

**ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF LEARNERSHIPS
WITHIN MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING AND RELATED
SERVICES ORGANISATIONS IN THE SEDIBENG MUNICIPAL
DISTRICT AREA**

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M Tech: Human Resource Management**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Technologiae: Human Resource Management in the Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Vaal University of Technology.

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January, 2009

The financial assistance of the Central Research Committee (CRC) of the Vaal University of Technology towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the CRC.

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This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Technologiae: Human Resource Management.

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The thesis is the result of my own independent work, except where otherwise stated.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to God, and the following people and institutions for their assistance in the completion of this thesis:

- My Creator, for the abilities and opportunities bestowed upon me.
- Noreen MacPherson, my supervisor, for her support and guidance.
- Dr Lynn Raijmakers, my friend, for her advice and encouragement.
- My family, including husband Kobus, children Kris and Lica, as well as parents Hennie and Ninna Pitout, who provided me with the love and support needed to complete this study.
- The Central Research Committee of the Vaal University of Technology for the bursary that enabled this study.
- Human Resources Directorate of the Vaal University of Technology for their invaluable assistance and for providing me with the opportunity to complete my studies.
- Dr Ayesha Bevan-Dye for language editing the text.
- Aldine Oosthuizen of the North West University for the statistical analysis of the data.

ABSTRACT

Key skills shortages, coupled with high levels of unemployment are well documented in South Africa. Learnerships, which are meant to reduce the skills shortage, are not addressing this problem as the SETAs have failed to communicate the benefits of learnerships aggressively to companies. Thus, the purpose of this research is to determine organisational perspectives of learnerships within the MERSETA organisations in the Sedibeng district municipal area.

A literature study of learnerships and applicable legislation in South Africa was undertaken in order to contextualise the South African skills development initiative.

The empirical portion of the study involved conducting a survey using a self-administered questionnaire designed to elicit perspectives of learnerships within small, medium and large organisations (n=150) that fall under the MERSETA and that are situated in the industrial areas of Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging and Meyerton, within the Sedibeng district municipal area.

The data obtained indicate that although almost two-thirds of the researched organisations do currently implement learnerships, these organisations experienced several barriers and challenges when taking on learnerships. It was found that the MERSETA organisations within the study area also lack understanding and familiarity with the learnership system and their perceptions towards learnerships are for the most part, negative.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations, targeted at the National Skills Authority, the Department of Labour, the MERSETA and the SETAs, are made to assist organisations in various areas to overcome the identified barriers and challenges emanating from learnership implementation.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Apprentice	Person who is learning a trade or craft because of a legal agreement entered into with an employer.
Core component	The compulsory learning area required in a particular learnership programme.
Effective learnerships	Training programmes designed to produce learners who are well trained and who are qualified to contribute to the economic growth and development of the country.
Elective component	The specialised areas of an occupation required in a particular learnership programme.
External stakeholders	Department of Labour, Department of Education, South African Qualifications Authority, training providers and the National Skills Authority.
Fundamental component	The basic educational requirements needed to take part in a learnership programme.
Internal stakeholders	Learners, employers, stakeholder forums and trade unions.
Large organisations	Organisations comprising 500 or more employees.
Learnership	A training programme whereby theory and practice are combined to culminate in a qualification and/or credit(s) that is registered on the NQF.
Learnership qualification	A qualification made up of what are known as unit standards.
Medium organisations	Organisations employing between 100 and 499 employees.
National Qualifications Framework	A set of principles and guidelines through which records of learner achievements are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge.

National Skills Authority	A stakeholder body established in accordance with the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) to ensure that a national skills development policy and strategy are developed and implemented.
Perspective	An individual way of looking at a situation, which may, for example, be influenced by personal experience or consideration.
Provider	An Education and Training Quality Assurance accredited body, which delivers a learning programme that culminates in registered standards and qualifications.
Role players	External and internal stakeholders.
Skilled	The ability to perform a task at a satisfactory level because of training received.
Skills shortage	A lack of workers with specific skills required to do specific jobs.
Small organisations	Organisations that employ up to 99 employees.
Unit standard	A specified number of credits that contribute towards obtaining a qualification.
Workplace Skills Plans	Well-developed plans from each organisation describing what skills are needed, who needs the skills, how they will obtain the skills and how much it will cost for them to obtain those skills.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DIIA	Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
E-mail	Electronic mail
ESDLE	Employment Skills Development Lead Employer
ETQAs	Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GET	General Education and Training
HET	Higher Education and Training
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
ISOE	Institute of Sectoral or Occupational Excellence
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
MERSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Education and Training Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSBs	National Standards Bodies
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund

OHS Act	Occupational Health and Safety Act
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SGBs	Standards Generating Bodies
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
WPSPs	Workplace Skills Plans