

**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FROM THE SERVICES**

**DELIVERED BY ESKOM ACADEMY OF LEARNING (EAL):**

**A CASE STUDY OF ESKOM KWAZULU-NATAL OPERATING UNIT**

**CYNTHIA ZIBUYILE THUSI**

**AUGUST 2023**



**ASSESSING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FROM THE SERVICES DELIVERED  
BY ESKOM ACADEMY OF LEARNING (EAL):  
A CASE STUDY OF ESKOM KWAZULU-NATAL OPERATING UNIT**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management  
Sciences  
Specializing in  
Human Resource Management  
in the  
Faculty of Management Sciences  
at the Durban University of Technology

**CYNTHIA ZIBUYILE THUSI**

**AUGUST 2023**

**APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION**

---

**18.08.2023**

**SUPERVISOR**

**DATE**

**DR. NOMKHOSI XULU-GAMA**

**HONORARY RESEARCH ASSOCIATE**

## **ABSTRACT**

The Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) occupies the role of Learning and Development; therefore, it provides training to employees for the sole purpose of closing the competency gap by building a highly skilled workforce that will meet the strategic objectives of the organization. The main purpose of this study was to assess the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning, with a particular focus in Eskom KZN. The three objectives of the study were to assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning KZN, to identify areas of improvement within Eskom Academy of Learning KZN and to recommend practical strategies for enhancing customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning KZN. This study used a mixed methods approach to conduct the survey. The target population was 185 Eskom employees for quantitative survey and 5 senior managers for qualitative survey. This included male and female students employed within Task Grading T05-E Band. Two data collection instruments were developed for the study, to satisfy the requirements of the design. Following the online questionnaire, which was structured on a five-point Likert scale, in-depth personal interviews were conducted. To select participants for the quantitative data collection, the researcher used systematic random sampling. Quantitative data analysis was conducted first, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0; while thematic analysis was used to analyse data obtained from interviews. The results indicated that the Eskom Academy of Learning has been effective in meeting its goals, indicated by a significant level of satisfaction among employees. The findings further revealed the determinants of customer satisfaction. While the academy has largely been able to satisfy the employees, information gathered from the interviews identified areas that require improvement.

Four main strategies are suggested for the improvement of customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning, namely: fostering a culture of customer satisfaction surveys, being aware of the business training needs through Individual Development Plans, proactive planning of training interventions and conducting on-job post assessments to determine if training received was relevant and effective.

## DECLARATION

I, Cynthia Zibuyile Thusi, hereby declare that this research thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Management Sciences – Human Resource Management, in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology, is my own original work carried out by myself to the best of my ability and knowledge and has not previously been submitted to any institution of Higher Education. All the sources that were used have been indicated and acknowledged in the references.

.....

18.08.2023

Cynthia Zibuyile Thusi

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I hereby dedicate my thesis work to my family. A special gratitude is extended to my late parents Mrs Gloris Jabulile Thusi and Mr Themba Samuel Thusi who will always remain closest to my heart. I love you and know that you would have been most proud. I'm grateful for their selfless love, prayers, sacrifices and support since my childhood. I also dedicate this thesis to my younger sister, Pearl Khethiwe Thusi and my brother Bongumusa Gabriel Ntokozo Thusi, for motivation and encouragement.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and most I would like to thank my heavenly Father for the blessing of life and for giving me enthusiasm, wisdom, and strength to conduct this research.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama, my supervisor. Thank you for guidance, continuous support, and motivation since the inception of my studies. Thank you for your undivided attention and patience from the moment you were allocated to supervise my work. Your extensive knowledge, constructive comments, and the valuable information you contributed are very much appreciated. Your encouragement and robust energy motivated me to study hard even during challenging and difficult times faced during completion of my studies. I very much appreciate your time and effort invested in me to make sure I achieved all the milestones set. I admire you and owe you so much! Thank you very much. God bless you.

My sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to my manager, Mr Castro Khuzwayo. Thank you for embracing who I am and to giving me approval to further my studies. Thank you for being my mentor from the moment I reported to you as my manager. Your wisdom and guidance are sincerely appreciated. To Learning and Development KZN colleagues, thank you for your continued support and encouragement, together we are scaling greater heights.

To my previous manager Dr Andrew Johnston, thank you for believing in me when I approached your office with my proposal to further my studies and conduct research in the area of my discipline Learning and Development. Your signature opened doors towards achievement of a qualification of my dreams.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to my Eskom colleagues, including management, for participating in the survey. Thanks for your time and effort – without you this study would have been impossible.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the staff and management of Durban University of Technology in the Faculty of Management Sciences. Thank you for your support and guidance throughout my years of study especially in making sure my administration was done correctly and submitted on time.

# **TABEL OF CONTENTS**

Cover page	ii
Abstract	iii
Declaration	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	viii
Table of Figures	xii
List of Tables	xiii
Abbreviations and acronyms	xiv
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research problem	2
1.3 Purpose of the study	2
1.4 Objectives of the study	2
1.5 Questions	3
1.6 Contributions of the study	3
1.7 Scope of the study	3
1.8 Dissertation structure	4
1.9 Background of the study	5
1.9.1 Brief background of Eskom	5
1.9.2 Brief background of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN	5
1.9.3 EAL operational structure – Central east cluster	7
1.9.4 Eskom Academy of Learning KZN customer base	7



1.9.5 Eskom Academy of Learning mandate	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE</b>	
<b>REVIEW</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Theoretical framework and systems theory in relation to human resource management	9
2.3 Literature review on learning and development	11
2.4 The importance of evaluation	14
2.4.1 Lessons from previous studies	18
2.4.2 Possible challenges for organisations	22
2.5 Evaluating customer satisfaction	23
2.6 Chapter summary	24
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research methodology	25
3.2.1 Study type	26
3.2.2 Research design	27
3.3 Sampling	28
3.3.1 Population of the study	28
3.3.2 Sampling techniques	29
3.3.3 Sample size and attributes	31
3.4 Data collection	33
3.4.1 Data collection instruments	33
3.4.2 Quantitative instrument	33
3.4.3 Qualitative instrument	34

3.4.4 Pretesting	34
3.4.5 Data collection procedure	35
3.5 Data analysis	36
3.5.1 Quantitative data analysis	36
3.5.2 Coding of the data	36
3.5.3 Descriptive statistics	37
3.5.4 Inferential statistics	38
3.5.5 Qualitative data analysis	38
3.6 Reliability	39
3.7 Validity	40
3.8 Limitations, challenges, and shortcomings	40
3.9 Ethical considerations	42
3.10 Chapter summary	43
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION</b>	<b>44</b>
4.1 Introduction	44
4.2 Quantitative results	44
4.2.1 Reliability analysis	44
4.2.2 Descriptive statistics	45
4.2.3 Inferential statistics	57
4.2.4 Independent sample t-test	57
4.3 Qualitative data analysis	59
4.3.1 Themes found after coding and indexing	59
4.4 Chapter summary	65

<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION</b>	<b>66</b>
5.1 Introduction	66
5.2 EAL customer satisfaction	66
5.3 Areas of improvement	69
5.3.1 Lack of information from EAL	69
5.3.2 Lack of a proactive approach to training	70
5.3.3 Inability to implement some training programs	71
5.3.4 Inability to adapt to new developments in the business	71
5.4 Strategies for improvement	72
5.5 Chapter summary	73
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>74</b>
6.1 Introduction	74
6.2 Summary of the study	74
6.2.1 Major findings of the study	74
6.3 Conclusions	76
6.4 Recommendations	77
6.5 Chapter summary	77
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>ANNEXURES</b>	<b>87</b>
Annexure A – Quantitative research questionnaire	87
Annexure B – Interview guide	90

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Eskom Academy of Learning operational structure	7
Figure 2.2: Manage Learning Delivery PCM (Process Control Manual)	15
Figure 2.3: Recruitment Process flow chart (Joseph 2020)	21
figure 2.4: Summary of report on EAL Learner Feedback Forms for July 2022	24

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) Results	45
Table 4.2: Acceptable $\alpha$ levels key	45
Table 4.3: Gender representation in the study	46
Table 4.4: Age representation in the study	46
Table 4.5: Race representation in the study	47
Table 4.6: Task grading representation in the study	48
Table 4.7: Work division representation in the study	47
Table 4.8: Further descriptive statistics	48
Table 4.9: Participant response percentages	52
Table 4.10: Cross tabulation of scale item nine with gender and race	55
Table 4.11: T-test comparison of satisfaction in men and women	58
Table 4.12: Correlation of biographical characteristics with EAL satisfaction.	58

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CC&B	Customer Care and Billing
CC&I	Customer Care and I
DUT	Durban University of Technology
EAL	Eskom Academy of Learning
ETD	Education, Training and Development
EWSETA	Energy & Water Sector Education Training Authority
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRBP	Human Resource Business Partner
HRM	Human Resource Management
IDP	Individual Development Plan
ISO	International Standards Organisation
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
L&D	Learning and Development
NEC	New Engineering Construction
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
POPI	Protection of Private Information
PCM	Process Control Manual
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RCAT	Root Cause Analysis Technique
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SAP	System Applications and Products
SHE	Safety Health Environment

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Skills Development Act (no. 97 of 1998 (2)) was intended to build the capacity of the South African workers without prioritising class, status, or level. It focuses on improving investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment. This legislation inspires employers to create a conducive working space which can be utilised for development of the various capacities of the workers, to give workers with opportunities and freedom to learn new traits and competences, acquire new information and specialised knowledge and skills as well as get the practical on the job learning especially for workers entering the labour market for the first time.

The intention of this legislation is to facilitate a space for employees to take leading positions in their organisations; to redesign the workspace so that it caters for those who in the past suffered from unfair discrimination and to correct the wrongs by providing training and education; and to ensure the highest standard of education and training in and for the workspace. Additionally, the Act contributes to the economy by assisting those who are out of employment for example through retrenchment to get back to the workspace, facilitates the job matching of employers with potential employees based on their skills, and it controls and oversees the matters which relate to employment. Penceliah, Noel and Adat (2015) mentioned that a worker needs to be supported in the development of their skills base to achieve their obligations through effective and efficient training programmes. They argue that this goes a long way in helping a worker gain courage and determination in their work performance.

This research assesses customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in Eskom KwaZulu-Natal. Included in this chapter are the background of the study, the problem statement, purpose, objectives, questions, major contributions, and the scope of the study, together with the dissertation structure. O'Sullivan (2010) wrote that service excellence can be seen by checking the level (and consistency) in which the expectations are met or exceeded. Excellence is one way in which the business can grow, get more clients, and generate more profits.

## **1.2 Research problem**

The Eskom Academy of Learning Customer Service Survey, which was conducted in 2016, produced results showing areas requiring improvement to offer excellent customer service. Findings from that survey indicated that EAL KZN needed to improve on turnaround time to deliver on training requested, to be customer focused and improve its performance, and to treat all trainees in Eskom KZN equally. Hamouche and Chabani (2021) emphasized that HRD (Human Resource Development) practitioners must assess the standard, the prevalence, and the form of communication (formal vs. informal; face-to-face vs. virtual) as well as synergy between permanent and non-permanent employees, and to discover areas of improvement, to optimize dissemination of information within the organization.

The Eskom Academy of Learning customer service survey identified gaps within EAL KZN which are thus explored in this study. Concerning the backdrop of that survey, it became imperative for the researcher in the case of this study to assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by EAL KZN for continuous improvement. Meyer (2016) describes learning evaluation as a continuous process to assess the quality of the learning interventions and experience before, during and after the learning intervention. This is to determine if a learner is able to apply knowledge and skills acquired after training and to assess if there is a change in behaviour against specified outcomes/outputs.

This particular conceptualisation by Meyer (2016) captures the essence of the Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN which exists to reduce the Eskom skills and training gap and to empower workers to perform and meet Eskom objectives with excellence.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

This research intends to assess the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning with a particular focus on Eskom in KwaZulu-Natal.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study**

Within the confines of this purpose and the above-mentioned knowledge gap, the following objectives were conceived to guide the study.



- To assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN. Customers for the purposes of this research are the Eskom employees who undergo the training delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.
- To identify areas of improvement within Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.
- To recommend practical strategies in enhancing customer service in the Eskom Academy of Learning KZN.

### **1.5 Questions**

- Are customers satisfied with the service delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN?
- What are the areas of improvement within Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN?
- Which strategies can enhance customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning KZN?

### **1.6 Contributions of the study**

This study will contribute towards improving the effectiveness of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN in achieving its main objective. The main objective of Eskom Academy of Learning is to close the competency gap within Eskom and to equip employees with the knowledge as well as skills they need to achieve the organisation's strategic goals. To do so, the study not only highlights the strengths and weaknesses of Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN, but also highlights opportunities and areas of improvement through emphasised scrutiny of the area of customer service.

Because Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN equips employees so they can be effective in their respective work roles, the study will also contribute towards the achievement of Eskom's strategic goals.

Well-trained employees have the potential to raise the portfolio of Eskom to a higher level, and this study, through its direct impact on Eskom Academy of Learning, will contribute towards that. The goal is for the development as well as implementation of the necessary interventions to boost the effectiveness of Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.

## **1.7 Scope of the study**

As is implied by the topic, the research study was limited only to Eskom KwaZulu-Natal; hence other regions were not included.

Because the study followed a cross-sectional design and was conducted in the form of a case study, time, cost, and location constraints did not permit the inclusion of other regions.

## **1.8 Dissertation structure**

This research report comprises six chapters as follows:

### **Chapter one – introduction**

This introductory chapter has provided the justification for the study by describing the research problem and purpose of the study, its objectives, questions and scope and its contribution. After this outline of the dissertation's structure, the introduction will go on to provide the background to the study: a brief background of Eskom, Eskom's mandate, vision, mission and values, Eskom's life-saving rules, and a brief background of Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN, its structure, accreditation achievements, customer base and mandate.

### **Chapter two – literature review**

This chapter gives an overview as well as an evaluation of current literature on the study's subject area. It includes insight on the critical role of learning and development, the importance of evaluation, evaluating customer satisfaction, successful training evaluation, training evaluation models and training evaluation techniques.

### **Chapter three – research methodology**

The methodological process that was followed to evaluate the aim and objectives of the study is systematically conveyed in this chapter. Included in this chapter are research methods used, sampling, data collection, information on data analysis, reliability, validity, limitations, challenges, shortcomings, and the ethical considerations of the study.

### **Chapter four – data analysis and presentation**

The chapter highlights how both quantitative and qualitative results were analysed and presents the results. Overall summary of survey was that the customers were happy and highly satisfied with the performance of Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.

## **Chapter five – discussion of findings**

Through the discussion, relevance and meaning is given to the results. This chapter also discusses areas of improvement as well as strategies for improvement. In this chapter, results are linked with the research problem and the reviewed literature. The areas of improvement were the following: lack of information required from EAL, lack of proactive approach to training, inability to implement some training programmes and inability to adapt to new developments in the business. Strategies for improvement were the following: being aware of business training needs through IDP's (Individual development plans), proactive planning of training interventions and fostering a culture of customer satisfaction surveys.

## **Chapter six – conclusion and recommendations**

This is the concluding chapter of this research report, and it includes the researcher's concluding remarks and recommendations for future studies.

### **1.9 Background of the study**

#### **1.9.1 Brief background of Eskom**

The generation capacity of Eskom ranks among the highest utilities worldwide (2012: 41 706 MW). Nationally, it generates at least 95% of the electricity used within the country. There is a 40% footprint in the African continent – with more than 83% of households having access to electricity in South Africa. It runs 27 power stations of which 85% of the capacity is coal-fired, with the balance composed of a mix of nuclear, open-cycle gas turbine, hydro and pumped storage plants. Eskom has a substantial number of kilometres of power lines and cables, (Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd 2017b:7).

#### **1.9.2 Brief background of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN**

Khuzwayo (2012) documented the history of the Eskom Academy of Learning in KwaZulu Natal. In the late 1980's, the Technical and other developmental

functions of Eskom were situated under one roof. In 1992 the split into technical training and non-technical training occurred.

In the mid-1990's, Customer Service and ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) development functions were created. In July 2001, the Technical, Customer Service, ABET, and Non-Technical components were placed under one roof once again, with one manager.

This created the challenge of integrating the functions. In 2007 and 2008, ETD (Education, Training and Development) expanded to cover HRD (Human Resource Development).

Eskom Distribution in KZN has two training centres, namely Mkondeni Training Centre and Mersey Training Centre. In 2009, the Mkondeni Training Centre was expanded to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of apprentices. The training centre can now accommodate 70 to 120 apprentices at any given time. This has ensured, and will continue to ensure, that the training centre produces the quality artisans the business and the country so desperately need.

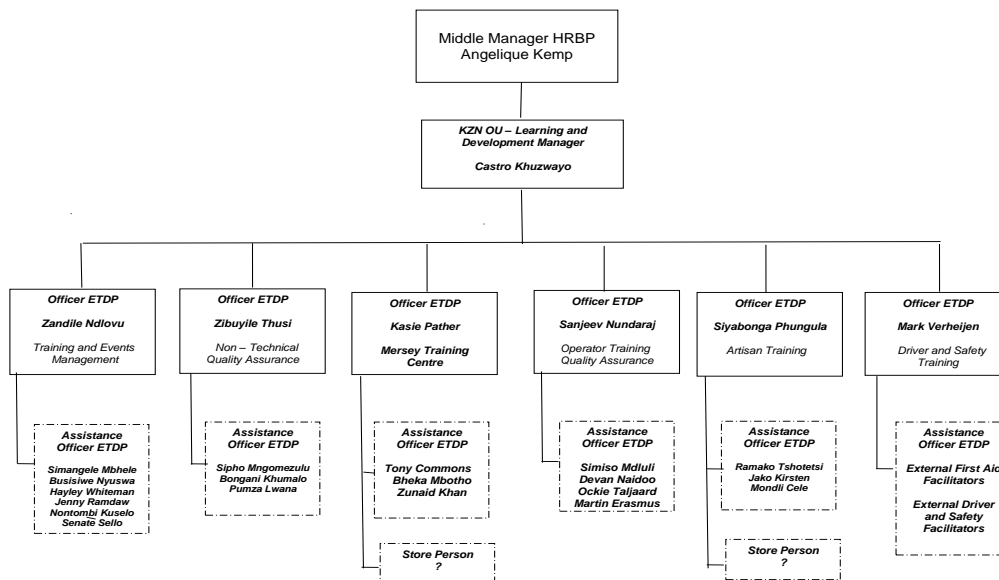
At the same time Mersey Training Centre was being renovated and was officially opened in 2011. Mersey caters for Operations and Maintenance department and Major Engineering Works training needs and provides on-site accommodation.

Eskom Academy of Learning KZN now has a customer base of more than 3000 people, catering for a variety of needs from Supervisory Development to High Voltage Regulations.

EAL KZN cater for all the needs of the Eskom family, and, if unable to provide the training requested, it is sourced for customers.

### 1.9.3 EAL operational structure – central east cluster

Khuzwayo (2021: 5) confirmed the Eskom Academy of Learning operational structure to be as follows:



**Figure 2.1: EAL operational structure – central east cluster**

Figure 2.3, reproduced above, indicates the Eskom Academy of Learning structure which consists of Manager, Supervisors, Facilitators, Assessors, Moderators, Coaches, Mentors and Administrators. EAL has the following portfolios that executes employees training needs:

- Safety (Occupational Health and Safety) and Driver Training Portfolio
- Artisan/Apprenticeship Training Portfolio
- High Voltage Operator and Specialised Training Portfolio
- Medium and Lower Voltage Line Construction Training Portfolio
- Customer Services and Non-Technical Training Portfolio
- Training and Events Management Portfolio.

### 1.9.4 Eskom Academy of Learning KZN customer base

Mpumulwana (2015) refers to customers as people who need assistance. They are not an interruption to one's job; they are the reason one has a job.

Eskom Academy of Learning KZN delivers training to approximately 2432 employees based in KZN. Eskom employees are customers to EAL. EAL customer base covers employees from Distribution, Generation, Transmission divisions to mention a few. KZN is divided into three zones, namely Pietermaritzburg zone, Newcastle zone and Empangeni zone.

#### **1.9.5 Eskom Academy of Learning mandate**

The mandate of the Eskom Academy of Learning's to reduce the skills and training within Eskom to create a highly skilled organisation and empower guardians to deliver their outputs confidently and effectively. This in turn assists Eskom in sustainably delivering on its strategic objectives now and into the future (Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd 2017b:16).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section engages with theoretical framework and various literatures which have been published in the field of human resource management and customer Satisfaction. In addition, this chapter highlights various concepts relevant to the research. The definition of learning and development and customer satisfaction, as seen by various authors, are discussed.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework and systems theory in relation to human resource management**

Kumar *et al.* (2020) recorded that sustainable human resource management will enable organisations to balance conflicting expectations from different stakeholders such as employees, vendors, customers, shareholders, government, and communities by ensuring that they create a positive impact on organisational, environmental, and financial performance. Furthermore, sustainable human resource management benefits can be measured by evaluating organisational, social, individual, and ecological performance. Measures would need to evaluate outcomes such as quality of the employment relationship, health, and wellbeing of the workforce, employee productivity, quality of relationships at work, potential employer, being recognised among a range of potential sources of labour (social), job satisfaction, employee motivation, work-life balance (individual) and use of resources. It is evident that Eskom Academy of Learning KZN adopts the above theory and concept and conducts customer satisfaction surveys with the aim to improve and enhance their service delivery.

Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) in the Journal titled: Conceptual framework on the relationship between human resource management practices (supervision, job training, and pay practices), job satisfaction and turnover, recorded that even in the best of times, organisations must decide how much to invest in on-the-job training, balancing the benefits of increased productivity against the cost of training.

On the other hand, the employees must retain the high performance of work to show their quality of work otherwise will lose their work. Along the same line, the relationship between pay practice and job satisfaction is useful to influence motivation of employees and achieve higher productivity.

Harney, B. (2019) in his publication: Systems theory: forgotten legacy and future prospects, recorded that systems theory has long informed theoretical developments in employment relations and human resource management. The following concepts were covered in his publication:

### **Systems theory: key purpose and characteristics**

Human resource management should not be viewed as a once-off structural intervention, but as an ongoing process concerned with balancing emerging contradictions of the employment relationship (Harney 2019).

### **Evolution and imprint of systems theory in employment relations and human resource management**

The realities of workplace relations could not be simply read off a set of rules or policies, nor could they be understood in isolation from either the macro-organisational context or internal micro-politics. Overall, it is evident that the evolutions of human resource management are likewise characterised by a reference to system-based logic, albeit in a more selective and normative manner (Harney 2019).

### **Systems theory: application and value**

Harney, B. (2019) further records it can be argued that direct empirical application of systems theory is noticeable for its absence in human resource management and employment relations. By contrast, much conceptual work has provided models and frameworks very much in keeping with systems theory. Change and the dynamics of re-organising are rarely considered, especially in human resource management, or limited to narrow one-off occurrences, disrupting the stability which is assumed as possible and normal.



## **Systems theory: problems and pitfalls**

There are several factors that have hindered the application of systems theory in human resources and employment relations. Some of these relate to trends in research and others to the inherent characteristic of systems logic (Harney 2019).

## **System theory: prospects and potential**

A systems approach offers potential value as it moves away from more reductionist analysis towards a concern with holism and contextualism. This potential is reflected in the rise of work drawing on ecosystems' logic. Additionally, a further prospect stemming from system logic is that it does not presuppose the existence of a particular form of human resource management or employment relations, nor assume the nature of its impact as a predetermined given. Instead, by merely sensitizing analysis to key determinants, analysis can be open to evidence of how things happen in practice (Harney 2019).

## **2.3 Literature review on learning and development**

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2017), learning and development (L&D) is defined as the system of making sure that an organisation has a team of workers with the appropriate knowledge or know-how and diligent workers it needs, and that the workers have the opportunity to develop their skills and maximise their capacities. Jehanzeb (2022) also confirms that skills development assists workers to acquire innovative skills and contributes to the development of the workforce in general.

In turn, this would present the workers with critical training programs facilitating the success of the organisation. This is in line with the human capital theory which argues that giving workers training and skills helps them improve their performance. This definition captures the crux of the critical role of learning and development in all organisations. In Eskom in particular, Armstrong and Taylor's (2017) definition underpins the primary goal behind the establishment of Eskom Academy of Learning, as a driving force to ensure that there is a knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged workforce. It is imperative to note that learning and development forms a crucial part of an organisation's learning strategies. Such strategies facilitate the organisational betterment and efficiency.

This is done by acquiring and developing awareness, knowledge, methods understanding, and practices. This is aligned with the basic principles of human resource management, which is investment in people. This is beneficial to the human capital required by the organisation as part of its stock of knowledge and skills (Armstrong and Taylor 2017). This goal is part of Eskom's strategic plan, thus the existence of the Eskom Academy of Learning.

Ho, Kuo, and Kuo (2014: 158-174) argue that, for training centres to be successful in the market, customer satisfaction is of utmost importance as this will contribute towards positive learning experiences. "Employees who are properly trained and demonstrate professional customer service skills can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. This helps the business retain customers and improve image", writes Raphoto (2015: 7).

Additionally, Lovell (2012), in his MBA thesis, found that globalization and technology are the driving force to upskill, reskill and multi-skill employees to remain relevant in business.

Therefore, Armstrong and Taylor (2017) emphasise the importance of investment in learning and development through provision of a conducive environment which is inclusive of ample opportunities, learning infrastructure and the relevant physical environment. Eventually the learning responsibility lies with individual workers, who are provided with the guidance and support by their seniors and the human resource department. The critical role of trainees in being part of their own success is crucial; it is a point that is continuously stressed in research.

In agreement with Lovell (2012), Ahuja and Singh (2020) wrote an article that studied the important factors regarding trainers which affect the effectiveness of training. The study was conducted by collecting responses through interviews using a structured questionnaire format. Feedback of the employees was taken on a five-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

In many ways, the study echoed the sentiments raised by Armstrong and Taylor (2017) concerning the role of learners and those who should provide them with adequate support for success.

Support is a vital aspect of the entire process, which is why Smith (2018) states that there are seven key factors for learning program success, which are:

- Higher level structure counsel
- Effective and efficient marketing and communication
- Facilitating a dynamic management style
- Aligning training program and business objectives
- Developing a broad vision and specific goals
- Creating relationships and partnership

Jehanzeb (2022: 922-944) agreed that managers must be vigilant in implementing strategic training plans. Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009: 255-270) also confirmed that the planning of the training program is very important for its total success and therefore for training transfer at work.

The goals and the extent of training, the training methods and means, as well as the training place and equipment, are important factors related to training program planning.

Hamouche and Chabani (2021: 366-379), in a study titled “Covid-19 and the new forms of employment relationship: implications and insights for Human Resource Development”, argued that some organizations may decide not to invest in the training and development of atypical workers because they prefer implementing flexible work practices instead of standardized work arrangements, or hiring contractual workers.

Aruldoss *et al.* (2022) posited that training and development assist workers attain satisfaction in their performance. Henceforth, training and development encourages workers' determination and results in job satisfaction.

In the context of this study, Armstrong, and Taylor (2017) acknowledge that the burden also rests with employees to learn and develop, with the guidance of the necessary stakeholders. Despite this, a critical point of inquiry still exists when it comes to understanding learning and development outcomes and effectiveness, which is why there is need for evaluation.

Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009: 255-270) confirm that, when the trainee has a vested personal interest in a training program, it is possible that the person will do anything she or he can to do well during the training to acquire the knowledge and skills she or he values. Furthermore, when the person has set work or career goals she or he wants to achieve through training, it is more probable she or he will transfer the training to work.

For this reason, Pangarkar (2018) posits that effective training is more than delivering content. It is about how well participants can perform the skills they receive from training. Hence assessing and evaluating training received is crucial.

## **2.4 The importance of evaluation**

Craig and Kohl (2014) caution that evaluating training must not be a tick box exercise as it is most of the time to get it finished. Feedback must be analysed and used to improve the service to customers.

Evaluation is a continuous process to assess the impact and quality of the learning experience, application of knowledge and skills, and changes in behaviour against a specified outcome or output (Meyer 2016). According to Armstrong and Taylor (2017) it is important to evaluate learning to assess its effectiveness in producing the outcomes specified when the activity was planned.

Eskom Academy of Learning KZN aligns to the statements above and executes its duties using the process outlined below of managing learning delivery.

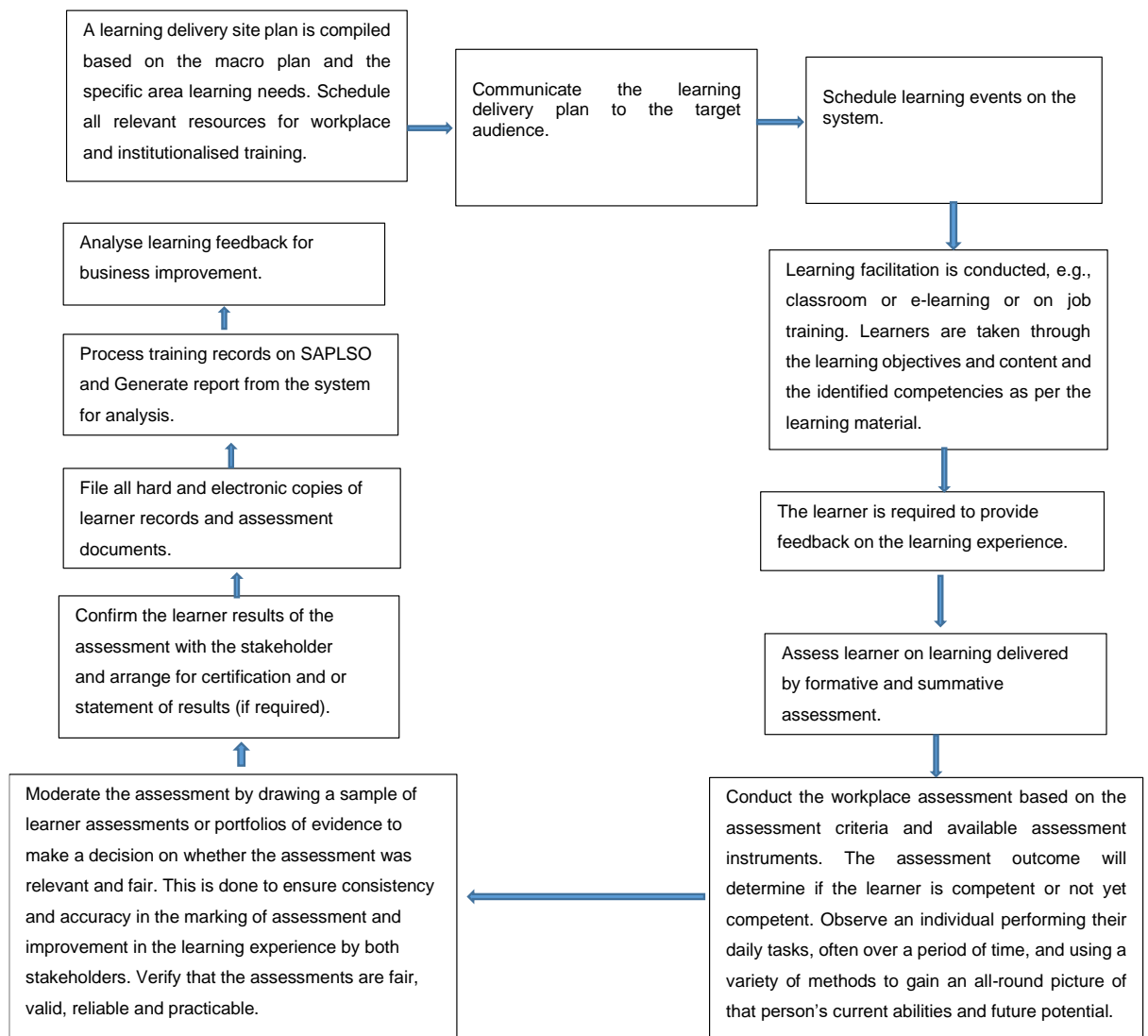


Figure 2.2: Manage Learning Delivery PCM (Process Control Manual)

Eskom Academy of Learning conducts customer engagements where employees are informed of products and services offered by EAL. In these engagements, employees are encouraged to have an approved IDP (individual development plan) which will enable them to submit their training needs to EAL in a course application form, for further execution. EAL will then use the abovementioned process to deliver employee training needs from end to end.

Mishra (2018) emphasised that there is a need for organisations and managers to understand, plan for, and critically evaluate training. Evaluation can indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective.

Evaluation is the integral feature of learning activities. It is the comparison of objectives with outcomes to answer the question of how far the event has achieved its purpose. Evaluation provides guidance on what needs to be done to ensure that learning activities are effective.

Additionally, Charoensap-Kelly *et al.* (2015) wrote that, with evaluation, soft skills training programs yield positive results even within and amongst the employees themselves. It improves internal communication within the organisation and understanding of different cultures and personal lifestyles amongst employees; thus, managers can measure the effectiveness of the training programme.

The importance of evaluating training programs which form part of the ADDIE (analyse, develop, design, implement and evaluate) process is thus emphasised in this study. Evaluation does not end with evaluating a program and all other important aspects, but goes beyond classroom, which is to evaluate whether trainees can apply knowledge gained from training. As Brimstin and Hester (2015) put it, was there a return on investment or return on expectations.

This view is further explained by Warnich *et al.* (2015), who highlight that even when training and development is finished in the classroom, it has not run its full cycle. Training and development objectives define the performance gap between actual and desired performance and may be used to measure training and development success. Businesses can save on wasteful expenditures on training and offer what is relevant to the needs of the business through willing, capable, positive, and determined employees (Kunche *et al.* 2011).

Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009: 255-270) note that, with high investment in and allocation of resources to training, the need to justify training effectiveness and to document that employees can transfer and use the skills learned to their work environment has accelerated. Therefore, what counts in every training program is whether the participants can transfer and apply the skills they learn to their work.

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2017), organisations need people with high and appropriate levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Steps taken to meet this need are business-led in the sense that they are based on an understanding of the strategic imperatives of the business and support the achievement of its goals.

Erasmus *et al.* (2010) confirm that organisations spend enormous budgets in developing their employees to have necessary skills and competencies for business and to perform at their best, as well as to exceed goals and objectives. Program evaluation is therefore critical to determine if there is, for example, an increase in productivity and sales compared to the cost of training. On that trajectory, Amos *et al.* (2016) emphasizes that, while embarking on evaluating the effectiveness of the course is important, businesses should note that the impact of training and development is often longer term rather than a quick fix. Other newly learned principles must be implemented and entrenched as positive personal habits over time.

Phillips (2011) proposes a critical question which service providers must examine: is there a return on investment in learning programs companies offer, as billions of rands are spent as budgets for each financial year. That calls for a need to evaluate if training received was beneficial to the organisation and yielded positive company results and increases in productivity and profitability.

It is important to note, as stated by Gordon-Davis (2009), that when conducting learning effectiveness evaluations, it is important to have proper planning in order to get comprehensive and constructive feedback. The following are advantages of conducting course effectiveness evaluations as stated by Phillips (2011):

- It makes good economic sense.
- It increases accountability.
- It is an important trend.
- It leads to increased scrutiny of HRD budgets.
- There is pressure from the top management to make a contribution.
- There is peer pressure from HRD professionals.
- It leads to self-satisfaction.
- It facilitates workers to evaluate their performance.
- It develops motivation by showing enthusiasm interest in staff development.
- Determines return-on-investment.
- Determines opportunities for future training needs.
- Identifies the effectiveness of various kinds of teaching and it also helps to mitigate the HRD risks.

Griffin (2012) argued that although there is a lot of money which is invested in learning and training of workers, the evaluation programmes are not as famous. Some of the reasons for such includes the lack of supportive organisational environment and a lack of effective measurement instruments. There is a tendency to miss the critical departure point, which are the needs of workers or practitioners.

Shenge (2014) highlights that evaluation of training programs is necessary and beneficial for successful management of organisations. When training and learning development is effective, it corrects employee and organisational deficiencies. Additionally, O'Sullivan (2010) confirmed that a business should ensure that there is an open channel for communication and feedback from clients. Management cannot make the changes that are necessary to address the client's needs and problems if it is not aware of such needs and problems.

#### **2.4.1 Lessons from previous studies**

There are numerous studies that support the stance taken in this research to evaluate the training that is provided by Eskom through EAL. For instance, Griffin (2010), in a paper reviewing the state of training evaluation in the workplace, presented barriers preventing wide scale and effective evaluation because other organisations ignore such and regard it as wasting time and money. His findings include discovering that a limited number of organisations go through a review process of the changes on an individuals or teams. Organisations put less emphasis on training and development and measuring training is less of their worry. This particular study highlighted the need to evaluate training programmes. It showed how the lack of a proactive approach in understanding the impact and outcomes of training initiatives could have disastrous consequences in the area of human capital, which is an organisation's largest asset.

Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009: 255-270) conducted in-depth personal interviews that were conducted to find out the perceptions of those trained regarding the level to which training transferred to everyday performance. The response from one participant stated that knowledge becomes obsolete as time passes, and hence knowledge refreshment was needed.



Another participant mentioned that training was purely for personal growth; it has nothing to do with the job.

Further, Scaduto, Linsday and Chiaburu (2008) conducted an employee survey of 495 trainees. The findings stated that it is important for leaders and management to buy into the concept of training, development, and evaluations. These yield a positive return for the performance of the organisation, as well as motivating employees to excel in their work functions (Scaduto, Linsday and Chiaburu 2008).

Farjad (2012), in his case study about the effectiveness of evaluation of training courses at the university using the Kirkpatrick model, shows that effectiveness of training courses is below standard level. It also shows that data gathered about effectiveness of evaluation indicated that reaction, learning behaviour and organisational levels need to be improved. The study showed that the effectiveness of evaluation in the subject centre needed to be improved through implementation of optimising training design, redefining training roles, providing enough budget, management commitment, attention to individual, job and organizational needs and motivation mechanism, and use of ongoing and summative evaluation. Feedback after training evaluations must not be left unattended but programs must be edited and improved for the better. In other areas, the wheel will have to be reinvented for the benefit of meeting customer needs and expectations.

Additionally, Sahni (2020) undertook a study to investigate the effectiveness of a managerial time management training with the help of the Kirkpatrick framework. Two sets of questionnaires were filled by the trainees: the first one assessed the training satisfaction and the second measured the learning of trainees immediately after completing the training. The findings suggest a high level of training effectiveness at both levels, satisfaction, and learning. The training success was associated with four factors: practical orientation, training environment, role of trainer, and training usefulness. The study further shows that participants' responses to the survey questions depicted a heightened awareness and knowledge about the different techniques to manage time well.

The experience-sharing and interactive sessions were rated as most useful because they shared the real-life cases and taught how to solve the problems in the field. Most importantly, the study highlights and confirms that insight on training programmes can only be gained through evaluation.

In the study that Nawangwulan *et al.* (2020) conducted, which aimed to describe the conceptual model of effective communication and collaboration training evaluation to improve the performance of employees in the national nuclear energy agency, the following process was formulated.

Development of evaluation in this model was divided in three stages, which were planning, implementation, and evaluation. At the planning stage, there was need identification, determination of training materials, time and place of implementation, determination of resources (facilitator and training participants). At the implementation stage, four levels were developed, namely the reaction level, learning level, behaviour level, and result level. Finally, in the evaluation stage, there were assessments based on effective communication and collaboration indicators that were packaged into pre-test and post-test and showed effective results in improving the performance of training participants. De Klerk (2020: 15-20) recorded that the architecture of the Eskom Management Development Programme for Supervisors, Middle Managers and Senior Managers includes the learner post-training assessment determining the business impact after three months of completing formal training.

Joseph (2020), in a fact sheet of the South African Board of People Practice (SAMPP), wrote about the “Role of algorithms, automation and artificial intelligence in human resources management”. Part of the recruitment process flow chart is that, after an employee has been selected and appointed, training needs analysis must be done, training for the employee must be planned and conducted, the training outcome is to be evaluated, performance must be monitored, and then it should be determined if skill has been achieved or not.

This is in support of this study I'm undertaking. (See complete flow chart below in Figure 2.3).

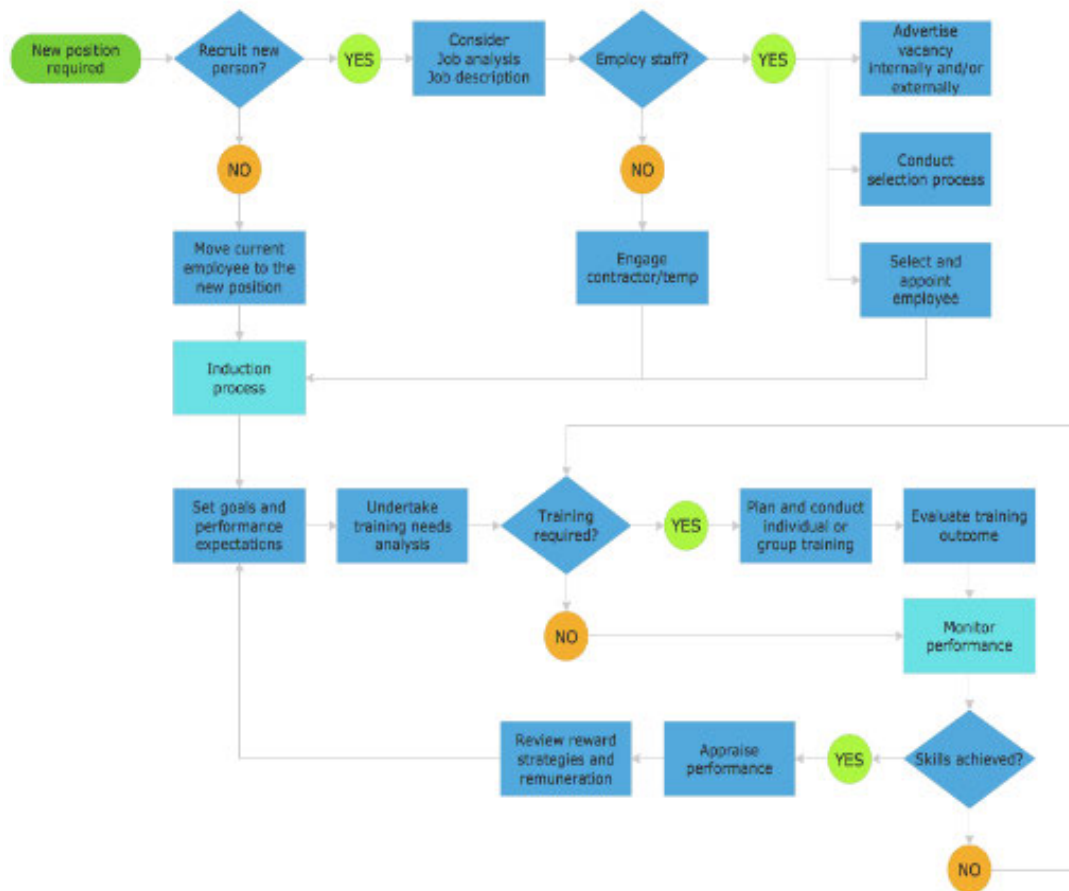


Figure 2.3: Recruitment Process Flow Chart (Joseph 2020)

Pineda (2010) records that training is a key strategy for human resource development and in achieving organisational objectives. Organisations and public authorities invest large resources in training, but rarely have the data to show the results of that investment. Only a few organisations evaluate training in depth due to the difficulty involved and the lack of valid instruments and viable models.

Findings of the study Pineda (2010) conducted, titled “Evaluation of training in organisations: a proposal for an integrated model”, confirmed that an analysis of pedagogical aspects enables training professionals to improve training quality as they can identify any weaknesses in elements such as training design, needs analysis and training implementation.

### **2.4.2 Possible challenges for organisations**

Meyer (2016) records that it is concerning that most of the learning programmes in South Africa were found to be ineffective, as documented in the Deloitte Human Capital Trends Report 2016; hence the need to evaluate HRD programmes. Offering ineffective training programs contributes negatively to the business as it is a waste of time, money, and effort. Kodwani and Kodwani (2021: 321-337), however, believed that organizations invest a substantial amount of money on hiring qualified and skilled trainers to design and deliver training programs effectively.

O'Sullivan (2010), on the other hand, mentions factors within the work situation that are obstacles ("roadblocks"), and which cause so much negative energy that they affect the ability to deliver what is intended. These factors could be any of the following: untrained staff, staff shortages, the computer systems and support systems being used, red tape and the processes being applied, low staff morale, union problems and unsatisfactory working conditions.

Berge (2008) argues that training sometimes lacks planning, sponsorship and budget, or training is done for the wrong reasons. Evaluation of training is also difficult because operating unit managers are looking for increased performance and not necessarily the increased learning by which trainers usually judge the success of their training. He ends with note to say that there need to be simple ways to evaluate and measure effectiveness of training; at the moment, methods used are not easy to use.

In Eskom KZN individual learner progress is tracked by using the micro plan in the form of a learner logbook where formative and summative assessments are recorded during knowledge and practical training.

EAL also visits Eskom Customer Network Centres and cater for overseeing the coaching and mentoring aspects of workplace learning (Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, learning matters: 2019: 25).

The challenges that arise with the need to evaluate training programmes are numerous, and thus important information such as data, time for participant and supervisor, cost of collecting data, accuracy including validity and reliability of the instrument used to collect data, usefulness of data collected by additional techniques, and the culture and philosophy of the organisation is critical to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of training. Phillips and Phillips (2016) also mention the ability to ask tough questions and embrace tough answers as part of the evaluation process.

## **2.5 Evaluating customer satisfaction**

It is difficult to measure customer satisfaction because trainees are at liberty to be involved or not be involved in the evaluation process (Phillips 2011). Learning programmes must be evaluated and failure to do so could lead to service providers offering irrelevant training which will not be able to satisfy employee training needs or offer a delightful experience to trainees.

O'Sullivan (2010) posed the question: how is service actually measured? There are several options. In the main, it is all about asking and listening to the client.

This is achieved by asking the client politely and directly for feedback, through surveys or questionnaires and by means of market or consulting research.

Khan (2022: 9) records that Eskom Academy of Learning processed 80 learner-feedback forms for the month of July 2022.

Below is the summary of the report.

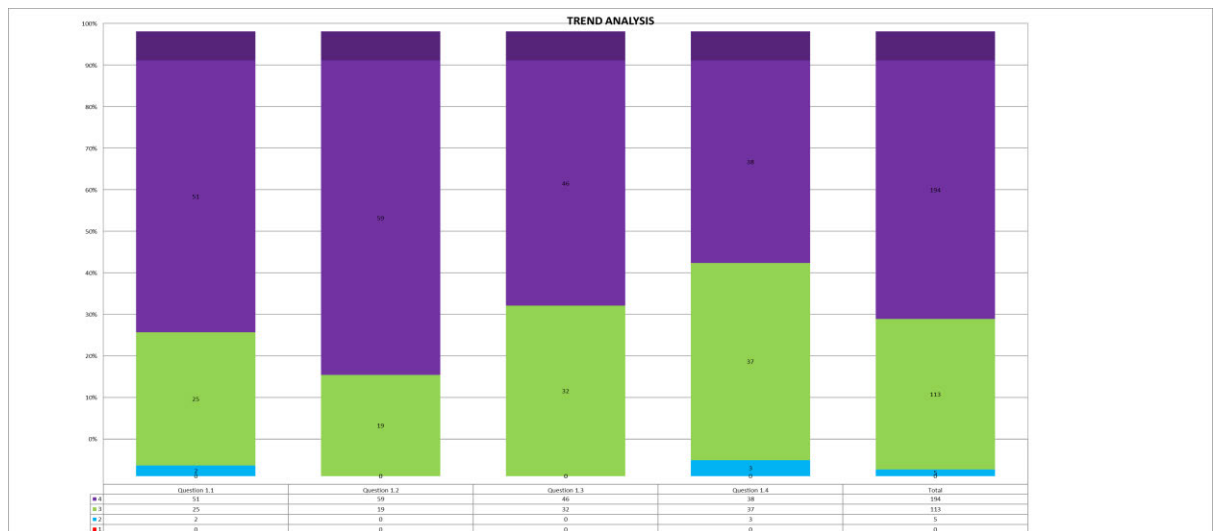


Figure 2.4: Summary of report on EAL learner feedback forms for July 2022. Key: Blue – Poor, Green – good, Purple – excellent and Red – need improvement.

Summary report: 98% Learner satisfaction was achieved (good and excellent ratings) and 2% was non-satisfaction (poor and need improvement ratings).

## 2.6 Chapter summary

This chapter intended to provide a literature to underpin this study, by establishing how the current study is situated within the wider body of knowledge on the subject area. In the next chapter, the methodological process that guided the research is presented.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed description of the methodological process that was followed to conduct the study. The objective of this research study was to assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN, identify areas of improvement within EAL and recommend practicable strategies for enhancing customer service in EAL. A mixed-method research design was used to meet this objective, combining a quantitative survey with qualitative interviews. This chapter justifies a key decision to adapt an initially purely quantitative design to become a mixed-methods study. The chapter also highlights the experiences of the researcher throughout the research process. Important methodological research stages that are discussed in this chapter include the research design, the type of research, sampling, and data collection (a systemic random sample for the quantitative survey, and purposive sampling for the qualitative interviews), as well as analysis. The chapter further includes details on how the researcher safeguarded both the reliability and the validity of the study, together with an analysis of ethical issues and limitations that were encountered in various stages of the research process.

#### **3.2 Research methodology**

The research methodology is the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project (Leedy and Ormrod 2014). The methodological approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects and makes use of in completing a research study (Leedy and Ormrod 2014). While the research methodology dictates how a study will be conducted, determining which methodology to use is premised on the objectives of the study, together with the subject being investigated.

To select the appropriate methodology for the study, initially, due consideration was given to the aim of the study, which called for assessing customer satisfaction from the services delivered by EAL.

The aim and objectives of the study led to the selection of the quantitative line of inquiry, which is statistically inclined and relies solely on the reliable, as well as accurate measurement of variables (Queirós, Faria and Almeida 2017). A survey was selected as the appropriate method.

However, data collection coincided with the mandatory level 3 Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa. Consequently, some individuals who were part of the target population to whom the survey had been sent were working at home and did not have the necessary technological resources, such as computers and internet access, to complete the survey; hence the low number of responses received at the inception of the survey. Hamouche and Chabani (2021: 366-379) noted that the digitalization model should be upgraded to facilitate interaction between employees, and to redesign employee engagement plans. To meet this challenge, HRD professionals would benefit from grappling with information and communication technologies and from focusing on creativity and innovation by going beyond the traditional stream of HRD.

The researcher was therefore left without adequate data to produce results within reasonable parameters for confidence levels and margins of error. For that reason, the researcher was compelled to adjust both the methodology and the study design to include qualitative methods in order to obtain more valuable information about the survey. Qualitative research allows for the collection of data which is non-numerical and is critical in understanding opinions and experiences (Queirós, Faria and Almeida 2017); hence this kind of exploration was deemed suitable to complement the quantitative data that had been collected to gain in-depth insight into EAL customer satisfaction. When data gathering was completed, the researcher had received responses to the quantitative survey from 70 participants out of 185 invitations that were sent out to target population.

### **3.2.1 Study type**

A mixed methodology, which combined both quantitative and qualitative components, was used. Such research involves not only collecting, analysing, and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data but also integrating conclusions from that data into a cohesive whole.



Leedy and Ormrod (2014) note that some research problems practically demand both qualitative and quantitative data. Almeida (2018) indicates that mixed methods research is not only able to provide broader, holistic results, but it also overcomes the fundamental limitations of using either the qualitative or quantitative method alone. Mixing both research methods yielded positive results for the researcher. To begin with, incorporating qualitative results allowed the researcher to assess possible contradictions in the different sets of results. Interviews conducted for qualitative research allowed participants to respond fully to questions without choosing relevant responses on a one-to-five Likert scale, which restricts the way one receives feedback when using a quantitative approach. In qualitative research survey the researcher had the opportunity to engage the participants and give examples to support their responses. The greatest boost that was given to this study by incorporating qualitative data was a voice was given to the respondents and they were able to give in-depth explanations of the responses that had been recorded in the questionnaires. The experience in this study as is indicated in the next chapter was that qualitative results complemented the quantitative data.

### **3.2.2 Research design**

The crux of a mixed-methods study is in combining the two methodological traditions into a research endeavour in which all aspects substantially contribute to a single, greater whole. In other words, a good mixed-methods study is one that effectively and convincingly “hangs together”. Effectively achieving this is contingent on utilising the appropriate mixed-methods research design. A research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. A research design should provide a plan that specifies how the research is going to be executed in such a way that it answers the research questions (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006).

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was used to conduct this study. This is a two-phase design in which quantitative data was collected first, followed by the collection of qualitative data to complement it (McCrudden and McTigue 2019).

When using the sequential explanatory research design, quantitative results are used to paint a general picture of the problem, while the purpose of the qualitative results is to extend this picture and give necessary explanations (Maleku *et al.* 2021). This mixed methods design was best suited for this study because quantitative data had already been collected. A second qualitative phase of data collection was thus incorporated to extend the researcher's view of the research problem, thus allowing for the fulfilment of the aim as well as the objectives of the study. The comprehensive data analysis in Chapter Four shares how objectives of the survey were met.

### **3.3 Sampling**

#### **3.3.1 Population of the study**

According to Maree (2009), every study that is conducted has both a general population and a target population.

##### **General population**

After delimiting a study and properly determining the location of the study, the entire population or group of people included within that framework are regarded as the general population (Maree 2009).

Raphoto (2015) records that when we recognise and treat our co-workers, supervisors, and managers as customers, we automatically increase our professionalism towards them. Because this study was mainly focused on Eskom employees and management, all individuals employed within this capacity were therefore part of the general population. The challenge with the general population is that it is, in most instances, too vast, as was the case in this study, and thus a sub-set of this population group was necessary for a more focused, practical study. This sub-set population is therefore referred to as the target population.

##### **Target population**

The target population is a small segment of the general population from which study participants are then drawn (Maree 2009).

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) further suggest that not only are the sample elements drawn from the target population, but this is also the same population group to which research findings are generalised. For this reason, properly defining the target population is a crucial step in the design of the research project. Setting the proper target population parameters correctly makes one's study more scientifically rigorous. In this research study, the target population was 185 Eskom employees and five senior Eskom senior managers employed in KZN. Both male and female students employed within Task Grading T05-E band (these are job grades for different positions within Eskom) were part of the population. These are employees from different designations including Technical Officials, Assistant Technical Officials, Senior Technical Officials, Technicians, Engineers, Officers, Assistant officers, Administration staff, Senior Clerks, Secretary, Senior supervisors, and Managers, who were all included within the parameters of the target population. The age group representation of the target population was from 26 to over 56 years of age. The race of the target population was African, White, Indian, Coloured and Other. The target population encompassed the following Eskom divisions: Generation, Transmission, Distribution, Finance, Human Resources, Sustainability and Risk, Customer Services, Corporate Affairs, Commercial, SHEQS (Safety, Health, and Environment), Information Management, ERE (Eskom Real Estates) and Procurement.

### **3.3.2 Sampling techniques**

Once the process of determining the target population was complete, the next stage in the research process was sampling. The process of actually selecting participants from whom data will be collected from the target population is what is referred to as sampling (Acharya *et al.* 2013). A sample is therefore a subset that represents the target population (Leedy and Ormrod 2014). Since data collection was a two-step process because of the sequential explanatory research design, two different sampling techniques were used to satisfy the requirements of selecting participants for the quantitative and then the qualitative components of the study.

To select participants for the quantitative data the researcher used systematic random sampling, which is a probability sampling technique. "Probability samples are the gold standard in sampling methodology and for ensuring generalisability of the study results to the target population. By probability sampling, we mean everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected in the study", write Acharya *et al.* (2013: 330). Therefore, the researcher opted for systematic random sampling. This sampling technique afforded all members of the target population described above an equal chance to be selected for the study. To conduct systematic random sampling, the researcher was cognisant of the fact that, to have a random selection method, you must set up some process or procedure that assures that the different units in your population indeed have equal probabilities of being chosen (Trochim 2006). In quantitative research, it is believed that if this sample is chosen carefully using the correct procedure, it is then possible to generalise results to the whole of the research population (Dawson 2019). This was a major priority while sampling was being conducted for the quantitative component of the research study. A total of 185 trainees were sampled and 70 responded to the survey.

Systematic random sampling is conducted by selecting the first participant randomly and thereafter using a periodic process to select subsequent participants (Acharya *et al.* 2013: 330). To do this, training records from 2019 and 2020, which had names of trainees targeted for this study, were downloaded from the System Applications and Products Learning Solution (SAPLSO) used for data capturing and storage of training events in Eskom. From the list of trainees who attended different training courses during 2019 and 2020, the total number of the sampling frame was determined and thus divided by the number of participants required for the study. After doing this, the researcher was able to determine that choosing every 13th employee from the list would result in the number of people required to participate in the research by completing the research questionnaire (Annexure A). The total number of trainees for the 2019 and 2020 financial year was 2402; 185 trainees were sampled for survey, as already mentioned, and 70 trainees responded to the survey. In this way the researcher was able to reduce bias in the selection of participants, to attain more generalisable results.

During the second phase of sampling, the researcher used a non-probability sampling technique to select participants to provide qualitative data. Non-probability sampling relies heavily on the judgment of the researcher to determine the right study participants (Sharma 2017). In non-probability sampling, therefore, members of the target population do not have an equal chance of being selected for the study (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016). Qualitative researchers tend to use nonprobability or non-random samples. This means they rarely determine the sample size in advance (Sharma 2017). This was the case in this study: while the researcher was aware of the target population, there was no way of determining the required sample size. Qualitative research focuses mainly on depth of information and the researcher samples until reaching saturation or the level where information became repetitive. Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, was used to draw out participants from the target population during sampling. Purposive sampling was used to collect study participants, making use of the judgement of the researcher to select cases with specific criteria in mind (Alvi, 2016). There were therefore specific characteristics that were considered during the sampling process and each of the participants had to meet all of them. These characteristics included being part of the target population and being employed in a managerial capacity, along with gender because the researcher wanted to ensure equal gender representation. Five out of fourteen senior managers in Eskom KZN met the above characteristics and were selected for qualitative interviews.

### **3.3.3 Sample size and attributes**

Van Zyl (2014) writes that the type of research you do determines the type and size of sample you need. Two samples were collected for the study in line with the requirements of a mixed methodology. Below are the important characteristics of the quantitative and qualitative samples that provided data for the study. The quantitative sample was significantly larger than the qualitative sample, which is the norm in research.

### **Quantitative sample**

Invitations to participate in the quantitative research survey were sent by email to 185 Eskom trainees. After noticing a low response rate, the researcher decided to send reminders by email to the target population every week reminding the participants to complete the survey. The total number of participants who finally completed the survey was 70.

The sample consisted of 39 male participants and 31 female participants, whose ages ranged from 26 to above 56 years of age. The researcher was not only able to build a heterogeneous sample about gender and age, but also all the major race groups in South Africa were represented to varying degrees. Furthermore, participants who took part in the study represented a wide variety of task grading levels and divisions within Eskom KZN Province.

### **Qualitative sample**

Van Zyl (2014) writes that the type and size of sample you need will depend on the type of research you do. For example, if you are doing case-study descriptive research, which involves long, intense interviews and has limited generalisability (which is not one of the purposes of the method), you will need very few participants in your sample.

To fulfil the qualitative component of the study, interviews were successfully conducted with five senior managers from Eskom KZN. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews could not be conducted face to face. Thus, they were held virtually through the MS Teams platform used by Eskom to hold meetings. These were in-depth interviews which were quite intensive. Each interview took approximately an hour. All five interviews were conducted over a period of two months. Ethical considerations were also applied during these interviews; for example, the confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained. Confidentiality of responses and data collected were maintained; no individual identifiers will be made available, and no participant information was made public.

### **3.4 Data collection**

#### **3.4.1 Data collection instruments**

Two data collection instruments were developed for the study, to satisfy the requirements of the mixed-methods design.

#### **3.4.2 Quantitative instrument**

A questionnaire (Annexure A) was developed for the purpose of collecting quantitative data. According to Goddard and Melville (2001) a questionnaire is a printed list of questions that respondents are asked to answer. Goddard and Melville (2001) state further that it is easy to compile a questionnaire, but it is not easy to compile an effective one. Effectiveness requires planning beforehand to ensure that the data can be objectively analysed afterwards. The data survey questionnaire here was based on the Kirkpatrick model which was developed in 1976.

The questionnaire comprised of two sections: the first section required participants' demographic characteristics. This demographic data was important because it allowed the researcher to understand the composition of the study sample. Moreover, getting demographic information on age, gender, job position, division and task grading allowed the researcher to statistically assess if any of these variables played a role in participant experiences with EAL.

The researcher was able to also assess differences between men and women, different race groups, age groups, job positions, divisions, and task grading levels. All the results from the analysis are presented in the following chapter. The second section of the questionnaire contained an 18-item Likert scale, to assess participants' general impression of the Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.

The Likert scale contained number options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale included indicators such as attitude (reactions), learning, behaviour, and results.

### **3.4.3 Qualitative instrument**

In preparation for qualitative data collection, an interview guide (Annexure B) was prepared beforehand. This is a list of pre-determined structured and semi-structured questions that have the purpose of guiding the researcher during interviews. The interview questions were designed in a manner that would allow the responses to answer to the objectives of the study.

### **3.4.4 Pretesting**

Dawson (2019) is of the opinion that pretesting the research instrument is critical in ensuring the validity and reliability of the research results or findings. In keeping with the recommendations of Dawson (2019), the data collection instruments described in the section above were piloted after development. The pilot was conducted to ensure, before conducting the actual study, that the instruments would assess what they were meant to and yield the required data. To pilot the research instruments, the researcher first approached fellow Eskom colleagues who would not be involved in the research process to assess face validity and iron out possible ambiguities. Owing to the fact that quantitative data collection was conducted first, piloting the quantitative instrument was done with individuals whose characteristics were similar to those who would actually participate in the study (that is, Eskom employees who had attended training before, falling within Job grade T05 – E job band which are job grades for different positions within Eskom).

The same procedure was followed in piloting the qualitative instruments. People who participated in the pilot studies were informed beforehand that this was a pilot study and were required to forward questions and comments afterwards that would help the researcher to refine the research instruments. After completing the piloting process, the researcher refined the structure and wording where it was necessary. Feedback from the pilot study was within my intentions – the questionnaire was supported by all, especially because evaluators are from Eskom Human Resources. No gaps were identified. Upon completing this, the data collection instruments were found to be ready to be implemented. Pretesting was thus found to be critical to ensure smooth execution of the research study.



### **3.4.5 Data collection procedure**

Quantitative data collection was conducted first, using the questionnaire (Annexure A). However, before data collection commenced, the researcher had to go through the ethical procedures necessary for studies that include human participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from DUT (the Durban University of Technology) Management Science Research Committee. Upon completing the sampling process, identified potential participants were informed via email that they had been selected to participate in the study. At this stage the exact nature of the study was thoroughly explained so that potential participants would have all the important information. Consent to participate in the research survey was obtained prior to participation in the survey. The personal information of participants was also protected as per the POPI Act. Included in the email requesting participants to respond to the survey were the contact details of the researcher, which was necessary for participants who needed further clarification. Aspects that were important to highlight to potential participants included that participation was voluntary and that each person had the choice to participate or not. Participants were also informed that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained throughout the research process; they were also informed that it was encouraged for them to ask questions beforehand so they could make informed choices. After going through this ethical procedure, participants completed the questionnaire through Eskom's internal system, called SharePoint, which is online.

Completing the questionnaire for the quantitative survey took approximately 15 minutes, as was originally planned.

For that reason, the same data collection ethical procedure described above was followed when qualitative data collection commenced. The researcher made use of the interview guide (Annexure B) during the interview process. Interviews with the five senior Eskom managers in KZN were conducted virtually using the MS Teams application. Online recordings were also made. The researcher used the interview transcripts that were automatically produced by the MS Teams system as well as additional notes recorded by the researcher to conduct data analysis of the survey.

## **3.5 Data analysis**

### **3.5.1 Quantitative data analysis**

Quantitative data analysis was conducted first using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. Van Zyl (2014) states that SPSS is the most powerful and easiest-to-use data analysis package available, and this is the main reason why it was used to analyse quantitative data. The process began with the numbering of questionnaires that had been returned by the participants. This was done to ensure that any problems in the capturing and coding process could be traced back to the exact questionnaire that the data was taken from. Following this, all the data was systematically captured on Microsoft Excel and then exported to SPSS where it was coded. Coding can best be understood as the process of organising data into different categories and into a format that is compatible with the software being used so that can be analysed without error.

According to Van Zyl (2014), data are coded when they are transferred from the original collection form into a format that lends itself to data analysis. The important thing to remember is that the researcher should be able to look at a data coding sheet and know exactly the nature of what's entered. During coding, the researcher was cognisant of the fact that all the categories that were created on SPSS needed to match what was on the questionnaire.

### **3.5.2 Coding of the data**

Coding is a data reduction stage, and it involves identifying features within the data and attaching concise labels to them (Clarke and Braun, 2013). There are two types of coding: it can either be deductive or inductive. In this study, both were used, as that resulted in a more thorough analysis. Inductive coding is a bottom-up approach through which codes are developed from the information given by the sources (Braun *et al.* 2018). On the other hand, in deductive coding, the researcher makes use of preconceived topics and themes (Braun *et al.* 2018). The codes that were used during the deductive process were mostly informed by the literature reviewed in the second chapter of this study.

### **3.5.3 Descriptive statistics**

The actual analysis process began with descriptive statistics. Descriptive analysis is done first to help the researcher gain an initial impression of the data that were collected (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2014), descriptive statistics summarise the general nature of the data obtained – for instance, how certain measured characteristics appear to be “on average”, how much variability exists among different pieces of data, how closely two or more characteristics are associated with one another, and so on.

The main aim of descriptive statistics during data analysis was to describe the data by investigating the distribution of scores on each variable. This allowed the researcher to determine whether the scores on different variables were related to each other. There are two kinds of descriptive statistical procedures that were conducted. First, the researcher assessed the frequency and percentage distribution of scores for all demographic variables (age, gender, race, task grading and division).

This kind of analysis provided groups of data distribution on a nominal level. For example, the researcher was able to determine the frequency as well as the percentage of both male and female participants. Many times, these distributions are displayed as tables or as bar graphs or pie charts (Lavrakas 2011). In the next chapter, they are presented in the form of tables. Second, the researcher assessed the demographic characteristics of participants' responses to the 18-item scale.

Specifically, the statistical distribution of scores was assessed by investigating such things as minimum and maximum scores, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, which is the measure used to describe the degree to which scores cluster in the tails or the peak of a frequency distribution.

### **3.5.4 Inferential statistics**

Inferential statistics, which are the most important, were also conducted. Inferential statistics help the researcher make decisions about the data: for instance, they might help a researcher decide whether the differences observed between two groups in an experiment are large enough to be attributed to the experimental intervention rather than to a once-in-a-blue-moon fluke (Leedy and Ormrod 2014).

The inferential data analysis method was also used to analyse data from the questionnaire (Annexure A). Inferential data analysis also allows the researcher to draw conclusions about populations from sample data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006).

In the study, an independent sample t-test was conducted to assess differences between men and women in Eskom Academy of Learning customer satisfaction. A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson  $r$ ) was also done to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between different variables.

### **3.5.5 Qualitative data analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data obtained from interviews. Terre Blanche (2006) records that the best way of summarising a text is to thematise it. This is done by reading through a body of material and identifying recurrent themes or categories. Conducting thematic analysis is a systematic process which is conducted in steps. The following steps were followed:

**Transcribing:** The MS Teams system that was used as a channel for interviews automatically produced transcripts. The researcher also took notes manually which were used for data analysis.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) emphasise that it is usually important to transcribe everything rather than try to decide which data are relevant and which not. The reliability of the transcripts was also assessed by reading them, while listening to the audio recordings. This was not simply a technical exercise; it provided a clear image of the interviews as a whole.

**Becoming familiar with data from the sources:** becoming familiar with the data on the transcripts required extensive reading. As indicated by Clarke and Braun (2013), this is a common process in all kinds of qualitative data analysis; thus, the researcher devoted adequate time to understanding the data through reading and rereading.

**Searching for themes:** During this stage of the qualitative data analysis process, the initial labels created during coding were further analysed, developing themes 1 to 6 which are explained below under naming of themes. This was an important stage as it allowed the researcher to identify similarities in the transcripts from different interviewees. The analysis of these labels resulted in the creation of the initial unrefined themes, specifically preparation and organization of training especially where there are huge numbers of people attending training, as well as challenges encountered with Eskom Academy of Learning.

**Refining the themes:** In refining the themes, the researcher was concerned with ensuring that they were in line with the aim as well as the objectives of the study. While refining, some themes were split, while others were combined, and all was done to come up with the best interpretation of the data.

**Naming the themes:** The resulting themes were given appropriate names after the refinement process. Examples of some of the themes are as follows: type of services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN; meeting customer needs; adaptation; customer satisfaction; service quality and challenges experienced. This was followed by a writing process which was very extensive, as information about each theme had to be written down.

### **3.6 Reliability**

Dudovskiy (2018) states that reliability refers to the extent to which the same answers can be obtained using the same instruments more than one time. In this research study the reliability of the 18-item quantitative scale was assessed using the reliability analysis on SPSS. This reliability analysis assessed Cronbach's Alpha. According to Glen (2021), Cronbach's alpha,  $\alpha$  (or *coefficient alpha*), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, assesses reliability, or the internal consistency of a scale.

Reliability in research is synonymous with consistency. Therefore, the reliability analysis or Cronbach's Alpha on SPSS tests to see if multiple-question Likert scale surveys are consistent. These questions in the scales measure what can be regarded as latent variables, which are unobservable variables and very difficult to measure in real life.

The Cronbach's Alpha gives an indication to the researcher of how closely related a set of test items are as a group. In this study, the quantitative data collection instrument was found to have excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .919$ ). The reliability of the qualitative instrument and process were also of uttermost importance in the study. Qualitative reliability, unlike quantitative reliability, is not measurable, and relies on the researcher's ability to produce reliable results by following a rigorous research process. For this reason, the research made use of tried and tested qualitative procedures, and thus the application of procedures was followed consistently and carefully to ensure that the study could be replicable.

### **3.7 Validity**

Validity refers to the ability of a research instrument to accurately measure what it was developed for (Maree 2009). In this study, the researcher relied mainly on face validity, which was assessed when the research instruments were pretested. Face validity, which is also referred to as logical validity, is assessed using a subjective process. Thus, individuals involved in the piloting phase were the ones responsible for assessing the appropriateness of the research instruments in measuring what they were developed for. During the same stage, content validity was also assessed; thus, the researcher ensured, while refining the research instruments after pretesting, that they would indeed gather information relevant to the research aim and objectives.

### **3.8 Limitations, challenges, and shortcomings**

There are certain limitations, challenges and shortcoming that were encountered during this research study. Some of the challenges that were experienced emanated from the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in mandatory lockdowns. To begin with, data collection was extremely challenging. Data targets that were set for quantitative data collection were not met at the planned time because of a low response rate.

Despite the researcher's efforts to encourage participation in the study, which was done by sending reminder emails to the participants, the outcome was not up to the expected standard. To counteract this problem, as explained previously, the researcher decided to adapt the study from being quantitative to being a mixed-methods study incorporating qualitative data. As a result of this, data collection was completed over a period of six months which was longer than expected.

Furthermore, the entire research project lasted longer than initially projected, which was three months.

Owing to the mandatory lockdown, companies were forced to close their premises and employees were expected to work from home. All this happened without any preplanning. This affected the study because some trainees from Eskom KZN were working from home without the resources to enable them to access the survey online and complete it. This was the major cause of the low response rate.

The inability to obtain sufficient data for a quantitative study significantly lowered the confidence level and increased the margin of error of the results. Finally, after sending email reminders to participants to respond to the survey, 70 responses were received from the target population of 185.

Mikołajczyk (2022: 544-562), in the study "Changes in the approach to employee development in organisations as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic", found that remote cooperation is more cognitively burdensome than direct cooperation, and that employees experienced more fatigue and stress during online meetings compared to situations related to other professional duties. Similarly, some of the participants in this study pointed to the observed decrease in employee engagement and lack of interest in very interesting online initiatives.

After incorporating a qualitative component into the study, interviews had to be conducted to supplement the quantitative data. During the interviews, which were conducted virtually, poor network quality was experienced from time to time during one particular interview. After pausing for few minutes, the network quality improved and the interview was completed without disconnecting the interview session. Although the flow of the interview was affected, this did not prevent successful completion of the interview process.

No data was lost as we continued from where we left off before bad network started. Interviews were also recorded to assist with completely capturing the information that was shared.

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare of research participants. Research ethics, however, involve more than a focus on the welfare of research participants and extend into areas such as scientific misconduct and plagiarism (Terre Blanche 2006). Leedy and Ormrod (2014) say that most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories.

These categories are protection from harm, voluntary and informed participation, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) indicate that conversing with people in cyberspace rather than in the same room does not nullify the importance of ethical standards of conducting research.

There are several important ethical guidelines that were strictly upheld while the study was being undertaken. Before collecting data, ethical clearance was obtained from DUT, gatekeeper access was sought and obtained from Eskom (Annexure C), and, when data collection commenced, study participants were truthfully informed about the study.

They voluntarily gave consent to participate. The researcher ensured, and took the necessary measures to maintain, the confidentiality and anonymity of the study participants. This included the non-inclusion of names on the questionnaires and the use of pseudonyms to refer to interviewees. Moreover, information and documents which were used to identify participants during sampling were kept safe by the researcher.

No ethical issues were encountered during the research study. I approached the information technology department to assist with technical system problems. The IT department complied with all ethical considerations, including information confidentiality.



### **3.10 Chapter summary**

In conclusion, the methodological process that was adopted during the study was presented in this chapter. The presentation and discussion of findings will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Following the collection of data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used during the analysis process. In this chapter, the results that were obtained from both processes are presented. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section contains the presentation of quantitative results which were obtained from the analysis of data collected using the questionnaire. Results which were obtained from qualitative data which was gathered through in-depth interviews are presented in the second section of this chapter.

#### **4.2 Quantitative results**

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The process began with capturing all the data that was in the questionnaires on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by exporting the data into the analysis software. Thereafter, necessary coding and data preparation procedures were followed, then differential and inferential statistical analysis commenced.

##### **4.2.1 Reliability analysis**

The scale that was used for data collection was an 18-item Likert scale which was used to assess participants' general impressions of the Eskom Academy of Learning (EAL) in KwaZulu-Natal (see appendices). It was also a five-point scale; thus, participants had to express their opinions using pre-identified options which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). To begin with, the researcher assessed the reliability or the internal consistency of this scale in order to assess if the scale is actually measuring what it is designed to measure.

This was done by measuring the Cronbach's Alpha, which is represented by the symbol  $\alpha$ . The internal consistency reliability results of the scale that was used in the study are presented below, together with the statistical key for deciphering acceptable  $\alpha$  levels.

**Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) Results**

A	Number of items
.919	18

**Table 4.2: Acceptable  $\alpha$  levels key**

A	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$\alpha \geq 0.8 - 0.9$	Good
$\alpha \geq 0.7 - 0.8$	Acceptable
$\alpha \geq 0.6 - 0.7$	Questionable
$\alpha \geq 0.5 - 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha \leq 0.5$	Unacceptable

The results for the scale which was used to measure participants' impression of the EAL indicated that  $\alpha = .919$ . These results indicated that the scale had excellent internal consistency and that it actually measured what it was designed to measure. The reliability of the scale as a measure of participants' impressions of EAL was excellent.

#### **4.2.2 Descriptive statistics**

After reliability analysis, the researcher conducted descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were conducted for three main reasons. They provided important information on the main variables of the study; they gave a thorough demographical understanding of the participants who took part in the study, and they showed the distribution of scores on a curve, highlighting important aspects such as the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and skewness, as well as kurtosis. Results that were obtained from the descriptive analysis are thus presented below.

**Table 4.3: Gender representation in the study**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	55.7
Female	31	44.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in the table above indicate that a total of 70 participants took part in the quantitative component of the study. The sample consisted of 39 (55.7%) male participants and 31 (44.3%) female participants. While gender participation was not equal, representation of each gender was sufficient for statistical analysis.

**Table 4.4: Age representation in the study**

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
26 – 35	7	10.0
36 – 45	26	37.1
46 – 55	27	38.6
56 and above	10	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the participants who took part in the study were in the 46 to 55 age range (38.6%) and the 36 to 45 age range (37.1%). Participants who were older than 55 years were significantly fewer (14.3%), which is understandable given that this is early retirement age. However, there were more participants in that age range than in the 26 to 25 category (10%).

**Table 4.5: Race representation in the study**

Race	Frequency	Percentage
African	41	58.6
White	13	18.6
Indian	11	15.7
Coloured	3	4.3
Other	2	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The representation of participants by race in the study largely reflected the distribution of race in the South African populace at large. The majority of participants were of African origin (58.6%). There were two participants (2.9%) who indicated that their race did not fit into any of the categories that had been predetermined. However, because the data had been collected using a semi-structured questionnaire, it was not possible to conduct further investigation into their race origin.

**Table 4.6: Task grading representation in the study**

Task Grading	Frequency	Percentage
T05	1	1.4
T06	2	2.9
T07	1	1.4
T08	2	2.9
T10	15	21.4
T11	4	5.7
T12	24	34.3
T13	4	5.7
Site Officer	1	1.4
P16	1	1.4
G15	5	7.1
P14	3	4.3
P13	2	2.9
P15	1	1.4
M16	2	2.9
M17	1	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>98.6</b>

The T12 task grading was most frequently represented (34.3%), followed by T10 (21.4%). The table above indicates that there were also a good number of categories that were represented. It further shows that there was no participant from T09, and one missing variable, since only 69 participants responded to this question.



**Table 4.7: Work division representation in the study**

Division	Frequency	Percentage
Generation	5	7.1
Transmission	6	8.6
Distribution	38	54.3
Finance	1	1.4
Human Resources	2	2.9
Sustainability and Risk	1	1.4
Customer Services	14	20.0
Legal and Compliance	1	1.4
Group Capital	1	1.4
Procurement	1	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

While there were many divisions that were represented in the study, most notably Distribution (54.3%) and Customer Services (20.0%).

An overview of the demographic characteristics of the study sample indicated in the demographic results presented above shows that there was heterogeneity in the study. In other words, there were people of different genders, ages, race groups, work divisions and task grades who participated in the study. This was very important because it allowed the researcher to gather a wide range of perspectives on the Eskom Academy of Learning. It definitely increased the generalizability of the results to the study's target as well as general populations from which the sample had been drawn.

The following table gives further descriptive statistics, with particular focus on the scale that was used for data collection. The figures in the table indicate the distribution of scores or participant responses and highlights major statistical features.

**Table 4.8: Further descriptive statistics**

<b>General impression of Eskom Academy of Learning (EAL) KZN</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
I am aware of the training courses and services offered by Eskom Academy of Learning	2	5	4.06	.740	-.543	.272
EAL succeeded in providing me with training courses I applied for	1	5	3.93	.922	-1.341	2.142
EAL demonstrate willingness and ability to listen accurately and interpret my requirements	1	5	3.97	.868	-1.314	2.812
EAL respond to my inquiry within reasonable timeliness.	1	5	4.05	.720	-1.285	4.315
EAL keeps promises and provides feedback on progress regarding my inquiry	1	5	3.86	1.026	-1.365	1.791
EAL treats me in a professional manner in all my contacts with them	1	5	4.20	.791	-1.460	3.734
EAL is easily accessible via all communication channels	1	5	3.93	.937	-1.050	1.912
EAL puts customers first in all they do	1	5	3.76	.842	-.560	.701
I sometimes feel discriminated against in my dealings with EAL	1	5	1.89	.925	1.475	2.172
<b>During and after training you attend</b>						
Training logistics such as dates, venue, time etc. were clearly communicated in advance	1	5	4.19	.767	-1.920	6.993
Training received met my expectations	1	5	4.06	.866	-1.076	1.631
Training material used was of quality	1	5	4.09	.717	-1.099	3.784
The course presenter was well prepared to deliver the training	1	5	4.20	.694	-1.362	5.254



The training environment was conducive to learning e.g., venue, temperature, visual aids etc.	1	5	4.07	.804	-1.164	2.577
I am able to apply skills and knowledge learnt from training I attended	1	5	4.11	.772	-1.175	3.077
My performance has improved as a result of training I attended	1	5	3.91	.864	-.804	1.006
My attitude and behavior changed positively as a result of training I attended	1	5	3.86	.937	-.795	.425
I am happy with the overall performance of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN	1	5	4.09	.897	-1.413	2.854

The table above contains statistics that were vital in initially deciphering the objectives of the study. For example, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the first statement, showing that there was greater awareness of the services that are offered by the Eskom Academy of Learning. In all the other statements, respondent opinions ranged from strongly disagreed (minimum 1) to strongly agreed (maximum 5). The table also provides the mean or average opinion for each of the scale questions, together with the deviation of scores from the mean. All these figures were purposeful in the establishment of initial assumptions on the results of the study concerning the objectives. Opinions were wide ranging, and thus it was clear that there were areas of excellence, as well as areas that may need improvement in the Eskom Academy of Learning. Unfortunately, these descriptive statistics were not precise enough; hence further descriptive were performed to obtain the precise percentages of participant responses to each of the statements. This allowed further interrogation of the aim and objectives of the study.

In the next phase of data analysis, therefore, the researcher was focused on the first two objectives of the study, which were:

- To assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning

- To identify areas of improvement within the Eskom Academy of Learning.
- In so doing, the researcher was to be then able to fulfil the last objective of the study, which was to recommend strategies for enhancing customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning. The recommendations are presented in the next chapter as they were drawn from the results presented in this chapter.

**Table 4.9: Participant response percentages**

<b>General impression of Eskom Academy of Learning (EAL) KZN</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I am aware of the training courses and services offered by Eskom Academy of Learning	0%	2.9%	15.7%	54.3%	27.1%
EAL succeeded in providing me with training courses I applied for	2.9%	7.1%	7.1%	60.0%	22.9%
EAL demonstrates willingness and ability to listen accurately and interpret my requirements	2.9%	2.9%	12.9%	57.1%	24.3%
EAL respond to my inquiry within reasonable timeliness.	1.4%	1.4%	10.0%	64.3%	22.9%
EAL keeps promises and provide feedback on progress regarding my inquiry	5.7%	5.7%	8.6%	57.1%	22.9%
EAL treats me in a professional manner in all my contacts with them	1.4%	2.9%	5.7%	54.3%	35.7%
EAL is easily accessible via all communication channels	2.9%	5.7%	11.4%	57.1%	21.4%
EAL puts customers first in all they do	1.4%	4.3%	28.6%	48.6%	17.1%
I sometimes feel discriminated against in my dealings with EAL	35.7%	50.0%	7.1%	4.3%	2.9%
<b>During and after training you attend</b>					
Training logistics such as dates, venue, time etc. were clearly communicated in advance	2.9%	0%	4.3%	61.4%	31.4%

General impression of Eskom Academy of Learning (EAL) KZN	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Training received met my expectations	1.4%	4.3%	12.9%	50.0%	31.4%
Training material used was of quality	1.4%	0%	12.9%	60.0%	25.7%
The course presenter was well prepared to deliver the training	1.4%	0%	7.1%	60.0%	31.4%
The training environment was conducive to learning e.g., venue, temperature, visual aids etc.	1.4%	2.9%	11.4%	55.7%	28.6%
I am able to apply skills and knowledge learnt from training I attended	1.4%	1.4%	11.4%	55.7%	30.0%
My performance has improved as a result of training I attended	1.4%	4.3%	20.0%	50.0%	24.3%
My attitude and behavior changed positively as a result of training I attended	1.4%	8.6%	17.1%	48.6%	24.3%
I am happy with the overall performance of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN	2.9%	2.9%	10.0%	51.4%	32.9%

Based on the results in the table above, the following were identified as the areas of greatest satisfaction and areas that may require improvement in Eskom's Academy of Learning (EAL).

#### **Customer satisfaction with EAL**

- The Eskom Academy of Learning is well able to make employees aware of the training courses that are available for employees. Satisfaction in this area was very high amongst participants: 54.3% agreed, while 27.1% strongly agreed with this notion. It was however concerning that 15.7% of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed and this is a significant number to have in an undefined or grey area. Despite this fact, the figure itself is overshadowed by the significant number of those who were satisfied.

- EAL is also largely able to provide customers with the training courses they applied for. This became evident when a cumulative figure of 82.9% of the agreed and strongly agreed. Given that there were 17.1% of participants who did not express satisfaction in this area, it is likely that there are mitigating circumstances which sometimes do not allow for that. Nevertheless, satisfaction with the training courses was again very high.
- The majority of participants also expressed that EAL has the willingness and ability to listen and accurately interpret customer requirements. 57.1 agree, while 24.3% strongly agreed with this.
- A total of 87.2% expressed that EAL responds to customer inquiries within a reasonable timeframe. As for the 10% of participants who were neutral, it is possible that ambiguity about what can be defined as a reasonable timeframe or the subjectivity of such could be a factor in those opinions. The same argument may also be applicable with regards to the 2.8% of participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed, along with other circumstances peculiar to their situations that could have contributed.
- In a matter related to the one above, participants also expressed satisfaction that EAL is true to its promises and provides feedback progressively when an inquiry is made. 80.0% percent of the participants agreed; 8.6% were neutral and 11.4% disagreed.
- 90% of the participants who took part in the study indicated that EAL treated them professionally. While there may be 5.7% who were neutral and 4.1% who did not agree and were thus not satisfied, these are, in this case, the outliers; hence this may again be attributed to subjective scenarios.
- EAL is easily accessible through all communication channels, and this is an aspect that participants expressed satisfaction with. A very significant 78.5% of the participants indicated this, while 11.4% were neutral and 10.6 disagreed.
- One of the important things that participants were asked was if they felt they were discriminated against by EAL; 85.7% expressed disagreement, which suggests that EAL is not discriminatory towards its customers. However, 7.1%



were neutral, while 7.2% indicated that they sometimes felt like they were being subjected to discrimination.

Because discrimination is a constitutional and legal matter which should not be tolerated, regardless of proportion, the researcher decided to do a cross tabulation of this item with gender and race for a deeper inquiry and understanding. The results of that cross tabulation (Table 4.10) could not determine with certainty if those who were neutral and those who indicated that they sometimes felt discriminated against were more likely to be of a particular gender or race origin. Therefore, the only explanation that could be offered was that of subjective experiences which could not be determined, given that quantitative inquiry and analysis does not allow for such probing.

**Table 4.10: Cross tabulation of scale item nine with gender and race**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	16	15	5	1	2
	<b>Female</b>	9	20	5	2	0
<b>Race</b>	<b>African</b>	15	22	1	2	1
	<b>White</b>	3	8	2	0	0
	<b>Indian</b>	5	3	2	0	1
	<b>Coloured</b>	2	1	0	0	0
	<b>Other</b>	0	1	0	1	0

- Participants were also satisfied with the way training logistics, including dates, venues and times were communicated to them and that they were communicated clearly. An overwhelming 92.8% of the participants expressed satisfaction in this regard.
- According to the results of the survey, training received from EAL met the expectations of the great majority of the participants: 81.4% expressed their satisfaction, while 12.9% were neutral and 5.7% were not satisfied.

- Furthermore, the training material was of the desired quality for 85.7% of the participants.
- 91.4% of participants who took part in the study indicated that course presenters are always prepared, showing that satisfaction was significantly high.
- A large proportion of participants (84.3%) also showed satisfaction with the training environment. EAL is therefore able to ensure that the training environment, including the venue, venue temperature and visual aids that are used, allows for learning.
- Similarly, 85.7% indicated that they were able to apply the skills and the knowledge that they gained from training. This is an important aspect that shows a significant impact of EAL in Eskom.

### **Areas that require improvement in EAL**

- While there may have been 48.6% of participants who agreed and 17.1% who strongly agreed with the notion that EAL considers its customers first, it is evident and concerning that more than a quarter of the participants (28.6%) fail to express certainty while 6.7% disagree. Because one third of the participants were not satisfied with EAL's consideration of its customers, this should be regarded as an indication that there is need for improvement in this area. It is clear, based on the number of those satisfied, that EAL is on the right trajectory in this area, but it's evident also that further improvement is required.
- While 85.7% of the participants indicated that they were able to apply the knowledge they gained from training, and 74.3% indicated that their work performance had improved as a result, it is concerning that there are more than 25% of the participants who could not say the same: 20% of the participants remained neutral, while 5.7% clearly indicated dissatisfaction by disagreeing. The number of people who did not feel that their work had improved because of EAL's training, though marginally outweighed by those who gave a positive response, is still too significant to ignore. The figures do not paint a picture of failure, but rather point towards a gap that may need to be addressed to ensure that more people can translate what they are trained

to do into work performance. EAL therefore must work towards further improvement in this area.

- The researcher also deduced, based on the results, that EAL needs to improve its behavioural focus. The researcher arrived at this juncture based on the fact that there were more than 27.1% of participants who could not say that their attitude and behaviour had changed as a result of the training they received.

To conclude this section, the results of the study showed that the participants and thus customers were highly satisfied with EAL. While there may be areas that require improvement, the overall level of satisfaction was very good, which is why 84.3% of the participants indicated that they were happy with the performance of EAL KZN. Those who did not share the same opinion further prove that continued improvement was necessary in all areas, but particularly in the areas identified above, which were: EAL to improve in putting a customer first in everything they do; not all employees are able to apply knowledge obtained from training; some employees do not agree that their work performance has improved due to training received; and some employees did not agree that their behaviour and attitude had changed after training received.

#### **4.2.3 Inferential statistics**

Inferential statistics allow the researcher to make inferences about the data that would have been given. In the previous section, results indicated that there was greater satisfaction with EAL than dissatisfaction. In this section, therefore, the writer uses inferential statistics to describe the possible roles of biographical characteristics of the level of satisfaction.

#### **4.2.4 Independent sample t-test**

To begin with, the Independent Sample t-test was conducted to test whether there was a difference in the satisfaction levels of men and women who had undergone EAL training. The results of that test, as indicated in the table below, revealed that EAL satisfaction in men ( $M = 70.28$ ,  $SD = 11.59$ ) was not statistically different from satisfaction in women ( $M = 70.13$ ,  $SD = 7.29$ );  $t(65) = .067$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Table 4.11: T-test comparison of satisfaction in men and women**

	Lavenes test for equality of variance		T-test for	equality of	means
	F	Sig	t	df	Sig(2-tailed)
<b>EAL Satisfaction</b>	3.255	.016	.064	68	.049
			.067	64.886	.046

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r)**

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) is a statistical test that is used in the assessment of both the strength of an association (strong or weak) between two variables and its direction (positive or negative). In this instance, therefore, the test was used to assess the relationship that biographical characteristics had with satisfaction with EAL. Because the researcher was not able to detect any notable difference between men and women, correlation was used to further assess if there was a relationship between gender and EAL satisfaction, but it was not limited to that biographical variable alone. The results of this statistical analysis are presented below.

**Table 4.12: Correlation of biographical characteristics with EAL satisfaction.**

	Gender	Age	Race	Task Grading	Division	EAL Scale
Gender	1					
Age	-.125	1				
Race	.027	.148	1			
Task Grading	.254*	.065	-.089	1		
Division	.122	.094	.021	-.006	1	
EAL Scale	-.008	-.117	-.345**	-.167	.020	1



*Note.* \*\*Statistical significance at  $p \leq .01$ . \*Statistical significance at  $p \leq .05$   
++ Practically significant (large effect  $< .50$ ). + Practically significant (medium effect  $< .30$ ).

Results indicated that gender, age, task grading and work division did not have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction with EAL. However, the results indicated that race statistically and practically correlated with customer satisfaction with EAL, but the relationship was negative ( $-.345$ ;  $p < .01$ ). What this implies with regards to this particular sample and the population of generalization is that race was a determinant factor in the level of satisfaction.

The next section in this chapter focuses on the results from the qualitative inquiry that was made by the researcher. Those results, being more detailed, add value to the numerical data presented above, thus covering the exploratory/explanatory gap that is always there in statistical analysis due to the nature of numerical data.

### **4.3 Qualitative data analysis**

Thematic analysis was used in analysing the data. Thematic analysis “is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Cooper *et al.* 2012: 701). Through focusing on meaning across a data set, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to “make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Cooper *et al.* 2012: 701). The data was coded and edited to reduce errors which made it easier to capture the data. The structured questions were prepared in advance to ensure uniformity. This allowed all the respondents to answer the questions satisfactorily. The interview questions were designed in a manner that would allow the responses to answer to the objectives of the study.

#### **4.3.1 Themes found after coding and indexing**

##### **Theme 1: Types of services and products offered**

One of the things that came out during the interviews was the vast number of services and products that were offered by the training department.

There was mention of the following training: SAP training, procurement training, ethics and fraud training, safety training courses, SHE induction training, NEC (New Engineering Construction) and contract management. Response from customer services department on training provided by EAL was RCAT (Root cause analysis technique), CC&B (customer care and billing) and CC&I (Customer care and I). Training provided by EAL from Human Resources was PFMA (Public Finance Management Act), ethics course, industrial relations courses, performance management course, change management course and personnel administration course.

From the data, it appears the participants were aware of the different services and products being offered by EAL KZN. In addition to being aware of the courses, they also received training in those courses. This was evidenced by the vast and different examples given by the participants as mentioned above. Most of the participants made mention of the course ethics training and hence it seems to be a familiar course across the board.

## **Theme 2: Meeting customer needs**

Under this theme, there are a lot of sub-issues that were highlighted from the collected data. First, the data shows that there was evidence of satisfaction from the participants. They also revealed that the training department was customer-oriented in its dealings. The department had successfully executed the requested services. This is evidenced by what the participants said, such as this participant:

*...and when we requested that course, it was arranged for us quite successfully, and we had a very successful training session together with the facilitators from the SHEQ Department.*

This satisfaction was also cemented by a second participant who said:

*The training department adds significant value to its customers, providing relevant training and organizing the training and seeing to it that it's conducted.*

The participants further highlighted that customer-oriented services were received. For example, the participant from Finance department responded as stated below:

*Yes, EAL do put customer first, because for instance, I had a problem with the training that was requested because obviously we have other deadlines, we also have so many commitments in the business, and we have certain training that is compulsory. But when I tell the training department I can't make it, they were very accommodating in changing the date to suit the customer request. So, I do agree EAL put the customer first.*

The data presented shows that customers are greatly satisfied with the training received. Services received are customer-centred and revolve around satisfying their needs. The customer receives services that they have requested timeously. Despite the satisfaction, it also appears that the customers expressed the need for slight improvement on meeting customer needs, especially in the area of time management.

Participant from Finance department had this to say regarding time management:

*We were only told about ISO 45001 literally now in October 2020 and we only have until March 2021 to be compliant because we will also be included in the audits. So, we have a very short time frame to complete the training.*

This issue that the participant speaks of shows that there is a great challenge participants face regarding the issue of timeous notification of information to the customer. If participants are not aware of upcoming trainings and they have a short time to prepare and do the trainings, this significantly affects the customer.

### **Theme 3: Adaptation to new environments**

Another theme that came out of the interviews was that of adaptation of the training to suit new requirements for service provision under the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 was an outbreak that affected the whole world and killed millions of people. It is transmitted when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and small airborne particles. This disease was first reported from Wuhan in China on 31 December 2019, from where it spread to the whole world, including South Africa. The participants expressed the views highlighted below:

*What I would say is that service provided by EAL hasn't worsened because in Covid-19. Everybody wasn't sure of what they needed to do due to the pandemic, but the training department decided to pull the bull by its horn and make sure that training is offered online. They didn't just let things sleep and not provide training at all because of the Covid-19. Some training had to stop because of the risk of contracting with the virus.*

From the above comments made, it emerges that the department used alternative online platforms as a means to service customer needs. Though Covid-19 was a major setback, the departments adapted to this new reality. However, some participants also felt that this online provision of training still needed to be polished and more online sessions should be facilitated.

#### **Theme 4: Customers' satisfaction**

From the data presented, the majority of the participants agreed that the services rendered were satisfactory. The participants are given an opportunity to apply for various training. When accepted for the training, course materials are made readily available. In responding to the question of whether EAL was satisfactory in provision of services, the participants had the following to say:

*Yes, service received from EAL was satisfactory because I received the courses that I applied for including dates, course material and certificate of completion. I do not really have additional areas of improvement for EAL because overall, I can say I'm satisfied with the service.*

Another issue that came out was that in addition to being satisfied, relevant knowledge that is applicable in the workplace was gained and this was a huge advantage for the customers. From the presented data, knowledge to operate in the current job and for possible future positions and promotions has been gained.

Participant from Procurement department stated the following:

*Ethics training that our staff attended was very fruitful because it touches on what we do. Before we attended the course, there were things that we were uncertain of, like whether to accept the gifts offered by the suppliers or not, or whether to do or not to private work in Eskom. EAL enlightened us in that area, so as a result we now know exactly what to do.*

The above quote from a participant shows that the training received has improved the value of the customers in the business and the working structure of the department. Customers have been successfully trained to move into higher positions which they are currently not part of. Finally, it also appears that in most training which they undergo, they get information relevant for areas where they have had uncertainty and in which they were not knowledgeable. This greatly impacts their performance from average to high quality.

#### **Theme 5: Service quality**

Raphoto (2015: 31) recorded that customers would always settle for nothing less than having their expectations met. It is of an utmost importance that service providers are well prepared and have their standards well defined, as these are basis for quality.

From the interviews, the finance department participant raised the issue that impacted the provision of a better service. Issues of training backlog significantly affect the customers. Cancellation of service provision to the customer adds to their backlog and affects progress. This in turn adds more frustration, especially in cases where training requested does not have sufficient applications and has to be cancelled. Lack of financial controls has also inhibited delivery of services in a more excellent manner. This needs improvement.

O'Sullivan (2010) wrote that if the business doesn't have the required skills, then you may need to outsource or even refer to someone who does specialise in a particular field of expertise. You don't want to be considered unprofessional or incompetent, but, even more importantly, you don't want to be caught acting outside your scope of authority.

The finance department participant welcomed the intention of the department to conduct learner feedback surveys to improve its service as an effective way in which service quality could be improved.

*What is good is that at the end of every course we get a questionnaire to answer and give back the feedback. Like for instance I did ISO45001 on the 29th of October 2020, and then immediately thereafter I was sent an evaluation form.*

From the data, an opportunity for feedback has been welcomed as a positive initiative. Allowing for there to be an opportunity to give feedback to the customers is an opportunity that allows for improvement of service provision.

### **Theme 6: Challenges**

Most of the participants highlighted that there were a lot of challenges that needed to be addressed by EAL. Among these challenges were lack information, lack of proactiveness, issues of struggle in implementation and adapting to new developments in the business.

In terms of adapting to new developments in the business a lot of issues were raised by the HR participant:

*Service provided by EAL has not worsened but has remained the same. Our training area is impacted by a lot of changes that are happening. Sometimes I feel training department are struggling with managing change. When changes come sometimes EAL take too long to embrace it and move with the change, e.g., changes in reporting structure of EAL from Head Office to Eskom Distribution in Provinces. Training department should be ahead of the change rather than to lag the change.*

From the interviews, the issue of struggle in implementation was also highlighted. This is evidenced from the quote below from Customer services participant:

*The frustration will come especially in the cases where there is not a big number of people that are requiring a specific training, one may feel frustrated but otherwise overall I can say performance of training department has improved in terms of catering for our needs.*

Lack of information from EAL was also another issue that was raised during the interview:

*We do get an HR business partner that comes to the finance meeting. But that person doesn't have the training matrix and doesn't control or manage it.*

One other challenge that needed improvement was lack of proactiveness in EAL. Participant from HR said the following:

*The current approach to training has been too much laid back where EAL wait for people to tell which training they want.*

From the data presented on challenges, it appears that there is a huge disappointed in terms of how service provision is done. The departments do not find out what is needed by the customers in advance and on time. Rather they wait for requests to be made by the customer and then they act on these. As a result, progress is always lagging. There is a need for improvement in this area. It also appears that there has not been much adaptation to progressive change that affect the department. Another issue that needs to be tackled that arises from the interviews is the issue of preparation and organisation. More must be done in this regard, especially in cases where there are not enough numbers to provide training.

#### **4.4 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this data analysis chapter was to highlight the level of customer satisfaction that participants had with EAL KZN. SPSS allowed the researcher to develop an understanding of the sample and the degree of satisfaction participants had. It also allowed the researcher to map out areas of success, along with those of need. Thematic analysis, on the other hand, allowed the researcher to highlight, in detail, a range of themes that emerged from the data gathered during the interview sessions, namely themes 1 to 6 mentioned above. Included also were the activities and comments of the participants. The evidence presented from both quantitative and qualitative data suggests that participants were generally satisfied with the services offered by the EAL KZN.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The discussion in this chapter flows in accordance with the objectives of this study. Its purpose is to show how the results that were obtained provide answers for the objectives in question. It is imperative to note that in line with the study's sequential design, quantitative and qualitative results will be discussed in accordance with the specific purpose for which they were intended.

#### **5.2 EAL customer satisfaction**

Raphoto (2015: 24) writes that, although a great deal of time is spent on customer satisfaction, the real issue may not be how do we keep customers satisfied, but rather what do we do about dissatisfied customers.

The first objective of the study was to assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN. In essence, the researcher was interested in evaluating if Eskom employees who had received training from Eskom's Academy of Learning in KwaZulu-Natal were satisfied with the service they received. Afthanorhan *et al.* (2019) indicate that the key determinant of customer satisfaction is service quality. Therefore, in pursuing this objective, the study did not just highlight whether employees were satisfied, but it also gave an indication of the quality of service that is provided by EAL KZN.

The quantitative data collection instrument which was used allowed trainees to provide rated opinions of the service they had received from EAL. One of the critical questions in the survey instrument to assess customer satisfaction asked for participants' overall satisfaction with the services of EAL. The results indicated that a cumulative total of 84.3% of the participants who took part in the study were happy with the training they had received. This overall level of customer satisfaction was informed by different facets of issues concerning the training that EAL provides in KZN.



For example, participants indicated that EAL among other things was able to put customers first in all things, was able to provide the training courses that had been applied for, was always willing to listen to trainees and was easily accessible for communication purposes. These are all important aspects that inform customer service. Several studies affirm these determinants. For instance, Kurdi, Alshurideh and Alnaser (2020) indicate that communication is vital in fostering customer satisfaction; thus, it is one of EAL's positive attributes as indicated by the participants of the study.

Qualitative data which was used to confirm the quantitative results served its purpose; thus, it proves points raised in the above paragraph. Qualitative feedback not only proved that there was customer satisfaction, but it also highlighted some of the determinants of this satisfaction as posited by the quantitative results. For instance, interview results indicated that participants were particularly satisfied because EAL was able to provide a wide variety of training courses, including SAP training, procurement training, ethics and fraud training, safety training courses, SHE induction training. NEC and contract management. Moreover, participants indicated that they were able to meet training needs, since courses that were requested by trainees were made available timeously. Again, this is indicative of the point that was noted from qualitative data that EAL KZN is customer-oriented and places the needs of customers above their own.

Nguyen *et al.* (2018) raise the issue of perceived value and it is an aspect that is frequently referred to in the literature review. In the review, it was noted that researchers in the field such as Pangarkar (2018) emphasize that learning success is not just about delivering knowledge to trainees, but about also actually ensuring that the knowledge is applicable to the work that is conducted in the organisation. In this study, quantitative results indicate that one of the reasons EAL can ensure customer service is because employees see value and are able to apply the knowledge and skills, they are equipped with to their everyday work tasks. This was indicated by a cumulative total of 85.7% of the participants who stated that they could apply what they learned both before and after the training.

This study was conducted at a time when the world was experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic, which has, in many ways, redefined the way work tasks are completed.

One of the drastic requirements that had to be met by individuals and organisations alike is abiding by mandatory lockdown regulations and the completion of work through virtual platforms.

Though the survey instrument did not delve into matters that related to the pandemic because it was designed before the pandemic, in relation to customer satisfaction with EAL, qualitative results were able to fill this gap. Notably, it was discovered during qualitative data analysis that one of the major factors contributing towards customer satisfaction with EAL is that they were able to adapt to the challenges that had arisen because of Covid-19. Results indicated that there was a shift towards online training courses. Because of that, employees' learning and development needs continued to be met while they worked from home though not without challenges.

While analysing quantitative results, the researcher was interested in knowing if there were differences in customer satisfaction, based on different biographical issues. To begin with, it was interesting to discover that in KZN, gender is not a determinant of customer satisfaction, because results from the independent sample t-test proved that there was no notable difference between men and women. This is indicative of a gender neutral or an unbiased stance on the part of EAL when it comes to meeting the training needs of employees. In fact, correlation results showed that gender, age, task grading and work division all did not have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction with EAL. Remember the Eskom Academy of Learning mandate as per EAL operational plan 2017/2018 – 2021/2022 is to close the competency gap within Eskom to create a highly skilled organisation and empower guardians to deliver their outputs confidently and effectively, to assist Eskom in sustainably delivering on its strategic objectives now and into the future.

It is imperative to note that results indicated a greater level of satisfaction with EAL among trainees. One of the crucial lines of argument in the literature review, as indicated by researchers such as Armstrong and Taylor (2017) and Shange (2014), is that when training is evaluated, researchers can gauge effectiveness in relation to desired outcomes. To that effect, customer satisfaction in this instance implies that EAL KZN has managed to be effective in meeting its desired goal of ensuring that they build a workforce within the organisation that is knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged.

This is not to say that there are no challenges or areas that require attention within EAL and the way they offer learning and development courses to Eskom employees. For all the determinants of customer satisfaction, quantitative results were indicative of the fact that there was still a percentage of attendees who were not satisfied, thus qualitative results were able to provide a better outline of the issues as discussed in the following section.

### **5.3 Areas of improvement**

Raphoto (2015: 26) writes that many consultants tend to try to ignore complaints or pass them off as irrelevant. However, if dealt with effectively, complaints can provide not only a positive image of Eskom, but also of South Africa as a country to visit or to stay in.

Regardless of the notable success of EAL in ensuring customer satisfaction among Eskom employees who received training in KZN, there are areas of improvement which were highlighted by respondents. It is imperative to note the key role that quantitative data played in not just complementing, but also providing explanations for, the quantitative data. During analysis of quantitative data, owing to the shortcoming of being numerically based, it was simply indicative of the fact that there were some employees who were not satisfied. Qualitative data was able to fill that gap; hence it was because of the probing that was conducted during the interviews that the researcher was able to identify specifically the key areas that required improvement.

Data pointed towards four areas of concern which are lack of information, lack of a proactive approach to training, struggles in implementation and adapting to new developments in the business.

#### **5.3.1 Lack of information from EAL**

A salient point concerning training within organisations is that those who provide the training should themselves be adequately resourced. Despite this fact, qualitative data showed that this is not always the case when it comes to members of EAL who are responsible for the training of other employees.

An example that was provided by Finance department participant concerning an HR business partner who attended a meeting without any knowledge of the training matrix.

The importance of a training matrix is that it is essential for both the planning and the tracking of training. Assessing the matter from a literature perspective, Armstrong, and Taylor. (2017) argue that, while successful training rests mainly on the employees, adequate support needs to be provided from key stakeholders such as the HR department. When such stakeholders fail to fulfil their role, it causes frustration and lack of congruence, as was noted in this study.

Raphoto (2015: 32) confirmed that characteristics leading to an excellent customer service include a strong understanding of the concept of service; technical and professional competencies; the presence of, and the ability to access and use information; clear-cut and tangible vision and strategies; passion and a sense of innovation; an understanding of policies and procedures; strong sense of quality; and understanding of their role in the team.

### **5.3.2 Lack of a proactive approach to training**

According to O'Sullivan (2010), one needs to be proactive and not reactive. Being proactive simply means getting things done for the client before he or she even asks for it, or even before the client is aware that he or she will need a particular service or product.

Training departments are mandated to be fully aware of the training received by employees in specific departments, as well as the gap areas from the employee's individual development plans. In so doing, they can be proactive in developing and suggesting training programmes that fill those knowledge gap areas.

Although this should be the case, participants indicated that EAL does not take this proactive stance but is rather reactive. As is the case with the challenge noted above, this lack of a proactive approach by EAL is captured by Ahuja et al.'s (2020) assertions regarding the role of trainer attitude, which is one of the determinants of an effective training department.

### **5.3.3 Inability to implement some training programs**

Quantitative results indicated that one of the reasons there was customer satisfaction is because EAL KZN was able to meet the training needs of employees. However, even though 82.9% of the participants were satisfied, there was still that small percentage of individuals who felt that their training needs were not being met. Not surprisingly, this is an issue that was then flagged during the interviews, and it was discovered to be an area of challenge that would require improvement on the part of EAL.

It emerged during the analysis that when a training course is requested by a few individuals, EAL struggles to follow through with implementation, resulting in frustration among employees requiring the course. Further analysis of this issue requires that it be interrogated while considering the perspectives of EAL, in particular why they consider the number of trainees before implementing a training programme. Berge (2008) offers a probable reason which pertains to the training budget, in which case EAL would have to find avenues to offer such training courses without ineffectiveness of resources.

On the same matter, it would also improve customer satisfaction if EAL, after failing to offer a training course that was requested by some individuals, would meet with them, explain the challenges and if possible, suggest courses which could be offered instead.

### **5.3.4 Inability to adapt to new developments in the business**

Despite the significant recognition that EAL KZN was given for having been able to adapt to the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was discovered that the same could not be said about its ability to adapt to other kinds of changes. One particular issue that was raised in the study is that changes are constantly taking place within Eskom, such as changes in the reporting structure of EAL from Head Office to Eskom Distribution in Provinces. The training department should swiftly embrace change so that customer service should not be compromised.

Another aspect of this problem is presented by Berge (2008), who recognises that there is a lack of proper planning on the part of training departments.

Proper planning of training courses would require EAL to be abreast with departmental issues and to take them into account.

However, in this instance results show a lack of alignment which is a notable concern among such theorists as Brassey, Christensen and Van Dam (2019) and Armstrong and Taylor (2017), among others. It is therefore imperative for this alignment to take place in order to improve the effectiveness of EAL's training programmes.

#### **5.4 Strategies for improvement**

The last objective of the study was to recommend practicable strategies in enhancing customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning. To begin with, literature has proven that one of the most imperative strategies for improving customer service is through evaluation. Studies conducted by Meyer (2016), Armstrong and Taylor (2017) and Shenge (2014), among many others, concurred that constant evaluation produces the desired outcome, which is in this instance customer service.

According to O'Sullivan (2010), one must be ahead of the pack to be remembered. In the sales or service field, people want to deal with the best salespersons or service providers, who must display attributes pointing to their positive attitude, their passion, and their success.

Evaluation has the capacity to reveal areas of weakness, as was the case in this study; hence the issues presented in the above section. When these are addressed adequately, the resulting development is increased customer satisfaction. For this reason, the researcher recommends that EAL fosters a culture of evaluation that keeps them relevant and able to meet customer needs.

In one of the studies that were reviewed in the literature chapter, Latif (2012) emphasised the need to foster customer satisfaction through effective service quality.

In the study, one of the areas highlighted as important was dissatisfaction with the HR business partner who attended a finance meeting without knowledge of the training matrix, and this is an issue that directly correlates with one of the areas of challenge within EAL. To that effect, it is imperative for EAL to also keep abreast with the training needs of its customers so that they can properly execute their duties. On the same trajectory, proactive planning should improve within EAL. In essence, EAL should constantly be using strategies such as a need assessment to remain knowledgeable about the training needs of employees.

When this is done efficiently and effectively, EAL will not need to always wait to be approached to offer certain training courses but will be able to constantly upskill Eskom's workforce by always suggesting, as well as implementing, training programmes that meet the organisation's needs. The issue of planning is central according to Armstrong and Taylor (2017); thus, it is a core facet of strategic alignment which is stressed by Brassey, Christensen and Van Dam (2019). Good customer service is therefore a product of effective and proactive planning, as well as having training programmes that align well with the strategic objectives of an organisation. Again, with proactive planning, EAL would be able to address the challenge of not being able to meet some employees' training needs as they find contingency measures to implement instead of just not offering the training. It is also critical for EAL to conduct on-job post assessments to determine if training received was relevant and effective.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, the researcher focused on interpretation and discussion of the study results. In the following chapter, the final remarks conclude the research report.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide conclusions of the study which was undertaken by the researcher. In doing so, the chapter includes a summary of the study, concluding remarks on the findings in relation to the objectives, and recommendations for future research in the same area of focus. This research tackled the critical issue of training.

#### 6.2 Summary of the study

The study was conducted with the aim of assessing customer satisfaction from the services delivered by the Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN, referred to also as EAL. The study focused mainly on the population of employees who work in Eskom KwaZulu-Natal. Within Eskom, EAL occupies the role of Learning and Development, thus it provides training to employees for the sole purpose of closing the competency gap within the organisation by building a highly skilled workforce and ability to meet the strategic objectives of the company.

The study used a sequential research design which allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Systematic random sampling was used to obtain participants for the quantitative component of the study, while purposeful sampling was used during the qualitative phase. In total, there were 70 quantitative respondents and five qualitative respondents. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS, while thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

##### 6.2.1 Major findings of the study

The following are major findings of the study on each of the objectives that guided the study.

**Objective 1:** To assess customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning.



Results indicated that EAL KZN has managed to be effective in meeting its goals. This was indicated by a significant level of satisfaction among employees from Eskom in KZN. The findings further indicated that the determinants of customer satisfaction were:

- Meeting customers' training needs
- Willingness to listen to customers
- Responding to queries on time
- Professionalism
- Prioritising customers
- Facilitator preparedness
- Applicability of knowledge and skills to work

O'Sullivan (2010) wrote that clients want to deal with experienced, professional, and knowledgeable people. It doesn't matter what age, race, or gender you are; provided that you are capable, it's the first step towards ensuring that clients will be happy and loyal.

Amongst all the demographic variables, only race proved to have an influence on the level of customer satisfaction.

**Objective 2:** To identify areas of improvement within Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.

Eskom Academy of Learning is not without its challenges. While they have to a greater extent been able to satisfy the employees of Eskom KZN, information gathered from the interviews pointed out areas of challenge that require improvement.

These are:

- Lack of information from EAL regarding finance training matrix;
- Lack of a proactive approach to training;
- Inability to implement some training programmes;
- Inability to adapt to new developments in the business.

**Objective 3:** To recommend practical strategies in enhancing customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning.

Three main strategies were suggested for the improvement of customer service in EAL. These strategies are:

- Being aware of the business training needs through Individual Development Plans and Macro training business plan;
- Proactive planning of training interventions;
- Fostering a culture of customer satisfaction assessment;
- Conduct on-job post assessments to determine if training received was relevant and effective.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following noteworthy conclusions are made. The services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in Eskom KwaZulu-Natal are of a good standard and are to a large extent in line with its fundamental goals. EAL is currently operating with the capacity to enhance the momentum of building the desired kind of workforce in KZN; thus, the study was able to show how it capacitates employees in a variety of ways to perform at their best.

In terms of customer satisfaction, EAL has been able to meet many of the training needs of the employees and departments of Eskom KwaZulu-Natal. There was congruence between quantitative and qualitative results on this matter, which was of paramount importance as it justifies this concluding remark. This is not to say that there is no room for improvement: EAL would need to constantly work towards attaining higher levels of customer satisfaction.

The study was able to reveal areas of weakness, which would need to be addressed to ensure a greater level of effectiveness from EAL. Despite its numerous strengths and areas of success, EAL still needs to work on the challenges that are highlighted in this study, keeping in mind that, left unresolved, they can multiply and fester within the organisation, as well as begin to negatively impact the strategic goals of the entire Eskom KwaZulu-Natal.

EAL can improve customer service by focusing on the strategic recommendations discussed in this thesis.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

The researcher recognises that there are still many knowledge gaps in this field of research. Thus, the following recommendations are made.

While this study focused primarily on the service that is offered by EAL at Eskom KwaZulu-Natal, there is acknowledgement of the fact that Eskom is a very large organisation that has many divisions throughout South Africa. Therefore, the study findings are limited in their generalisability. In future studies, obtaining data from different operational views would yield greater insight into the capabilities of EAL, together with its strengths and weaknesses.

In terms of methodological issues, the writer recommends that future studies use a longitudinal design which would allow researchers to track changes over time. Moreover, a longitudinal design would give insight into EAL's exact capabilities when it comes to adapting to change and resolving identified challenges.

## **6.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter marks the end of this research report. It gave a summation of the entire study and the researcher's concluding remarks, as well as recommendations for future studies.

## REFERENCES

- Acharya, A.S., Prakash, A., Saxena, P. and Nigam, A. 2013. Sampling: Why and how of it. *Indian Journal of Medical Specialties*, 4(2): 330-333.
- Afthanorhan, A., Awang, Z., Rashid, N., Foziah, H. and Ghazali, P. 2019. Assessing the effects of service quality on customer satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, 9(1): 13-24.
- Ahuja, M., Singh, R. 2020. Important factors for training effectiveness. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(11): 943-950.
- Akther, S. and Rahman, M.S. 2022. Investigating training effectiveness of public and private banks employees in this digital age: an empirical study. *Emerald Insight*, 43(2): 542-568.
- Alsalamah, I., and Callinan, C. 2022. The Kirkpatrick model for training evaluation: bibliometric analysis after 60 years (1959–2020). *Emerald Insight*, 54(1): 36-63.
- Almeida, F. 2018. Strategies to perform a mixed methods study. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 5(1): 137-151.
- Alvi, M. 2016. A manual for selecting sampling techniques in research. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, 70218. Available: <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70218/1/> (Accessed 25 October 2022).
- Amos, T., Pearce, N., Ristow, L. and Ristow, A. 2016. *Human resource management*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town: Juta.
- Andriotis, N. 2016. *How to evaluate the real impact of your employee training program*. Available: <https://www.talentlms.com/blog/evaluate-employee-training-program/> (Accessed 27 December 2018).
- Andriotis, N. 2017. *Return on training investment and how to measure it*. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-authors/nikos-andriotis> (Accessed 06 October 2020).
- Andriotis, N. 2019. *How to evaluate a training program: The definitive guide to techniques & tools*. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/login> (Accessed 06 October 2020).

- Armstrong, M. and Taylor, S. 2017. *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice*. 14<sup>th</sup> ed. Dorchester: Dorset Press.
- Aruldoss, A., Kowalski, K.B., Travis, M.L. and Parayitam, S. 2022. The relationship between work–life balance and job satisfaction: moderating role of training and development and work environment. *Emerald Insight*, 19(2): 240-271.
- Berge, Z.L. 2008. Why it is so hard to evaluate training in the workplace, 40 (7): 390-395.
- Brassey, J., Christensen, L. and Van Dam, N. 2019. *The essential components of a successful L&D strategy*. Available: [https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/businessfunction/organization/our insights/the essential components of a successful and d strategy/the-essential components-of-a-seccessful-i-and-d-strategy-final.pdf](https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/businessfunction/organization/our%20insights/the%20essential%20components%20of%20a%20successful%20and%20d%20strategy/the-essential-components-of-a-seccessful-i-and-d-strategy-final.pdf) (Accessed 30 September 2020).
- Cooper, H.E., Camic, P.M., Long, D.L., Panter, A.T., Rindskopf, D.E. and Sher, K.J. 2012. *APA Handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. x-701). American Psychological Association.
- Harney, B. 2019. Systems theory forgotten legacy and future prospects, 112-127
- Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N. and Terry, G. 2018. Thematic analysis. *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences*: 1-18.
- Brimstin, J. and Hester, A. 2015. *Training evaluation: knowing what to measure training industry*. Available: <https://trainingindustry.com/articles/measurement-and-analytics/training-evaluation-knowing-what-to-measure/> (Accessed 28 December 2018).
- Charoensap-Kelly, P., Broussard, L., Lindsly, M. and Troy, M. 2015. Evaluation of a soft skills training program. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 79 (2): 154-179. Available: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329490615602090> (Accessed 27 December 2018).
- Chaubey, A., Sahoo, C.K., and Das, K.C. 2022. Examining the effect of training and employee creativity on organizational innovation: a moderated mediation analysis. *Emerald Insight*, 30(2): 499-524.

- Clarke, V. and Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, 26(2): 120-123.
- [Cloe, H. 2014. \*Gamification: engage your learners and boost return on investment\*. Available: https://elearningindustry.com/subjects/elearning-concepts/gratification-education \(Accessed 6 October 2020\).](https://elearningindustry.com/subjects/elearning-concepts/gratification-education)
- Cloe, H. 2018. *5 Reasons why calculating return on training investment is essential*. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/return-on-training-investment-essential-5-reason-calculating> (Accessed 06 October 2020).
- Cornett, I. 2019. *How to demonstrate the value of a training and development investment*. Available: <https://www.eaglesflight.com/blog/topic/training-development> (Accessed 06 October 2020).
- Craig, D. and Kohl, K. 2014. *Accelerated learning for breakthrough results*. Randburg: Knowres Publishing.
- Dawson, C. 2019. *Introduction to research methods. A practical guide for anyone undertaking a research project*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Robinson.
- De Klerk, M. 2020. Eskom Academy of Learning 2022/2023 - leadership faculty (Presentation).
- Dudovskiy, J. 2018. *The ultimate guide to writing a dissertation in business studies: a step by step assistance*. Available: <https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/reliability-validity-and-repeatability/> (Accessed 15 January 2019)
- Erasmus, B.J., Leodolff, P.v.Z, Mda, T.V. and Nel, P.S. 2010. *Managing training and development in South Africa*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Southern Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd. 2017b. Human Resource Group – Eskom Academy of Learning Operational plan 2017-2018 / 2021-2022 (Policy document)
- Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd. 2017a. Process control manual (PCM) for manage learning delivery, 32-1246. Sunninghill: Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S.A. and Alkassim, R.S. 2016. Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1): 1-4.

- Farjad, S. 2012. The Evaluation Effectiveness of training courses in University by Kirkpatrick model. Department of Educational Management (case study: Islamshahr University), 22 April 2021.
- Glen, S., 2021. Cronbach's Alpha: simple definition, use and interpretation. From StatisticsHowTo.com: Elementary Statistics for the rest of us! Available: <https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/statistics-definitions/cronbachs-alpha-spss/> (Accessed 22 April 2021).
- Goddard, W. and Melville, S. 2001. *Research Methodology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Gordon-Davis, L. 2009. *Client services and human relations*. Cape Town: Nasou Via Africa.
- Govender, T. 2018. Life-saving rules standard. Eskom generation, risk, and sustainability divisions (Policy document).
- Griffin, R. 2012. A practitioner friendly and scientifically robust training evaluation approach. *Emerald Insight*, 24(6): 393-402.
- Griffin, R.P. 2010. Means and ends: effective training evaluation. *Emerald Insight*, 42(4): 220-225.
- Hamouche, S. and Chabani, Z. 2021. Covid-19 and the new forms of employment relationship: implications and insights for human resource development. *Emerald Insight*, 53(4): 366-379.
- Ho, L., Kuo, Y and Kuo, T.H. 2014. How a training institute acquired learner satisfaction and loyalty under economic recession. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 25(1-2): 158-174.
- Jehanzeb, K. 2022. How perception of training impacts organizational citizenship behaviour: power distance as moderator. *Emerald Insight*, 51 (3): 922-944.
- Joseph, R. 2020. *The role of algorithms, automation, and artificial intelligence in human resources management*. Available: [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.sabpp.co.za/resource/resmgr/siphiwe\\_2020/fact\\_sheet\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.sabpp.co.za/resource/resmgr/siphiwe_2020/fact_sheet_july_2020.pdf) (Accessed 13 September 2020).
- Khan, Z.S. 2022. SAPLSO report July 2022: Central East Cluster Learning and Development (Presentation).

- Khuzwayo, C. 2012. Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd - Eskom Academy of Learning in KwaZulu Natal – a brief history (Presentation).
- Khuzwayo, C. 2021. Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd - Human Resources Learning & Development Central East Merger (Presentation).
- Kodwani, A.D. and Kodwani, M. 2021. Exploring determinants of pre-training motivation and training effectiveness: a temporal investigation. *Emerald Insight*, 9(4): 321-337.
- Kumar, A., Bhaskar, P., Nadeem, S.P., Tyagi, M., Reyes, J.A.G. 2020. Sustainability Adoption through Sustainable Human Resource Management: A Systematic Literature Review and Conceptual Framework. *International Journal of Mathematical, Engineering and Management Sciences*, 5(6): 1014-1031.
- Kunche, A., Puli, R.K., Guniganti, S. and Puli, D. 2011. *Analysis and evaluation of training effectiveness*. Available: <http://article.sapub.org/10.5923.j.hrmr.20110101.01.html> (Accessed 28 December 2018).
- Kurdi, B., Alshurideh, M. and Alnaser, A. 2020. The impact of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction: Theoretical and empirical underpinning. *Management Science Letters*, 10(15): 3561-3570.
- Laskaris, J. 2018. *How to create the perfect training: aligning training goals with business objectives*. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/login> (Accessed 30 September 2020).
- Latif, K.F. 2012. An integrated model of training effectiveness and satisfaction with employee development interventions. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 44(4): 211-222.
- Lavrakas, P.J. 2011. *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. California: Sage publications. Available: [https://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Rhp1AwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Encyclopedia+of+Survey+Research+Methods+\(Lavrakas+2011\).&ots=NUL1GQpHDd&sig=DIWXKNxHj0TaaaF6uTBpql5iwxl&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Rhp1AwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Encyclopedia+of+Survey+Research+Methods+(Lavrakas+2011).&ots=NUL1GQpHDd&sig=DIWXKNxHj0TaaaF6uTBpql5iwxl&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false) (Accessed 10 October 2022).
- Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. and Johnson, L.R. 2014. *Practical research: Planning and design* (p. 360). Pearson Education Limited.



- Lovell, S. 2012. The effectiveness and efficiency of the training programme run by the training and development section in the Office of the Auditor General. M.B.A., Technikon Witwatersrand Business Management Unit.
- Maleku, A., Kim, Y.K., Kagotho, N. and Lim, Y. 2021. Expanding the transformative explanatory sequential mixed methods design archetype in a cross-cultural context: The polemics of African refugee livelihoods in places of resettlement. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 15(2): 212-239.
- Maree, K. (2009). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Shaik Publishers.
- McCrudden, M.T. and McTigue, E.M. 2019. Implementing integration in an explanatory sequential mixed methods study of belief bias about climate change with high school students. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 13(3): 381-400.
- Meyer, M. 2016. The Learning and development landscape in South Africa. *SABPP (South African Board For People Practices) Fact Sheet*, 2016(09): 8
- Mikołajczyk, K. 2022. Changes in the approach to employee development in organisations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Emerald Insight*, 46(5/6): 544-562.
- Mishra, S. 2018. Influence of Group Composition on Participant Reaction to Training: A Study in an Indian Power Transmission Organisation. *Sage Journal*, 43(3): 141-155.
- Mookapele, M. 2018. *EWSETA (Energy & Water Sector Education Training Authority), strategic plan 2015/16- 2019/20*. Available [https://wwwewseta.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/strategic\\_plan\\_2015-2020-2.pdf](https://wwwewseta.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/strategic_plan_2015-2020-2.pdf) (Accessed 27 March 2022).
- Mpumulwana, N. 2020. Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd - Care for Customer (Presentation).
- Mudor, H., Tooksoon, P. (2011) Conceptual framework on the relationship between human resource management practices, job satisfaction, and turnover. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 2(2): 41-49.
- Nawangwulan, S.T.D., Hufad, A., Ardiwinata, J.S., Saripah, L., Yunus L.D. 2020. Effective communication and collaboration training evaluation for employee performance improvement at national nuclear energy agency, *Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development*, 11(1): 1-2.

- Nguyen, H.T., Nguyen, H., Nguyen, N.D., and Phan, A.C. 2018. Determinants of customer satisfaction and loyalty in Vietnamese life-insurance setting. *Sustainability*, 10(4): 1151.
- Nikandrou, I., Brinia, V. and Bereri, E. 2009. Trainee perceptions of training transfer: an empirical analysis, 33 (3): 255-270.
- O'Sullivan, L. 2010. *Client service excellence. The 10 commandments*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Randburg: Mega Digital.
- Pangarkar, A. 2018. *4 Steps to evaluate employee learning performance*. Available: <https://elearningindustry.com/employee-performance-evaluation-learning-4-steps> (Accessed 27 December 2018).
- Penceliah, D.S., Noel, D.T., Adat, N. 2015. Problems and perspectives in management, customer satisfaction within pharmacies in a supermarket: a South African perspective. *Problems and Perspective in Management*, 13(2): 452.
- Phillips, J.J. 2011. *Handbook of training evaluation and measurement methods*. New York: Routledge.
- Phillips, P.P., and Phillips, J.J. 2016. *Real world training evaluation*. Available: <https://www.googletagmanager.com/ns.html?id=GTM-WGTDK2H>"height="0"width="0"style="display:none,visibility:hidden"></iframe (Accessed 12 November 2018).
- Pineda, P. 2010. Evaluation of training in organisations: a proposal for an integrated model. *Emerald Insight*, 34(7): 673-693.
- Priyashantha, K.G. 2023. Disruptive technologies for human resource management: a conceptual framework development and research agenda. *Emerald Insight*, 15(1): 21-36.
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, 2019. Learning Matters (Form 3 Annexure H).
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. 2010. *QCTO publications, policies, guidelines, and forms*. Available <https://www.qcto.org.za/publications,-policies,-guidelines---forms.html> (Accessed 27 March 2022).

- Queirós, A., Faria, D. and Almeida, F. 2017. Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9): 369-387.
- Raphoto, C. 2015. Care for customers (learner guide). school of customer services. Eskom Academy of Learning. Eskom Holding SOC Ltd, 01 January 2015.
- Sahni, J. 2020. Managerial training effectiveness: An assessment through Kirkpatrick framework. *TEM Journal*, 9(3): 1227-1233.
- Scaduto, A., Lindsay, D. and Chiaburu, D.S. 2008. *Leader influences on training effectiveness: motivation and outcome expectation processes*. Available: [https://scholar.google.co.za/scholar?start=20&q=training+effectiveness&hl=en&as\\_sdt=0,5](https://scholar.google.co.za/scholar?start=20&q=training+effectiveness&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5) (Accessed 28 December 2018).
- Sharma, G., 2017. Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International journal of Applied Research*, 3(7): 749-752.
- Shenge, N.A. 2014. An international journal - training evaluation, benefits, and issues. *Sabinet*, 22(1): 50-58.
- Smith, D. 2018. *7 key factors for learning program success: a practical guide to evaluating training*. Available: <https://www.bizlibrary.com/article/factors-for-evaluating-training-programs/> (Accessed 28 December 2018).
- South African Bureau of Standards. 2015. *Quality management systems – Requirements*, SANS. Pretoria: SABS Standards Division. Available <https://www.iso.org/standard/62085.html> (Accessed 27 March 2022).
- South African Bureau of Standards. 2018. *ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management systems– Requirements with guidance for use*, SANS 12885. Pretoria: SABS Standards Division. Available <https://www.iso.org/standard/63787.html> (Accessed 27 March 2022).
- South Africa, Department of Basic Education. 1998. *Skills Development Act 97 of 1998*, Cape Town: Government Printer.
- Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., Terre Balance, M.J. and Painter, D. eds. 2006. *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences*. Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd.

- Trochim, W.M.K. 2006. *Probability sampling*. Available  
<https://socialresearchmethods.net/kb/sampprob.php>  
(Accessed 15 January 2019).
- Van Staden, A. 2016. *Eskom academy of learning customer service survey at Eskom EAL Sites including KwaZulu Natal*. Johannesburg: EAL Midrand.
- Van Zyl, L.E. 2014. *Research methodology for the economic and management sciences*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town: CTP Printers.
- Warnich, S., Carrell, M.R., Elbert, N.F. and Hatfield, R.D. 2015. *Human resource management in South Africa*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (China): RR Donnelley.

## ANNEXURES

### A. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE



Dear Research Participant

Thank you for showing interest in this study. Please note participation is voluntary. I'm currently completing Master of Management Sciences Human Resources Qualification at Durban University of Technology. To fulfil the requirement of completing this degree, I am required to complete a research project. You are therefore invited to participate in the research project survey titled ***Assessing customer satisfaction from the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning: A case study of Eskom KwaZulu-Natal Operating Unit.***

- The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and all responses will remain confidential and secure.
- Please note that you can only place one X as an answer for each question.

<b>Participants name (optional):</b>									
<b>Gender:</b>	Male		Female		Other				
<b>Age:</b>	18 – 25		26 - 35		36 - 45	46 - 55	56 >		
<b>Race:</b>	African		White	Indian		Coloured			
<b>Task Grading:</b>	T06	T07	T08	T09	T10	T11	T12	T13	
<b>Division:</b>	Generation	Transmission	Distribution	Finance	Commercial	Human Resources			
	Corporate Affairs	Sustainability & Risk	Customer Services	SHEQS	Information management	Eskom real estates			

	<b>General impression of EAL (Eskom Academy of Learning) KZN.</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1.	I am aware of the training courses and services offered by Eskom Academy of Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	EAL succeed in providing me with training courses I have applied for.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	EAL demonstrate willingness and ability to listen and accurately interpret my requirements.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	EAL respond to my enquiry within reasonable timelines.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	EAL keep promises and provide feedback on progress regarding my enquiry.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	EAL treat me in a professional manner in all my contacts with them.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	EAL is easily accessible via all communication channels.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	EAL put customer first in everything they do.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I sometimes feel discriminated against in my dealings with EAL.	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>During and after training attended</b>	1	2	3	4	5

10	Training logistics such as dates, venue, time etc. were clearly communicated in advanced.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Training received met my expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Training material used was of quality.	1	2	3	4	5
13	The course presenter was well prepared to deliver the training.	1	2	3	4	5
14	The training environment was conducive to learning e.g., venue, temperature, visual aids etc.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I am able to apply skills and knowledge learnt from training I attended.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My performance has improved as a result of training I attended.	1	2	3	4	5
17	My attitude and behavior changed positively as a result of training I attended.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I am happy with the overall performance of Eskom Academy of Learning KZN.	1	2	3	4	5

Please give any additional comments and suggestions on how Eskom Academy of Learning KZN can improve.

---



---



---

**Thank you for completing the questionnaire**

## B. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



The objectives of the research study are:

- To assess customer satisfaction with the services delivered by Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.
- To identify areas of improvement within Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.
- Recommend practicable strategies in improving customer service in Eskom Academy of Learning in KZN.

Questions:

1. Please name some of the training courses and services offered by Eskom Academy in KZN.
2. Does EAL succeed in providing the courses that you have applied for?  
Please support your answer by giving examples.
3. Do you feel EAL provides you with quality training?
4. In what ways do you feel EAL adds significant value to its customers?
5. Do you think EAL puts the customer first in everything they do?  
Please explain and use examples, where possible.
6. Please mention any improvements or changes in your department that were a result of training that was successfully attended by your staff.
7. What is your general impression of the overall performance of EAL in KZN in 2019/2020 financial year?
  - a. Improved
  - b. Remained the same
  - c. Worsened

Please support your answer

8. Please give any additional comment and suggestions on how EAL KZN can improve.

End.