio recording on a digital voice recorder. Additionally, written notes were taken as a backup and for context, per interviewee's responses. A research daily journal was also kept, to ensure that the responses, observations, and preparations for the following day was done conducted in a systematic manner.

4.4.2. Verbatim transcription

The interviewees' responses were transcribed verbatim, immediately after the completion of each of the 18 interviews (one of the sampled participants withdrew from the study). Listening attentively to all the interviews was imperative to ensure that all the information, shared by the participants, were captured accurately. The information was arranged in tabular form, with three columns, indicating the name of each participant, their respective responses to the questions, and the last column was for notes by the researcher. Subsequently, these notes were used to identify key components and emerging trends pertaining to each question. Yin (2016, p. 186) describes "compiling" as formally arranging all the notes in some useful order. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the data for the purpose of thematic analysis and interpretation.

4.4.3. Reading the transcribed text and field notes (researcher journal)

The transcribed text and field notes (researcher journal) were read in-depth, to obtain a comprehensive impression of the content and context, before the process of coding began, where units of meaning/units of data were identified or labelled. The transcribed data was read several times, firstly, to become familiar and understand the information, which the participants disclosed, and secondly, to note key components and emerging trends in the right-hand column of the transcribed data *compiling-table* (Yin, 2016).

4.4.4. Assigning of labels or codes

The transcribed data was assigned to specific units of data; thereby, allowing the transcribed text to be arranged in meaningful themes (Yin, 2016, p. 187). In this current research, the transcribed data was assigned codes to identify emerging themes, ensuring

that the most logical description was employed, related to the data it represented. This process was repeated several times to verify that all emerging trends, to identify emerging themes, had been noted and captured. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 204) describe this process of assigning labels, as open coding of the data.

4.4.5. Grouping open codes

Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 206) define this process as “axial coding”. In this current research, after the correct codes were assigned to the transcribed data, a process of grouping similar categories/themes together, followed. Similar codes and crafted categories/themes, which reflected the codes assigned, were grouped together by the researcher. The transcribed coded data were presented in a tabular format, to categorise the interviewees’ responses, under the applicable respective code. According to Yin (2016, p. 187), the grouping of the transcribed data could be conducted, by depicting the data graphically, or by arranging them in lists, or tabular format.

4.4.6. Devising categories/themes

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 211), devising categories/themes is systematic, and informed by the study’s purpose; therefore, the categories (themes) are responsive to the research question/s. Ultimately, the emerging categories (themes) in the data analysis process of this current study, was then arranged into the final five themes, which were responsive to the research question, as well as purpose of this current study. In Figure 4.1 below, the six-stage data analysis process is depicted, as described above. In Figure 4.2, the final five themes, derived from the data analysis process, are portrayed.

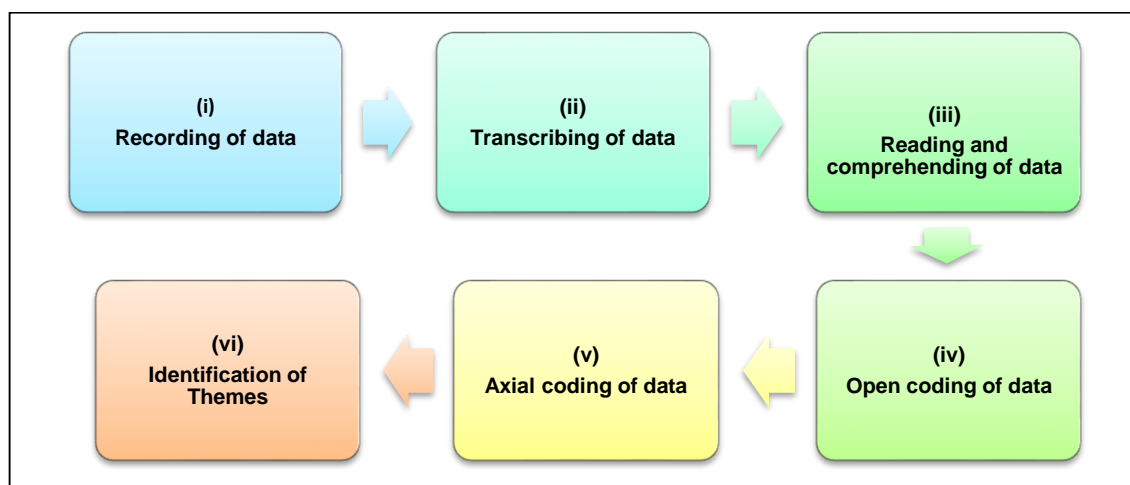


Figure 4: Six-stage data analysis process

Source: Own compilation



Figure 5: Emerging Themes from data analysis process

Source: Own compilation

4.5. Participant information

Most of the participants, namely, the training beneficiaries and key staff responsible for ensuring municipal skills development training, were willing, attentive and eager to participate in the research. An interview guide (Annexure 1) was developed, and the participants were informed timeously of the study, and their respective interview timeslots. All the participants were requested to complete and sign the research informed consent form. A private and conducive venue was availed by the municipality for the interviews. Twelve (12) of the participants were male, and seven (7) were female. The intention of the researcher was to have a gender balance among the participants; however, this was not possible, because of the majority male representation of middle and senior management positions in the municipality. Yet, the beneficiaries of the LGSETA training were mostly female, as represented in the interview sample. The aforementioned, therefore highlights the *employment equity disparities* pertaining to gender in municipalities of South Africa. According to LGSETA Sector Skills Plan [SSP] (Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority [LGSETA], 2019c), 39% of the managers in the local government sector are female. It is further indicated that women outnumber their male counterparts in the clerical support occupations. Employment

equity assessment was not part of this current study's focus; however, it should be considered for future research, with a similar focus of human resource capacity (LGSETA, 2019c, p. 29)

One of the participants withdrew from the study, after some of the interviews had already commenced, and another did not consent to the audio recording of the interview, for fear of data security, and confidentiality issues, which may result in employee victimization. However, this participant gave consent to note-taking, for completion of the interview, with detailed notes typed by the researcher, during the interview. The aforementioned sequence of events had no significant impact on the study findings.

4.6. Research findings

Primary and secondary data were gathered to assess the implementation of skills development initiatives in a rural municipality. The primary data source was the semi-structured interviews, conducted with key respondents and the beneficiaries of training. The secondary data sources preceded the primary data collection in the form of a reviewed literature (see chapter 2), consisting of related empirical studies, and non-empirical data such as organisational policies and procedures, to establish the state of implementation in the municipality. In the following sub-sections (4.6.1 to 4.6.5), the primary data findings are presented for each of the respective five data analysis themes that are aligned to the respective interviewee responses, and linked to the literature review secondary data.

The exploratory overall research question in this current study was: “What are the critical success factors that ensure successful implementation of learnerships in local government in the furtherance of skills development?” The secondary questions to the overall question were:

- What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships successfully?
- Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners?
- What was the impact of the learnerships that were implemented at the rural municipality under study?

The researcher, therefore, investigated the nature and extent of the skills development function, the planning process to implement learnerships, the workplace readiness for implementation,

the role of the various stakeholders in the learnership implementation process, and the support provided by the LGSETA.

In Table 4.1, the data findings, relevant to Theme 1: *Human Resources Development (HRD) policy framework*, are presented. The HRD framework (RSA, 2000), and the related data findings, contributed to addressing the following study sub-question (see section 3.8): “Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners?” The findings, presented in Table 4.1 and section 4.6.1 below, facilitated the realisation of the best way to address the local government challenges and skills shortcomings, as indicated in the problem statement and study purpose, presented in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 4.1: Human Resources Development (HRD) policy framework

| THEME | RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LINKS |
|---|--|--|---|
| Human Resources Development (HRD) policy framework | 1. <i>Does the Municipality have a policy/strategy on HRD? Does it include areas relating to learning and ways to support learning? If not, how do you think this could be done?</i> | 1. There is an approved HRD Strategy and policy in the Municipality. However, most of the participants were not familiar with the document; therefore, it is not being implemented. | People Management Effectively manage, inspire, and encourage people, respect diversity, optimise talent and build and nurture relationships in order to achieve institutional objectives. |
| | 2. <i>What is your understanding of The Learning Framework for Local Government and how does this find expression in the Policies of the Municipality? – qualification mapping</i> | 2. None of the participants had any knowledge of the learning framework. Head of Departments and line managers who are meant to drive and implement the HRD strategy and policy have limited involvement and do not see this as their responsibility | Change leadership Able to direct and initiate institutional transformation on all levels in order to successfully drive and implement new initiatives and deliver professional and quality services to the community. Communication Able to share information, knowledge, and ideas in clear, focused and concise manner appropriate for the audience in order to effectively convey, persuade and influence stakeholders to achieve the desired outcome |
| | 3. <i>What is your understanding of the Competency Framework for Local Government? How does this link to the Skills Planning process in the Municipality?</i> | 3. Most participants were not familiar with the Competency framework for local government. However, was familiar with the Treasury regulations. 4. According to most participants the Skills Planning process happens on an Adhoc basis, normally during the time when the WSP/ATR must be compiled; 5. The skills planning process is mainly driven by the SDF. | Moral Competencies Able to identify moral triggers, apply reasoning that promotes honesty and integrity and consistently display behaviour that reflects moral competence. |

Source: Own compilation

4.6.1. Theme 1: Human Resources Development [HRD] policy framework

The development of skills and competences in local government is imperative for the delivery of effective and efficient service delivery (Dalton, 2014). Therefore, to give credence to the transformational agenda of South Africa, and to ensure improved skills

levels, legislation and policies are crucial and enabling components to achieve this agenda. The post 1994 suite of legislation sets the scene and legislative framework in place, to activate, as well as fast track the skilling and upskilling within the local government sector. This suite was promulgated and discussed in section 2.2.6.1 to 2.2.6.4 of Chapter 2, which included the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), the local government competency framework for senior managers, Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 1998b), the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998c), and The National Development Plan: Vision 2030 for South Africa (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Ministry in the office of the President, 2013). Consequently, it is incumbent on all employers in South Africa, as well as the purpose of this current research within municipalities, to ensure that enabling skills development policies are drafted and aligned to the applicable legislation and policies, as listed above and approved by the Municipal Council.

Based on the responses from the interviewees, it was evident that the municipality had a council-approved HRD policy in place. However, most of the participants were unfamiliar with the policy content, as it was not available electronically on a central-municipal-system-drive, nor was it circulated to staff in any form. Additionally, no formal inductions, or staff information sessions were held with employees, regarding the HRD policy. As a result, the policy was not actively implemented, because the managers and employees were not familiar with its content, and ignorant of how, or where, to access the approved policy. This was evidential from the following interviewee responses:

Participant 6: *“...we have a HRD policy in place which is approved by Council but not being implemented. Line managers have failed and don’t follow through with implementation of policy...”*

Participant 1: *“...I’m working for the municipality for many years and has never seen or interacted with the HRD policy...”*

Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, it was evident that legislative and policy frameworks were key to transformation in the Local Government sector, and in turn, an effective and efficient local government. The Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), included an annexure to the Local Government: Competency Framework for Senior

Managers, which clearly outlines the knowledge, competencies, and attributes required by senior managers, which should be circulated to all employees within the sector, regarding the expected criteria for effective performance in local government.

Most of the participants were unfamiliar with the Local Government Competency Framework, and therefore, unable to comment whether their HRD policy had been aligned to the legislation (RSA, 2000), as indicated by the following interviewees:

Participant 5: “...I’m not familiar with the Competency framework for local government. However, I’m familiar with the Treasury regulations...”

Participant 1: “...I heard about the Competency Framework but not familiar with it...”

It is noteworthy that all the participants were familiar with the Treasury Regulations on the minimum competency levels for municipal officials, as per the following extracts:

Participant 8: “... I’m not familiar with competency framework but only the treasury regulations for finance staff...”

Participant 2: “...I’m familiar with the treasury regulations which outlines the minimum competences as per treasury which is incorporated in skills planning for the finance department...”

The overall findings of Theme 1, is supported by the findings of Kroukamp (2017, p. 85), which revealed that the public sector transformation and change is a complicated process, requiring long-term creative ideas, and the formulation of policies, translated into action through a knowledgeable, skilful, and dedicated workforce.

In Table 4.2, the data findings, relevant to Theme 2: *Skills Planning Roadmap for implementation*, are presented. The HRD framework (RSA, 2000), and related data findings contributed to addressing the following sub-questions, as indicated in Chapter 3, section 3.8: (i) What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships successfully?; (ii) Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners?; (iii) What was the impact of the learnerships that were implemented at the rural municipality under study?

The findings presented in Table 4.2 and section 4.6.2 below, facilitated the realisation of the best way to address the local government challenges and skills shortcomings, as indicated in the problem statement and study purpose, presented in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 4.2: Skills planning roadmap for implementation

| THEME | RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LINKS |
|---|---|--|---|
| Skills Planning Roadmap for implementation | 1. <i>How can Skills Development become a key component of Municipal Planning processes?</i> | 1. Skills planning does not receive the necessary attention. | People Management Effectively manage, inspire, and encourage people, respect diversity, optimise talent and build and nurture relationships in order to achieve institutional objectives. |
| | 2. <i>How often do you engage in the Municipality to discuss Skills Development? Who leads these engagements in the Municipality?</i> | 2. Line managers see skills planning as a hindrance and thus does provide the same commitment and attention to skills planning; 3. Most line managers see skills planning as not their responsibility but a function of the SDF. 4. Heads of Department adhocly discuss skills planning. | Planning and Organising Able to plan, prioritize and organise information and resources effectively to ensure the quality of service delivery and build efficient contingency plans to manage risk. |
| | 3. <i>How does the Line Managers, Management and Council support Skills Planning interventions within the Municipality?</i> | 5. Most line managers see skills planning as not their responsibility but a function of the SDF; 6. Heads of Department adhocly discuss skills planning. | Moral Competencies Able to identify moral triggers, apply reasoning that promotes honesty and integrity and consistently display behaviour that reflects moral competence. |
| | 4. <i>What factors do you think enable/inhibit the SDF to play a pivotal role with the implementation of Learnerships/learning interventions in the municipality?</i> | 7. The SDF is the only person that engage with the staff on skills planning and training interventions. The staff annually express their needs and provide that to the SDF, but we do not receive feedback. Staff skills is also not being diversified; 8. The SDF function is not receiving the necessary support and the strategic nature. 9. The SDF function is just seen as another job. | Change leadership Able to direct and initiate institutional transformation on all levels in order to successfully drive and implement new initiatives and deliver professional and quality services to the community. |
| | 5. <i>What factors influence/inhibit growth and learning of employees in the workplace?</i> | 10. The Training committee is not functioning. 11. No proper skills audit has been conducted thus interventions are planned ad hoc. 12. Recruitment of learners (both employed and unemployed) are not done transparently. 13. The Management also do not understand the link between service delivery and skills planning. 14. Low levels skills have a direct link with poor service delivery; | Analysis and Innovation Able to critically analyse information, challenges, and trends to establish and implement fact-based solutions that are innovative to improve institutional processes in order to achieve key strategic objectives. Knowledge and Information Management Able to promote the generation and sharing of knowledge and information through various processes and media, in order to enhance the collective knowledge base of local government. |

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| <p>6. What are some of challenges that you are experienced when implementing training in the Municipality?</p> | | <p>Communication</p> <p>Able to share information, knowledge, and ideas in clear, focused, and concise manner appropriate for the audience in order to effectively convey, persuade and influence stakeholders to achieve the desired outcome</p> |
| <p>7. What support would SDF require to optimally perform their responsibilities?</p> | <p>15. The SDFs capacity and knowledge base on skills planning legislation and processes must be improved.</p> <p>16. Additional people must be employed in the Skills planning section. Currently only interns are in the section with the SDF. The Personnel officer has been seconded for a short period.</p> <p>17. SDF have the support of Director Corporate services. SDF report to HR Manager. However, there is no synergy between SDF and HR Manager.</p> | |
| <p>8. What should the Municipality do differently to address the challenges?</p> | <p>18. Approved HRD policy must be in place which is aligned to applicable legislation and policies.</p> <p>19. Comprehensive skills audit must conduct to establish skills baseline within the Municipality.</p> <p>20. Build capacity of Council, HoDs and all line managers to understanding the skills planning process and their roles.</p> <p>21. A qualification mapping must be developed to indicate the learning pathways and mobility within the organisation this will assist to improve the learning culture;</p> <p>22. Communications must be improved between Line Managers, SDF and staff.</p> <p>23. An organisation communication protocol must be developed and implemented.</p> <p>24. Employee wellness programmes must be developed and implemented to improve the work culture within the organisation and to support employees.</p> <p>25. Create a learning and development programme that addresses training challenges.</p> <p>26. Improve awareness and understanding of HRD policies.</p> <p>27. An integrated Performance management system must be developed and implemented in the municipality.</p> | |
| <p>9. What do you recommend the Municipality should do to improve its Skills Planning process and implementation of learnerships/learning Interventions?</p> | | |

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| | 10. What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality? | | |
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Source: Own compilation

4.6.2. Theme 2: Skills planning roadmap for implementation

The information from the participants indicated that the skills development of employees contributed to improved skills levels within the municipality. Minnaar & Bekker (2015, p. 67) concurs that through training, municipal officials acquire knowledge and skills about specific municipal matters. Ndevu and Muller (2017, p. 159) adds that every organisation needs to have well-equipped and articulate human resources, to execute its activities effectively. The participants further indicated that the opportunities created by the municipality for unemployed, young people, contributed to them becoming economically active, and possibly finding employment at the municipality.

The findings of this current study revealed that the skills planning process in this rural-based municipality was fragmented, disorganised, and not focused on improving skills. The key stakeholders and decision makers in the municipality were not committed, nor driving the skills development agenda within the municipality. This is evident from the skills baseline that was not clearly defined. Additionally, a comprehensive skills audit analysis had never been conducted, as per the following responses from the participants:

Participant 2: *“...training needs are sent to the SDF once a year, but nothing happens and no feedback is received. People losing interest as they complete their needs, but no training is happening...”*

Participant 8: *“...the only time when organised labour is engaged is when the WSP must be signed...”*

The data findings also revealed that the skills planning process in the municipality had been regarded as the sole responsibility of the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) and the Council; consequently, the management team and line managers were not committed, or invested in the development of their sub-ordinates. This further contributed to the failure of managers to drive the process of identifying the skills need, as well as the appropriate skills development interventions, and consequently, being unaware of its

direct impact on service delivery to the community. The following extracts from the participants data refers:

Participant 7: “...Skills planning does not receive the necessary attention. Line managers see skills planning as a hindrance and does not get the same attention and commitment...”

Participant 6: “...Skills planning should be part of the HoD’s meeting agenda. It must be discussed regularly and then be cascaded to line managers so that they understand the importance of skills planning...”

Participant 1: “...Line Managers must be part of the skills planning process from the start. From the identification of skills needs to the planning for training interventions...”

The findings also revealed that the skills planning team, located within the Human Resources Department, was under resourced, and its skills and competences in human resource development required upgrading. A few participants reflected on the capacity within the HRD, as per the following extracts:

Participant 9: “...the HRD department require additional administrative support staff it is currently only interns in the department together with SDFs, who is the only permanent employee. This indicate the lack of commitment from council and management for the HRD function within the Municipality...”

Participant 5: “...Limited discussion at HoD level and TC not functioning. The SDF is the only person within the organisation that is driving the process...”

Participant 7: “...The SDF requires support. Additional people must be employed in the Skills planning section. Only currently Interns is in the section. Personnel officer has been seconded for a short period...”

The absence of a key performance area on HRD in the performance contracts of managers was further revealed in the findings. This implied that managers could not be held accountable for participation in the skills planning process, as well as the development

of their team members, unless their performance contracts were reviewed. The participants reflected on the participation of line managers in the skills planning process, as follows:

Participant 17: “...line managers are not interested, not taking skills planning serious thus they are not doing any career planning or pathing for employees or new employees within the Municipality...”

Participant 10: “...The line managers and supervisors are not part of identifying training need or identifying training programmes...”

The training committee, an important oversight committee that comprises employer and employee representatives, and is mandated to meet quarterly, was not functioning as optimally as it could, and consequently, the HRD team was not being held accountable, or required to report on skills planning in the municipality. The following extract refers:

Participant 5: “...the training committee is not functioning and the SDF is the only person driving the skills development agenda thus, no skills development reports are tabled at council meetings. There is no accountability and no consequence management which is a serious lack of political and oversight from council...”

The recruitment of learners for skills development interventions was not based on approved criteria, or the job requirements, but conducted on an ad hoc basis, and often for a selected few with *political connections* or ties. Through its council, the municipality has to build and maintain a capacitated state, to ensure that it meets its constitutional mandate (RSA, 2000). The findings clearly indicated that the municipal council had failed to drive and perform their oversight role on skills planning and implementation. Previous studies concur with the findings of this current study, which suggest the need for increased training in the workplace, as well as for employers to display a growing commitment towards increased human and financial investment (Nda & Fard, 2013); Davids, 2011, p. 3575)

In Table 4.3, the data findings relevant to Theme 3: *Political interference instead of Political oversight*, are presented. The HRD framework (RSA, 2000) and related data findings contributed to addressing the following sub-question: (i) What support and

guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships successfully? The findings presented in Table 4.3 and section 4.6.3 below, facilitated the realisation of the best way to address the local government challenges and skills shortcomings, as indicated in the problem statement and study purpose presented in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 4.3: Political interference instead of political oversight

| THEME | RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LINKS |
|--|--|--|--|
| Political Interference instead of Political Oversight | 1. <i>What factors influence/inhibit growth and learning of employees in the workplace?</i> | 1. Municipal Council does not discuss skills planning matters and does not ensure the implementation of policy. 2. Councillors political interference in administrative matters such as recruitment of learners for Learnerships; decide which employed learners can be nominated for training. | Governance Leadership Able to promote, direct and apply professionalism in managing risk and compliance requirements and apply a thorough understanding of governance practices and obligations. Direct the conceptualisation of relevant policies and enhance cooperative governance relationships |
| | 2. <i>What are some of challenges that you are experienced when implementing training in the Municipality?</i> | 3. Municipal venues not always conducive for people with disabilities. 4. Arranging transport for learners was a challenge as there isn't always funds available. 5. Planning of training was not done well by SDF and was not done timeously. 6. Operations are not taken into consideration – learners are not informed timeously training so that service delivery is not affected. 7. The Municipality does not make necessary arrangements for disability learners i.t.o of transport, assistance to access venues. 8. No consequence management for non-attendance, | Change leadership Able to direct and initiate institutional transformation on all levels in order to successfully drive and implement new initiatives and deliver professional and quality services to the community. Moral Competencies Able to identify moral triggers, apply reasoning that promotes honesty and integrity and consistently display behaviour that reflects moral competence. Communication Able to share information, knowledge, and ideas in clear, focused, and concise manner appropriate for the audience in order to effectively convey, persuade and influence stakeholders to achieve the desired outcome |
| | 3. <i>What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality?</i> | 9. Approved HRD policy must be in place which is aligned to applicable legislation and policies. 10. Comprehensive skills audit must conduct to establish skills baseline within the Municipality. | |
| | 4. <i>What should the Municipality do differently to address the challenges?</i> | 11. Build capacity of Council, HoDs and all line managers to understanding the skills planning process and their roles. | |
| | 5. <i>What do you recommend the Municipality should do to improve its Skills Planning process and implementation of learnerships/learning Interventions?</i> | 12. A qualification mapping must be developed to indicate the learning pathways and mobility within the organisation this will assist to improve the learning culture; | |

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| | | <p>13. Communications must be improved between Line Managers, SDF and staff.</p> <p>14. An organisation communication protocol must be developed and implemented.</p> <p>15. Employee wellness programmes must be developed and implemented to improve the work culture within the organisation and to support employees.</p> <p>16. Create a learning and development programme that addresses training challenges</p> <p>17. Improve awareness and understanding of HRD policies.</p> <p>18. An integrated Performance management system must be developed and implemented in the municipality.</p> | |
|--|--|---|--|

Source: Own compilation

4.6.3. Theme 3: Political interference, instead of political oversight

The Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), as well as the Municipal Structures Act (RSA, 1998b), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.6.2 and 2.2.6.3, clearly outlines the mandate and framework for municipalities. In addition, it articulates the functions and powers of elected leaders. Consequently, the municipal councils' oversight role is enshrined in the legislation and policies, which suggests that there should not be any *blurring of lines* between administration and oversight. The administrative functions are performed by the Municipal Manager, Heads of Departments and employees within the municipality. The Municipal's Systems Act (RSA, 2000) stipulates the oversight roles and functions, which should be duly performed by the elected councillors, who form part of the municipal council. In terms of the legislation, the council must ensure that the municipality has Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), linking their developmental priorities to municipal budgets. In addition, the council must ensure that Performance Management Systems (PMS) are implemented, to guide their decision-making, operations, and their execution. Section 68 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) stipulates that a "municipality must develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions and exercise its powers in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way".

This current research study's findings revealed that political interference was rife in the rural municipality space. Most participants raised this as a concern, and accused councillors of interfering in the recruitment of learners (both employed and unemployed), identification of training providers, as well as the selection of learners, which was not based on entry and operational requirements, but mainly on political connections, and allegiances to political parties. The following extracts refer:

Participant 1: *"...the municipality is rife with political influence and some employees are a law unto themselves as they believe they have protection from certain politicians..."*

Participant 3: *"...there is a perception that people don't require the minimum qualification to be employed as they have political connections. Some jobs are even earmarked for certain politicians' friends or family..."*

The participants highlighted previously that the municipal council approved various policies, including the HRD policies, but failed to monitor the implementation thereof. Literature concurs with the findings of this current study, as reflected in section 2.6 of chapter 2, regarding the US State of Michigan and Singapore, which confirms that high political will, a strong structural framework, and good skills development, could achieve the desired results.

In Table 4.4, the data findings, relevant to Theme 4: *Succession planning and workplace mentoring*, are presented. The HRD framework (RSA, 2000) and related data findings contributed to addressing the following sub-questions: (i) What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships, successfully?; (ii) Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners? The findings presented in Table 4.4 and section 4.6.4 below, facilitated the realisation of the best way to address the local government challenges and skills shortcomings, as indicated in the problem statement and study purpose presented in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 4.4: Succession planning and workplace mentoring

| THEME | RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LINKS |
|--|--|---|---|
| Succession planning and Workplace mentoring | <p>1. <i>What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality?</i></p> <p>2. <i>What should the Municipality do differently to address the challenges?</i></p> | <p>1. The municipality has an aging employee profile, particularly in the technical department. Thus, skilled employees will be retiring in the next 5-7 years.</p> <p>2. No succession policy or strategy in place;</p> <p>3. No workplace mentoring and coaching in place;</p> | <p>Programme and Project Management</p> <p>Able to understand programme and project management methodology, plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate specific activities in order to deliver on set objectives</p> <p>Change leadership</p> <p>Able to direct and initiate institutional transformation on all levels in order to successfully drive and implement new initiatives and deliver professional and quality services to the community.</p> |
| | <p>3. <i>What are some of challenges that you are experienced when implementing training in the Municipality?</i></p> | <p>4. The municipality is not proactive and planning for future skills needs within the sector.</p> <p>5. The Municipality does not make provision for Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) as a training initiative.</p> <p>6. Staff that retire are brought back as consultants as no skills development pipeline is in place to ensure that young people are employed and groomed for positions;</p> <p>7. Retired employees are brought back as consultants at a huge cost to the municipality.</p> <p>8. The ageing workforce is not responsive to ever changing environment in the local government sector;</p> <p>9. No career pathing for employees or new employees within the Municipality.</p> <p>10. There is no exit strategy for unemployed learners that have been trained.</p> | <p>Communication</p> <p>Able to share information, knowledge, and ideas in clear, focused and concise manner appropriate for the audience in order to effectively convey, persuade and influence stakeholders to achieve the desired outcome</p> |
| | <p>4. <i>What do you recommend the Municipality should do to improve its Skills Planning process and implementation of learnerships/learning Interventions?</i></p> | <p>11. The performance contracts of managers must include Human resource management and career pathing of their staff, but this is not happening;</p> | |

Source: Own compilation

4.6.4. Theme 4: Succession planning and workplace mentoring

The findings of a study conducted by Kuvaas and Dysvik (2012, p. 217) concur with the findings of this current study, as reflected in section 2.3, confirming that the lack capacity in the area of human resources, has negative consequences for any organisation. Therefore, the key to building the general capacity of the municipalities, is the capacity building of municipal employees, on a continuous basis. The municipality’s workplace

skills plan includes, inter alia, the age categories of all its employees. This information should be used as management information, to feed into the strategic plan, as well as skills plan of the municipality, ensuring continuous skills development, workplace mentoring, and coaching, to develop a pool of required skills and competences (for example, finance skills, technical skills, planning and water related skills), which would always be available within the municipality. The researcher observed that the municipality had an ageing workforce, particularly, in the technical departments, such as water services and road construction. The absence of succession planning and professional on the job coaching and mentoring, was disclosed by most of the participants. Concerns were raised about retired employees being brought back as consultants, due to the failure of the municipality to have a proper succession strategy and plan in place. One participant stated the following:

Participant 6: *“...there is a lack of succession planning within the Municipality and no policy in place to enable the process within the organisation. We currently have a situation where staff that retire are brought back as consultants at a huge cost to the municipality, as no skills development pipeline is in place to ensure that young people are employed and groomed for positions...”*

Another participant made the following comment:

Participant 1: *“...succession planning is not being done within the Municipality. Within the next few years, the municipality will be losing technical skills but it's not planning for the future skills that would be required...”*

The findings of the World Forum of Local Economic Development (UCLGA, 2017), as reflected in section 2.4, concur with the findings of this current study, confirming that the skills levels of officials in local government, impacts on the effectiveness of organisations, to carry out their mandates. Skills and competencies represent significant factors that influence the quality of life for citizens, as well as the prospects for economic growth.

In Table 4.5, the data findings, relevant to Theme 5: *Funding for Skills Development*, are presented. The HRD framework (RSA, 2000), and related data findings contributed to addressing the following sub-questions: (i) What support and guidance were provided to learners, by which relevant authority, for them to complete their learnerships, successfully?; (ii) Do the workplace policy directives on learnerships enable learners? (iii) What has been the impact of the learnerships, implemented at the respective rural municipality of the study? The findings presented in Table 4.5 and section 4.6.5 below, facilitated the realisation of the best way to address the local government challenges and skills shortcomings, as indicated in the problem statement and study purpose presented in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Table 4.5: Funding for skills development

| THEME | RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | INTERVIEWEE RESPONSES | COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LINKS |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Funding for skills development | 1. <i>How can the LGSETA improve its support to the Municipality?</i> | 1. The LGSETA must build capacity of Council, HoD and Line managers on the skills levy grant system and the broader skills planning process; 2. The LGSETA is enabling skills planning in the Municipality. However, the SETA can make additional funding available. 3. Municipality must spend funding committed from the LGSETA. Provincial LGSETA must initiated projects and just allocates seats to the municipality; 4. LGSETA must monitor the unemployed as they are not always serious and just there for stipend. | Financial Management Able to compile, plan and manage budgets, control cash flow, institute financial risk management and administer procurement processes in accordance with recognised financial practices. Ensure that all financial transactions are managed in an ethical manner. Moral Competencies Able to identify moral triggers, apply reasoning that promotes honesty and integrity and consistently display behaviour that reflects moral competence. |
| | 2. <i>What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality?</i> | 5. The municipality must set aside funding from its own budget for training; 6. Evaluate the impact of LGSETA Programmes in the Municipality 7. Exit strategies for unemployed learners | |
| | 3. <i>What are some of challenges that you are experienced when implementing training in the Municipality?</i> | 8. Funding remains limited and constraint. 9. No proper resource mobilization and utilization within the municipality. 10. The administering of Mandatory not clear within the Municipality. 11. Discretionary Grants access from LGSETA and other SETA | |

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| | | are providing assistance but not sufficient. |
| | 4. <i>What should the Municipality do differently to address the challenges?</i> | 12. Approved HRD policy must be in place which is aligned to applicable legislation and policies. |
| | 5. <i>What do you recommend the Municipality should do to improve its Skills Planning process and implementation of learnerships/learning Interventions?</i> | 13. Comprehensive skills audit must conduct to establish skills baseline within the Municipality. 14. Build capacity of Council, HoDs and all line managers to understanding the skills planning process and their roles. 15. Communications must be improved between Line Managers, SDF and staff. 16. Create a learning and development programme that addresses training challenges within the municipality 17. Improve awareness and understanding of HRD policies and budget available. 18. An integrated Performance management system must be developed and implemented in the municipality. |

Source: Own compilation

4.6.5. Theme 5: Funding for skills development

The funding of skills development in most countries is legislated and regulated, as per the discussion of the funding models followed in Singapore (section 2.3 & 2.2.5), the Netherlands (section 2.2.6.4), and the United Kingdom (section 2.2.3). The birth of a new democracy in South Africa required the transformational agenda to be set firmly, and underpinned by the required policy framework, as discussed in Chapter 2. The South African Skills Development Levies Act (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Act No 9 of 1999) encouraged employers to increase investment in the training and skills of their workforce, thereby intending to fund the *skills development revolution*. It is mandatory, therefore, for municipalities, as employers, to pay their skills levy, and be able to claim Discretionary and Mandatory grants from the LGSETA, when they meet the requirements, as articulated in the SETA Grants Regulations No. 35940 (RSA, DoHC, 1997), as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.6.4. In addition, municipalities are obligated to budget for skills development annually. The participants indicated that limited funding for skills planning was available within the municipality, which limits skills development opportunities to the employed, as well as the unemployed. The SETA Grants Regulations

No. 35940 (RSA, DoHC, 1997) prescribes that, for the Mandatory Grant, 20% could be reclaimed from the applicable SETA, and for the Discretionary Grant, up to 49.5%, once the employer meets the skills development requirements. This makes limited funds available to the municipalities, to claim skills development grants from the LGSETA. However, many participants also conceded that no clear strategy on the prioritisation and utilisation of the funds existed. Although the municipality accessed funding from the LGSETA, the Discretionary Grant was frequently not fully utilised, and at times, the municipality forfeited the Discretionary Grant allocations, due to non-adherence to deadlines, or non-submission of compliant learner documents. The following are reflections from the participants:

Participant 14: “...More funding should be made available for training...”

Participant 10: “...the municipality depend on funding from the LGSETA and have limited own funding to budget thus limited training is taking place which is also not properly coordinated...”

Another participant disclosed the following:

Participant 6: “...the LGSETA is enabling the municipality and assisting with funding however training expenditure must be monitored and reported to ensure that funding is used for the intended purpose...”

The need for the capacity building of the Council, as well as the Heads of Department was expressed by many participants. This would allow the Council to strengthen their oversight role and management lead, to drive and manage of the skills planning process within the municipality. The Mandatory Grant, disbursed to the municipality, was also not re-allocated for skills planning, but viewed as income in the municipality, and therefore, used for other expenditure within the municipality. The participants reflected on this by stating the following:

Participant 7: “...When funding is available we provide support for S&T etc. But when their financial constrains or to many people it becomes difficult...”

Participant 2: “...Mandatory grant from LGSETA is re-allocated as provision was made in the budget for training...”

Participant 6: “...Monitoring of training budget to ensure that funding is used for the intended purpose. Consequent management if this does not take place...”

The municipality sets aside limited funds from its own budget, due to its low revenue stream; however, it has access to other funding from sources, such as the National Departments, Provincial Governments, as well as SETAs. During the financial years of 2016/17 and 2017/18, the municipality budgeted R380 000 and R315 000, respectively, for training and development. However, the municipality *underspent* their training budget in both years, only managing to spend 53% and 21%, respectively (‘Rural’¹ Municipality, 2019, p. 62).

The Integrated Development Plan of the municipality reflects youth development programmes, with no budget allocation from the municipality. Instead the IDP reflects a reliance on funding from SETAs, Department of Social Development, and the Extended Public Works programme. The IDP, therefore, is not comprehensive and integrated with the workplace skills plan, and funding from SETAs, Provincial Government Departments, and Youth funding agencies are done on an ad hoc basis, with no clear organisational goals to be met, and no exit strategy for the unemployed young people (‘Rural’ Municipality, 2019, p. 53).

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented the analysis and findings of the qualitative data, collected from the sampled interviewees. The data analysis process is articulated, and the findings presented under the five themes that emerged from the thematic data analysis process. The findings were synthesized with previous empirical research findings and non-empirical literature, presented in Chapter 2, with the aim of identifying similarities, or differences. It was important for the researcher to reflect on the background of rural district, in which the municipality falls, as it formed an important part of the context for this current research project.

¹ The research is based on a rural municipality. For ethical considerations, the name of the municipality is withheld.

In order to provide effective and efficient service delivery to communities, the municipality requires a municipal employee, or new labour market entrant, to have the required knowledge, competences, and attitude to serve the citizens with distinction. In this current research study, the researcher aimed to explore the critical factors that could ensure successful implementation of learning intervention within a rural municipality context. The overview of the legislative framework was provided in Chapter 2, to provide clarity on the environment, in which the municipality operates. In this chapter, the researcher reflected on the data analysis process, and presented the findings, based on the data collection process followed, as outlined in Chapter 3. The five themes that emerged from the data analysis process, provided valuable insight into the state of skills planning and the implementation of learnerships, within a rural municipal setting.

A number of challenges have been identified that hinder the successful implementation of skills development interventions within the municipality. In summary, some of the key findings per theme are as follows: (i) Theme 1: The HRD policy had been drafted and approved by council. However, there was no indication whether the policy was aligned to the applicable legislation and policies, nor was the policy being communicated to all the employees. The municipality, therefore, inadequately implemented of the HRD policy; (ii) Theme 2: The Skills planning process, from conceptualization to implementation, was not being conducted systematically. Ad hoc skills planning activities were being initiated, mainly by the SDFs, as all strategic stakeholders, namely, Council, Heads of Department, Line Managers, and organised labour were *hands off*, generally, or side-lined in the process; (iii) Theme 3: Oversight from Council in the skills planning process was lacking; however, there seemed to be consistent meddling by councillors into the administration, regarding who should attend training, and which providers should be contracted to deliver training; (iv) The aging working population, particularly in the technical department, required strategic interventions from the municipality; therefore, a succession planning strategy and workplace coaching programme had become imperative; (v) Funding for skills development was a common theme; however, the municipality needed to ensure that it spent its limited training budget on targeted interventions.

All the participants were eager to participate in this current research and indicated a willingness to be involved in a workable solution, which would ensure that the anomalies were addressed, and skills development interventions implemented, efficiently and effectively. In the following chapter, the researcher presents the pertinent findings of the study, as it related to the purpose

of this current study (regarded as conclusions), together with recommendations and workable solutions for the municipality to consider and implement, to improve the current situation within the municipality. More importantly, it is anticipated that their employees and new labour market entrants, would receive the much-needed training, to ensure their competence and effectiveness, when performing their functions within the municipality.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"I am convinced that nothing we do is more important than hiring and developing people. At the end of the day, you bet on people not on strategies." - Lawrence Bossidy (Bossidy & Charan, 2004)

5.1. Introduction

This research study is resultant from the number of challenges that are existent within the local government sector, namely corruption, low skills levels, basic service delivery problems, as well as the fact that only a few municipalities have been receiving clean audit opinions from the auditor general. Additionally, the SA HRD strategy, which is articulate, and aims to address the "triple challenge" of inequality, unemployment, and poverty, has not had a significant impact on local government, as yet.

The purpose of this current study was to explore varying aspects of skills development, particularly the implementation of learnerships (SETA training for staff capacity building) within the local government sector. More specifically, this current study was aimed at identifying strategies and enhancements, geared at improved implementation of skills development initiatives, and ultimately, making recommendations to address the skills deficit within the local government sector. This current research is important to the broader local government sector and LGSETA, as it provides a critically objective assessment, review, reflection, and consolidation of strategic strengths and weaknesses in local government skills development.

Additionally, this current research highlights that, if local government staff are capacitated through skills development, they could become the required strategic drivers of transformation, through improved productivity. This, in turn, would enhance the municipalities' service delivery. Ultimately, it is anticipated that the findings of this current study would contribute to the body of knowledge, and existing research, regarding the implementation of skills development in the local government sector. In this chapter, therefore, the researcher presents

the most prominent factors, aligned to the study purpose and objectives, which led to the data findings that facilitated the conclusions, as well as recommendations for further research.

5.2. Revisiting the objectives of the study

In this current study, the researcher achieved the four objectives, namely: (i) explore staff capacity challenges, skills development approaches, training content and implementation within the local government sector, based on a literature review; (ii) conduct a case study of the role of key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of a learnership (SETA training) at a rural municipality in the Western Cape, for the purpose of conceptualising the experiences of the stakeholders with its implementation; (iii) analyse the collected case study data, using thematic analysis, to synthesize the findings with the literature review results, obtained with objective 1; and (iv) report the findings related to human resources development and skills training (e.g. SETA Learnerships) in local government, and make recommendations for further research.

5.2.1. Study problem statement and purpose

The problem statement (in chapter 1) indicated that local governments globally are faced with challenges of corruption, human capacity constraints, lack of service delivery transparency, political interference, weak financial management, as well as dysfunctional and poor public participation processes. This was compounded by the fact that often municipalities have a deficit in skills and competences in management and leadership, financial management, as well as technical skills, required to deliver access to water, sanitation, housing, transport, road construction, and planning. Consequently, the focus of this current study was on determining the best way to address these local government challenges and skills shortcomings.

The problem statement, therefore, determined the purpose of this current study, which was to explore varying aspects of skills development, particularly, the implementation of learnerships, for example, SETA training/staff capacity building within the local government sector. More specifically, this current study was aimed at identifying strategies and enhancements, geared towards the improved implementation of skills development initiatives, in order to make recommendations, ultimately, to address the skills deficit within the local government sector. The study purpose required a

comprehensive literature review of the legislative framework that governs local government, local government practices (globally and in South Africa), as well as the skills development practices in South Africa, and internationally.

5.2.2. Study objective 1: Literature review on skills planning and implementation within the local government sector

The first objective was outlined in Chapter 2, in which the available literature on local governments, their contexts, legislative frameworks, and capacities for service delivery, together with related literature on skills development for human resource capacity building was reviewed. The reviewed literature on the various origins and paths of local government development, as well as service delivery, revealed the extent to which effective, efficient, and meaningful local government service delivery, relies on a strong legal framework within effective government structures, a clear delegation of authority, and high standards of accountability, supported by relevant skills development and training. The countries reviewed, were observed to have progressed at different speeds, and to have reached different levels of effective achievement of the required levels of service delivery. Additionally, the literature revealed that a high political will, a strong structural framework, and good skills development, could achieve the desired results.

South Africa's literature cited a well-structured legal framework, but often flawed institutional arrangements, and challenges with implementation. Local government transformation, from passive service provider, to proactive facilitator of democratically accountable community development, as well as the enabling of active citizenry, is still lacking in South Africa. Although skills development legislation formed part of a government suite of policies, enabling transformation in the country, there are local municipalities with poor service delivery records, lack of accountability, as well as staff involved in corruption, and the number is escalating.

The evidence to date, indicates inadequate education and skills training, combined with low levels of morality, leading to a lack of the much-needed levels of in-house competencies to execute the expected tasks. In this study, therefore, the researcher reviewed the available literature on local governments, their contexts, legislative frameworks, and capacities for service delivery, together with related literature on skills development for human resource capacity building. The findings derived from the study,

as exemplified in a rural municipality of the Western Cape, was synthesized with the literature, and presented in Chapter 4.

5.2.3. Study Objective 2: Conduct a case study on the planning and implementation of a learnership (SETA training) at a rural municipality

The second objective was articulated in Chapter 3. This research, through the substantial theoretical evidence outlined in Chapter 2, established that there were challenges with service delivery, low skills levels, and the implementation of skills planning interventions, such as learnerships in the local government sector. An exploratory case study design was applied in this current research to fulfil the research purpose. The researcher, therefore, explored the nature and extent of the skills development function, the planning process to implement learnerships, the workplace readiness for implementation, the role of the various stakeholders in the learnership implementation process, and the support provided by the LGSETA.

The research methodology provided the blueprint for the study's operationalisation, which contributed towards the validity of the study's results. The study was conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, with defining characteristics aimed at a detailed encounter of the study, which was conducted at a rural municipality in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. The thematic form of data analysis was employed in this current study. The findings from the respective interviews' data analysis were synthesized with the data results from the literature review, in order to draw relevant conclusions. The key interviews were conducted to explore the participants' understanding of the skills development legislative framework, the organisation policy, their levels of participation in the skills planning process within the organisation, the roles of stakeholders in the implementation of learnerships, and the obstacles or challenges experienced with the implementation of learnerships.

5.2.4. Study Objective 3: Analyse data using thematic analysis to synthesize the findings with the literature reviewed

The third objective was outlined in Chapter 4, and reflects the data analysis and findings of the qualitative data collected from the sampled interviewees. The six-stage process followed for the data analysis was articulated, and the findings presented in five

respective themes that emerged from the thematic data analysis process. The synthesizing of the findings with previous empirical research findings and non-empirical literature, as presented in chapter 2, with the aim of identifying similarities, differences, and extended findings between this research project, previous studies, and existing non-empirical literature. The five themes that emerged from the data analysis process, provided valuable insight into the state of skills planning and the implementation of learnerships within a rural municipal setting.

These pertinent findings of this current study related to the purpose of the study and prompted recommendations and workable solutions for the municipality under scrutiny to consider and implement, to improve its current situation.

5.2.5. Study Objective 4: Report findings and recommendations for further research

The fourth objective was outlined in Chapter 4 and reflects findings of the qualitative data collected from the nineteen (19) sampled interviewees. This research study was aimed at exploring what the required critical factors were to ensure successful implementation of skills development interventions within a rural municipality context. A number of challenges, which hinder the successful implementation of skills development interventions within the municipality, have been identified. The willingness of the participants to be part of a workable solution, was an indication that the skills development interventions would be implemented efficiently and effectively, and that employees and new labour market entrants would receive the much-needed training to ensure that they are competent and effective, when performing their diverse functions within the municipality.

5.2.5.1. Human Resource Development (HRD) policy framework

The key findings of Theme 1 revealed that the HRD policy was drafted and approved by council. However, there was no indication whether the policy was aligned to the applicable legislation and policies, nor was the policy being communicated to all employees. The finding further revealed that the municipality had implemented the HRD policy, inadequately. Therefore, it is recommended that the municipality under scrutiny should review its HRD policy, to ensure that it is aligned to the applicable legislation and national policy prescripts. The policy must

be consulted, and once approved, shared with all stakeholders within the municipality, namely, organised labour, municipal council, local labour forum, and training committee. In addition, the HRD policy should be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains current, and facilitates the development of employees within the municipality, as well as unemployed young people, being funded by the municipality for learnerships, or any other training interventions.

5.2.5.2. Skills planning roadmap for implementation

The findings of Theme 2 highlighted that the skills planning process, from conceptualisation to implementation, was not being conducted systematically. Ad hoc skills planning activities were conducted by SDFs mainly, as all strategic stakeholders, namely, Municipal Council, Heads of Department, Line Managers, and organised labour, generally, were hands off, or side-lined in the process. A concerted effort is required by all stakeholders to ensure that skills planning is implemented and driven strategically within the municipality. The recommended, step-by-step skills planning road map, depicted in Figure 5.1 below, could guide and assist the stakeholders in the planning and implementation of learnerships, as well as other learning interventions.

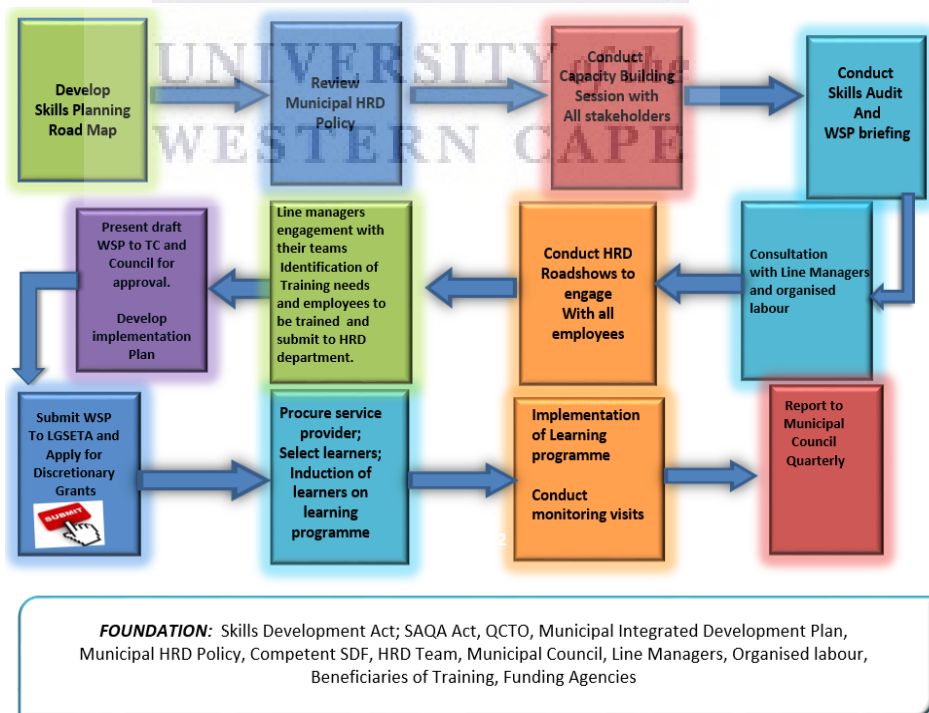


Figure 6: Skills planning roadmap
 Source: Amended from City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality (2020)

Understanding the legislative framework and skills planning policies, as well as conducting a skills audit within the municipality, would ensure that a solid foundation is in place for skills development. A solid skills planning foundation would contribute towards entrenching a culture of learning in the municipality, which should have a positive effect on service delivery. A management development programme should be sourced to capacitate the management team with the core principles of management, namely, planning, organising, leading and controlling. Performance management contracts of all managers in the municipality, should include human resource development, which would ensure that skills planning becomes mandatory for managers to coordinate within line departments, to ensure the upskilling of subordinates, and the mandate to departmental teams, to deliver on the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the municipality.

The skills development facilitator (SDF), as the coordinator of training and development in the municipality, should be knowledgeable and experienced in the skills planning process. Therefore, it is imperative that they are exposed to continuous development, to keep them abreast of all new policies, strategies, and legislation that would impact the skills planning process. Ultimately, the HR department should be fully capacitated with competent staff to ensure that the skills planning process, as well as workplace skills plan, is articulate and implemented. Additionally, the HR manager and Head of Department for Corporate services should be fully capacitated, to ensure that they support the SDF and drive the skills planning agenda within the municipality.

The local Labour forum and Training committee, as an integral element of the skills planning process, should be capacitated, to ensure that it has a clear understanding of the skills planning process, and is able to engage with its members and constituency within the municipality. Additionally, organised labour structures should form part of the consultative process and be engaged in policy development, communication, and the implementation thereof, as well as the compilation and implementation of the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP). The municipal council and management team should ensure the integration between the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the Local Economic Development (LED) strategy and

the WSP. Therefore, when the municipality embarks on its strategic planning process, it should ensure that it also articulates the skills planning requirements and strategy. It would be advisable for the municipality to consider a three- or five-year WSP, which could be divided into annual skills priorities and targets that should be achieved. The long-term planning would ensure that the municipality plans accurately for the skills and competences it requires, and that its annual WSP is credible and reliable. The employees, who are nominated for training, should undergo proper induction, to inform them of what would be expected of them in the learning programme, summary of the course content, and the assessment that would be conducted. Beneficiaries of training should be provided with the necessary support and transport, when training is conducted away from their places of work, while knowledgeable, qualified, and experienced mentors should be assigned to them for the duration of the learning programme. Unemployed learners should work under the supervision of a qualified and experienced mentor/coach, who is contracted to ensure that the learner receives the necessary exposure in the workplace, as well as the diligent completion and signing of the logbook.

5.2.5.3. Political interference instead of political oversight

The findings of Theme 3 indicate that the oversight of council in the skills planning process was lacking; however, some meddling by certain councillors in the administration was revealed. Therefore, the capacity building of councillors is imperative, for them to fulfil their oversight roles. A refresher programme on the roles and responsibilities of councillors, political structures and officials, finance for non-financial managers, and HRD for good governance was recommended. The councillor/s designated for corporate services, or human resource development, should be encouraged to register for an applicable skills programme, which would improve their skills and competences on skills planning, assist them to fulfil their oversight roles, and formulate informed opinions, when submissions are made by the administration.

A skills development progress report, as well as WSP preparations and implementation should be tabled with the management team and council on a quarterly basis, to ensure that the council is informed, but also empowered to fulfil their oversight role.

5.2.5.4. Succession planning and workplace mentoring

The findings of Theme 4 revealed that the municipality have an aging working population, particularly in the technical department; consequently, targeted and strategic interventions should be developed. A succession strategy and policy should be drafted, consulted, approved, and implemented. A comprehensive skills audit would assist the municipality to gain credible and reliable data, which would be fed into the WSP, as well as provide a profile of the municipal workforce and skills levels. Staff turnover should also be recorded and exit interviews must be conducted. Information collected from exit interviews should be analysed to ensure that the municipality remains responsive to constructive feedback, which would contribute to creating a conducive working environment.

The succession strategy should focus on strengthening the administrative capacity of the municipality, to ensure improved service delivery to the community it serves, as well as financial accountability and stability. The succession plan should include areas, such as: (i) The identification of key posts and job requirements that the plan is intended to address. According to the findings, as outlined in Chapter 4, the municipality had skills deficits in the technical skills area; (ii) The identification of employees, who could be upskilled, or the decision to create opportunities for unemployed young people; (iii) Planning and budgeting for learning interventions, namely, learnerships, or bursaries that should be made available to train unemployed young people; (iv) Training and contracting workplace coaches and mentors, to mentor and coach new employees, or unemployed learners, who could be taken on board; (v) Continuous monitoring of the plan, and the tabling of quarterly reports at the Training committee meetings, Management meetings, and Council meetings. Ultimately, a strategic approach to succession planning would mitigate against the municipality's potential deficit of skills and competences to address important basic services.

5.2.5.5. Funding for skills development

The findings of Theme 5 highlighted the need for the funding of skills development. According to the findings, although the municipality accessed mandatory and discretionary grants from the LGSETA, this funding was either

reallocated, or the total allocation received from the LGSETA was not fully utilised. It is important, therefore, for the municipality to ensure that, when it initiates its planning processes, such as the IDP, LED and WSP, these processes are interlinked with allocated budgets.

Mandatory grants, once paid by the LGSETA, should be reallocated for training, and utilised to address the skills deficits, as articulated in the integrated WSP. The IDP objectives and priorities should be linked with the required skills, or skills that should be developed, and a budget allocation should be included. Funding applications to LGSETA, or any other funding agencies, should be informed by the IDP and WSP priorities. Funding applications, together with implementation plans, as well as the target group, should be presented to the training committee and management team for endorsement, and subsequently, the council, for approval. Once funding had been awarded, quarterly reports on the progress with implementing skills development initiatives and skills development expenditure, should be presented to the training committee and council. The municipality needs to determine its return on investment annually, as well as whether operations, audit outcomes, and service delivery have improved.

5.3. Concluding statement

The difference between success and failure depends on a competent, skilled workforce; therefore, the researcher concurs with Bossidy (Bossidy & Charan, 2004), who asserts that developing people is the golden thread and foundation of any organisation. The findings of this current study revealed that inadequate education and skills training, resulted in a lack of the required in-house competencies to execute the expected tasks. The reviewed literature on the various origins and paths of local government development and service delivery, indicated the extent to which effective, efficient, and meaningful local government service delivery relies on a strong legal framework, a clear delegation of authority, high standards of accountability, all backed by relevant skills development and training.

Addressing the triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, could only be addressed, when a capable, professional public service and local government is in place. Therefore, to achieve this, local government should ensure that the skills planning policy

framework is in place, planning and implementation of learning interventions are performed timeously, as well as monitored and completed within budget, all stakeholders are capacitated to fulfil their roles and responsibility diligently, and municipal councils fulfil their oversight role. This should translate into an increased pool of skilled and competent officials, improved service delivery, while local government occupations would become careers of choice for graduates and new labour market entrants.

5.4. Recommendations for further research

The limitations of this current study were highlighted in Chapter 1, section 1.5. Therefore, recommendations for further research could be any of the following topics: (i) As this current research highlighted the under-representation of women in middle and senior managers in the local government sector, further research is recommended on the employment equity disparities, pertaining to gender within municipalities; (ii) The skills, competences, and responsibilities of managers, in relation to the skills planning process in municipalities should be explored; (iii) The training committee forms an integral part of the skills planning process; therefore, a research project on the composition and effectiveness of training committees should be initiated; (iv) the Covid19 pandemic caught all sectors off guard; therefore, a research project on the impact of a pandemic on skills planning in the local government sector should be conducted; and lastly, (v) This type of research should be duplicated in an urban-based municipality, to ascertain whether the same findings, as in a rural setting, would emerge; however, a comparison between rural and urban-based municipalities, is also recommended.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Interview guide

| RESPONDENT | |
|--|---|
| <i>Name & Surname</i> <i>(optional)</i> | |
| <i>Age</i> | Below 35 <input type="text"/> 35 – 5 <input type="text"/> 55 and above <input type="text"/> |
| <i>Gender</i> | Female <input type="text"/> Male <input type="text"/> |
| <i>Designation in the Skills Planning process?</i> | |
| What is your understanding of the Competency Framework for Local Government? How does this link to the Skills Planning process in the Municipality? | |
| Does the Municipality have a policy/strategy on HRD? Does it include areas relating to learning and ways to support learning? If not, how do you think this could be done? | |
| What is your understanding of The Learning Framework for Local Government and how does this find expression in the Policies of the Municipality? – qualification mapping | |
| How can Skills Development become a key component of Municipal Planning processes? | |
| How often do you engage in the Municipality to discuss Skills Development? Who leads these engagements in the Municipality? | |
| How does the Line Managers, Management and Council support Skills Planning interventions within the Municipality? | |
| What factors do you think enable the SDF to play a pivotal role with the implementation of Learnerships/learning interventions in the municipality? | |
| What factors inhibit the SDF to play a pivotal role to support | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Learnerships/learning interventions implemented in the Municipality? | |
| What factors influence/inhibit growth and learning of employees in the workplace? | |
| What systems need to be in place to create an optimal learning culture in the Municipality? | |
| What are some of challenges that you are experienced when implementing training in the Municipality? | |
| What should the Municipality do differently to address the challenges? | |
| What support would SDF require to optimally perform their responsibilities? | |
| What types of learning are most beneficial to support your growth in the municipality? | |
| How is the LGSETA enabling learnership/learning interventions in the Municipality? | |
| How can the LGSETA improve its support to the Municipality? | |
| BENEFICIARIES OF TRAINING | |
| What challenges do you experience with attending and completing learning programmes within the organisation and what support do you expect from the Municipality? | |
| How has attending a learnership/ learning programme improved your competence in the Municipality? | |
| What factors influence/inhibit growth and learning of employees in the workplace? | |
| What are the best mechanisms to assess your learning and contribution in the municipality? | |
| What do you recommend the Municipality improves its Skills Planning process and implementation of learnerships/learning Interventions? | |
| General comments: | |
| | |