THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL, MEDIUM AND MICRO ENTERPRISES (SMMEs) IN UMKOMAAS KWAZULU-NATAL

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ABSTRACT

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play a vital role in driving economic growth, employment, and community development, particularly in emerging economies like South Africa. However, many SMMEs encounter considerable operational and strategic challenges, primarily stemming from a shortage of skilled labour and managerial expertise. To address these skill gaps, short-term training and development programmes are often proposed, aimed at enhancing the capability of SMMEs to thrive and operate efficiently. This study explores the effects of short-term training interventions on the growth and performance of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal, with the objective of assessing the effectiveness of these programmes within a localised South African context. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study gathers insights through in-depth interviews with 10 SMME owners and managers who have participated in short-term training initiatives. Thematic analysis is utilised to uncover prevalent themes related to skills acquisition, operational enhancements, and the perceived influence of training on business outcomes. The research aims to evaluate whether short-term training has a direct positive impact on critical performance metrics. Preliminary findings suggest that targeted, skills-centric training can significantly bolster the operational and financial performance of SMMEs, although the degree of impact may vary based on business size, industry, and resource availability. These results underscore the potential of short-term training programmes to facilitate regional economic development through sustainable growth in SMMEs. Moreover, this study offers important recommendations for policymakers, training providers, and business development agencies concerning the design of effective training programmes tailored to the specific needs of SMMEs in Umkomaas and comparable communities. By identifying best practices and areas for enhancement, this research contributes to the broader conversation on capacity building and the essential role of targeted training in promoting economic resilience in local economies.

KEY WORDS: Short term Training, Development programmes, growth, performance, Umkomaas, Economic impact, small business management, SMMEs, skill acquisition.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Winnie Snegugu Xulu do hereby affirm that unless otherwise specified, this dissertation is the product of my own work and it has not been submitted to any other tertiary institution for a degree award or other purposes and all the authors whose work contributed to this study have been accordingly referenced.

I hereby give consent for this dissertation to be made available for inter-library loan, photocopying, and made available to outside interested organisations and students.

11-Nov-2024

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Signed **Date**

Winnie Snegugu Xulu

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) have grown in importance, as a result of post-industrialisation, emerging as the foundational support for economies and presenting a promising solution to address the labour shortage through employment opportunities (Brendzel-Skowera 2021). The stabilisation of a nation's financial condition; increased technological innovation; the creation of job possibilities; an increase in industrial production; and industrial diversification are all believed to be benefits of SMMEs. South Africa similarly relies on SMMEs to generate a sufficient number of employment opportunities to address the significant level of unemployment within the population. Additionally, the growth of SMMEs aids in lowering income disparity, preserving social stability, and advancing private sector development. However, training in entrepreneurial skills in South Africa is still not prioritised. Entrepreneurial education and awareness are given significant importance by the government's National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030. By 2030, the NDP aims to foster a society in which all South Africans, with particular emphasis on youth and women, are equipped through education, access to information, and support services to pursue entrepreneurship. In this context, Fatoki (2018) points out that continuously changing circumstances call for training at all organisational levels. Regular training should be provided to SMMEs, as well as to private and public organisations. In accordance with the findings presented by Rykleif and Tengeh (2022), training programmes can equip owners and managers with the skills necessary to effectively address specific challenges. This not only contributes to time and cost efficiencies but also enhances their understanding of established norms and procedures that may facilitate the successful execution of their responsibilities. Training in entrepreneurial, business, and motivational skills are all possible useful subcategories. Despite the abundance of options, many training schools specialise in just one field. Institutions that serve the SMME sector poorly do so by emphasising business skills (management training) or motivational skills more than entrepreneurial abilities. It is important to think of training for SMME owner/managers as a three-legged pot that cannot stand on one leg alone.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Governments worldwide recognise the vital role that small enterprises play in fostering economic stability and growth, facilitating new job creation, promoting social cohesion, and driving overall development (Malik, 2018). These small firms function as economic shock absorbers during challenging economic periods, effectively shielding economies from potential collapse. Their contributions ensure that economic activities persist, even amidst adversity. Consequently, numerous developed and developing nations prioritise the support and expansion of small businesses. Research by Morina (2021) highlighted that small enterprises serve as key contributors to socioeconomic development, largely due to their significant impact on gross domestic product (GDP) growth. In knowledge-based economies, improving the capabilities of all employees, including managers, is essential for business performance. Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) are required to demonstrate agility in responding to fluctuating market dynamics and evolving business conditions, often operating with constrained resources. Consequently, there is a pronounced emphasis on achieving managerial excellence (Frost, 2019). These constraints also hinder their capacity to engage in training initiatives, despite research indicating a positive correlation between the extent of management training and the financial performance of SMMEs. Preliminary studies suggest that structured management training contributes to reducing the failure rates of small businesses, which are significantly higher than those of larger enterprises, particularly during their nascent stages.

Moreover, smaller organisations frequently provide limited opportunities for external training across all employee levels, including management, due to a variety of factors. The culture of entrepreneurship training and commercial practice is still underdeveloped among South African SMMEs, particularly in Umkomaas, KZN. This might be related to a reliance mentality and a lack of risk-taking tendency in the culture (Dixit and Sinha 2021.). Due to this, SMMEs have poor levels of entrepreneurial aptitude and business management proficiency. Most SMMEs are unable to advance past the establishment phase due to these poor levels of management and entrepreneurial aptitude (Ncube and Chimucheka 2019).

Therefore, it is necessary to develop entrepreneurial capacity through a deliberate entrepreneurship development system, such as designing market demand-led entrepreneurship and business management training for various levels of SMMEs. For SMMEs in the industry, it is essential to strive for sustainable qualitative growth while also ensuring that citizens are aligned with business objectives (Ayandibu, Ngobese, Ganiyu and Kaseeeram 2019). One of the elements that may be very important to the success of SMMEs is staff training and development. Thus, this research examined how offering short-term training and development courses to SMMEs might be advantageous to SMME growth and productivity.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the elements driving the expansion of SMMEs in South Africa continues to be the supply of the most beneficial training. In this context, Dladla and Mutambara (2018) point out that continuously changing circumstances call for training at all organisational levels. Regular training should be provided to SMMEs, as well as to private and public organisations. Pauli (2020) outlined that professional training can play a pivotal role in equipping proprietors and managers with the necessary skills to navigate specific challenges effectively. This proactive approach not only promotes efficiency by conserving both time and financial resources but also enhances their understanding of established norms and processes that facilitate the successful execution of their responsibilities. Training in entrepreneurial, business and motivational skills are all possible useful subcategories (Susomrith, Coetzer and Ampofo 2019). Despite the abundance of options, many training schools specialise in just one field. Institutions that serve the SMME sector poorly do so by emphasisng business skills (management training) or motivational skills more than entrepreneurial abilities (Nganu 2018). It is important to think of training for SMME owners /managers as a three-legged pot that cannot stand on one leg alone. This research therefore investigated the provision of short-term SMME training courses to SMMEs in Amahlongwa Mission in Umkomaas KZN.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of short-term training and development initiatives on the growth and performance outcomes of SMMEs within the Umkomaas region of KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, the research established the benefits that are accrued when an SMME engages in training courses and determine the challenges that result from SMMEs not engaging and participating in short-term training courses.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the impact of short-term training and development courses on the growth of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN.
2. To explore the impact of short-term training and development courses on the performance of SMMEs in KZN.
3. To identify the type of short-term training and development courses provided for SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN.
4. To investigate the experiences of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN, using short-term training and development courses.
5. To provide recommendations on the improvement of short-term training and development courses provided for SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study endeavoured to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of short-term training and development courses on the growth of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN?
2. How do short-term training and development courses impact the performance of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN?
3. What type of short-term training courses are provided for SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN?

4. What are the experiences of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN in using short-term training and development courses?

5. How can the short-term training and development courses provided for SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN be improved?

1.7 RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY

The research rational was founded on the significant role that SMMEs play in South Africa's economy, particularly within local communities such as Umkomaas in KwaZulu-Natal. Small Medium and Micro Enterprises are often regarded as essential contributors to economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. However, many of these enterprises encounter difficulties in sustaining and expanding their operations due to constraints such as limited resources, difficulty accessing skilled labour, and gaps in management knowledge. Short-term training and development programmes represent a viable approach to address these challenges by providing targeted skill development that may lead to notable improvements in productivity, growth, and overall organisational performance.

The researcher sought to assess the effectiveness of short-term training initiatives in equipping SMMEs with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate common challenges and succeed in a competitive marketplace. By concentrating on the Umkomaas area, the research aspired to contribute to regional development by pinpointing specific training interventions that could benefit local SMMEs. The insights garnered may assist policymakers, training institutions, and business proprietors in the implementation of strategic training programmes that promote sustainable economic growth within the region.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs): In the South African context, SMMEs are defined as businesses characterised by a limited number of employees and moderate annual turnover. These enterprises are categorised based on size:

"small" businesses employ between 11 and 50 individuals, while "medium" businesses have 51 to 200 employees, and "micro" businesses consist of one to ten employees. SMMEs play a vital role in regional economic growth by generating employment opportunities and contributing to local economic development (Bhorat, Asmal, Lilenstein and Van der Zee 2018).

Short-Term Training and Development: Noe and Tews (2018) state that short-term training and development programmes could consist as organised educational sessions, workshops, or practical learning experiences that span a limited duration, usually ranging from a few days to a few months. These programmes are designed to provide participants with targeted skills and knowledge needed to tackle immediate challenges and enhance specific areas of business operations.

Growth: In this context, growth pertains to the enhancement of the size, revenue, or market presence of SMMEs (Weinzimmer, Nystrom, and Freeman 2018). Indicators of growth may encompass increased sales, an expanded customer base, a larger workforce, or geographical expansion of the business.

Performance: Performance is measured by the ability of SMMEs to achieve their goals efficiently and effectively (Al Aina and Atan 2020). Key performance indicators (KPIs) include profitability, productivity, quality of products or services, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The focus was on SMMEs located in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal, with an emphasis on assessing the impact of short-term training and development programmes on their growth and performance. It exclusively included businesses that meet the SMME criteria as established by South African business standards. Furthermore, the research concentrated on the outcomes of training programmes lasting less than six months. This specific timeframe facilitates a thorough analysis of the immediate effects of short-term interventions, rather than their long-term implications.

The scope of this study did not extend to larger enterprises or SMMEs outside of Umkomaas, nor did it take into account other potential factors influencing SMME performance, such as changes in government policy, market dynamics, or external

economic conditions. By maintaining this focused approach, the study aimed to provide a detailed examination of the relationship between short-term training interventions and business outcomes within a defined geographic and economic framework.

1.10 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

CHAPTER 1: Background and Overview of the Study - This chapter offered a succinct introduction to the study, outlining the central topic and providing essential background information relevant to the research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review - In this chapter, a comprehensive examination of key literature concerning the training and development of SMMEs is presented.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology and Design - This chapter delineated the procedures and methodologies that were employed in the systematic collection of data for this study.

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Results and Discussion of Findings - Chapter Four involved a thorough analysis of the collected data, presenting the results in an organised manner through themes and subthemes.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and Recommendations - The final chapter integrated the insights gained from the study, delivering conclusive statements and offering actionable recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Continuous training is necessary at all organisational levels due to the rapidly evolving environment. Regular training should be provided to SMMEs, as well as to private and public organisations. Owners and managers can benefit from training by learning how to address specific issues and so save time and money. They can also learn about specific regulations and processes that may help them do their task more easily. Training in entrepreneurial, business, and motivational skills are all useful subcategories. Despite the abundance of options, many training schools specialise in just one field. Institutions that serve the SMME sector poorly do so by emphasising business skills (management training) or motivational skills more than entrepreneurial abilities. It is important to think of training for SMME owner/managers as a three-legged pot that cannot stand on one leg alone.

Small, Medium and Micro enterprises (SMMEs) are crucial to the economies of all countries around the world and play an important role in generating cash, production of goods and services, and creation of employment. Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) have consistently been acknowledged as vital contributors to the economic vitality of nations worldwide. In South Africa, approximately 68% of the workforce is employed by SME enterprises (Algan 2019). Seventy percent of South Africa's SMMEs fail in their first year, a shocking statistic that makes the nation the greatest economic failure in the world, according to Rob Davies, the country's minister of trade and industry (Hlatywayo 2022). In addition, the global financial crisis has created a challenging environment for SMMEs, with a decrease in the demand for goods and services, accompanied by a reduction in the volume of loans extended by banking institutions and other financial entities (Adesina and Ocholla, 2021). This elevated failure rate, coupled with financial and economic instability, has significantly impacted Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). According to Moos and Sambo (2018), the primary reasons for SMME failure in South Africa include a lack of acceptable managerial skills, knowledge in critical function areas, and a lack of adequate financial understanding. As a result, SMMEs now had to compete for

aptitude and proficiency, which raised awareness of the need for training and development in SMMEs.

According to Nguyen and Duong (2020), training is the nerve that bares the necessity for the elegant and flawless operation of work, helping to improve the quality of work, employees' life, and organisational development. Igwemeka, Odidi, Imo, Igwe and Egbo (2020) state that organisations, particularly SMMEs, must serve, cultivate, and advance in their markets, making staff training and development essential in this competitive environment. In the modern corporate environment, training is one of the most crucial elements because it helps employees and organisations increase their competencies and efficiency. Employee development and performance are two of the most crucial aspects that affect an employee's performance and productivity (Frost 2019). Because they recognise the importance that additional training may bring to their companies, the wealthier companies offer it to their staff. Training and staff development frequently define the success of the SMMEs.

Despite the growing emphasis on the value of training and development for small enterprises, the literature has not given much attention to training and development in SMMEs. The majority of earlier research studies, which tended to concentrate on larger organisations, emphasised the value of managerial development and strategic human resource management. It is generally assumed that SMMEs should invest in training and development since it improves their business performance (Hyasat, Al-Weshah and Kakeesh 2022).

Following a discussion of the relevant literature, the impact of training and development on performance and growth of SMMEs and the significance of training and development in SMMEs were addressed. A discussion of the crucial training and development programmes in organisations follows in the literature review.

2.1 THE ROLE OF SMMES IN THE ECONOMY

Governments are often urged to provide support for SMMEs due to the enhanced economic benefits they offer compared to larger corporations, particularly in areas such as job creation, operational efficiency, and overall growth potential. The following details underline the crucial role that SMMEs play in the economy:

2.1.1 Labour Intensity

In many emerging economies, small businesses employ a sizable portion of the labour force since they require less labour than large businesses. Numerous scholars argue that within various industries, SMMEs employ a greater number of individuals compared to large corporations. Amoah and Amoah (2018) noted that the size of an enterprise is not necessarily a reliable indicator of labour intensity, as many smaller businesses may actually have higher capital requirements than their larger counterparts. Furthermore, the substantial contribution of SMMEs to the workforce in developing nations such as Zambia may be more closely related to the composition of products being produced in those economies rather than the intrinsic labour intensity characteristic of small enterprises.

2.1.2 Job Creation

It is often posited that SMMEs play a crucial role in fostering employment growth alongside their labour-intensive characteristics. Consequently, the establishment of new businesses is a significant contributor to job creation (Shelly, Sharma, and Bawa, 2020). SMMEs can be metaphorically likened to a diverse array of seeds, with a select few evolving and maturing into substantial enterprises. Thus, rather than focusing on the multitude, it is more pertinent to recognise that it is a limited number of these ventures that possess the potential to generate employment opportunities. The SMME sector is the key strategy for addressing the unemployment problem in South Africa.

2.1.3 Stimulating Competition

Adam Smith and other economists (Smith, Aaron, Manley and McDowell 2020) examined the foundational principles that contribute to economic competitiveness. In a competitive environment, there exists the potential for individuals to exploit their positions through practices such as implementing excessively high pricing, postponing technological progress, marginalising competitors, or engaging in other similar activities. The presence of small firms is essential for fostering a competitive landscape (Erdin and Ozkaya, 2020). Moreover, systems supporting Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises play a crucial role in stimulating competition, as entrepreneurs in smaller

businesses often demonstrate a willingness to enter markets characterised by perceived business opportunities.

2.1.4 Helping Large Firms

The principles that support economic competitiveness have been discussed by Adam Smith and other economists. For the competition to have a competitive edge, a small company is required (Erdin and Ozkaya 2020). Small business proprietors are highly motivated to explore and engage in any market that presents viable business opportunities, therefore SMME systems encourage competition.

2.1.5 Efficiency

The optimal size of a business differs significantly across various industries. The continued presence of SMMEs in a competitive economic landscape is a testament to their operational effectiveness (Tambunan 2019). If SMMEs were not delivering value, it is likely that more dominant competitors would have quickly displaced them from the market.

2.2 THEORIES OF SMMES IN RELATION TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In the evolving field of strategic management, the importance of theoretical frameworks cannot be overstated, particularly in the pursuit of sustainable growth for SMMEs. It is essential to recognise that a robust theoretical foundation is not merely a reflection of the opinions of marketing professionals (Jelenc, 2019). Moreover, within the context of an adaptive science that lays the groundwork for significant advancements, theory is not only intellectually engaging but also highly applicable in practice. Discussions that challenge the notion that theory operates independently of practical application are indicative of thoughtful theoretical discourse. Academics specialising in strategic management theory have grasped the fundamental essence of theory and the complexities it presents to the profession. Prescott and Gatrell (2020) state that theory provides a detailed explanation of the phenomenon's nature or how

it works. According to Torraco (2016), a theory is viewed as an idea or collection of principles used to define anything. The primary contribution of this research to existing theories underscores that all theoretical frameworks are effective in elucidating the variables, whether directly or indirectly related to SMMEs and their sustainable growth. Consequently, organisations are increasingly leveraging, developing, expanding, and restructuring their operations to establish and maintain critical dynamic capabilities, which is a pivotal element in the relevance of this concept. According to a related perspective, SMMEs can continue to remodel their resource base and develop new skills by being able to unravel the perception of the firm, which is a crucial component in all theories. In addition to adopting creative strategies, SMMEs establish and nurture a variety of unique competencies to achieve sustainable growth in a market that is highly competitive. Moreover, the suggested examination of the theoretical frameworks supporting the growth of sustainable SMMEs establishes a robust inductive basis for innovative quantitative research.

2.2.1 Institutional Theory

An institutional theory serves as a valuable framework for analysing the various ways in which societal and organisational influences have impacted SMMEs in their pursuit of sustainable growth (Fauzi and Sheng, 2022). It is essential to articulate the significance of sustainable initiatives, as businesses face challenges from multiple sources, including governmental regulations and competitive pressures. Consequently, institutional theory primarily focuses on sustainable innovation and both internal and external firm-centric factors. This theory provides opportunities for SMMEs to leverage normative, coercive, and mimetic mechanisms, thereby informing their environmental, social, and economic decision-making and validating their commitment to sustainable business practices (Shibin et al. 2020). A growing number of SMMEs worldwide aspire to integrate sustainable practices into their operations, which offer the potential for enhanced profitability, resilience, and positive social and environmental outcomes (Caldera, Desha, and Dawes, 2019).

Business leaders are actively addressing institutional constraints through a range of innovative strategies. This includes the development of new business models, collaboration with various organisations, initiatives aimed at community engagement,

and partnerships with regulatory authorities (Eijdenberg, Thompson, Verduijn, and Essers, 2019). The formulation of sustainable growth policies and practices, along with the recognition of quality management frameworks and technology orientation, has been effectively informed by institutional theory (Roxas, Lindsay, Ashill, and Victorio, 2017). Upon understanding the underlying motivations for technology orientation, institutional theory provides valuable insights (Liu, Ke, Wei, Gu, and Chen, 2020). There are three distinct types of competing pressures that influence the strength of an institutional framework: normative pressures, mimetic pressures, and coercive pressures (Caldera, Desha, and Dawes, 2019). Organisational efforts to enhance their sustainability programmes encompassing social and environmental development are driven by all three of these influences, thereby ensuring alignment with best practices and perceived value. Institutional theory posits that social structures can be approached in more expansive and sustainable manners, with structural-building processes acting as guidelines for the behaviour of societal authorities through established rules and standards. Caldera, Desha, and Dawes (2019) focus on a process through which behaviours may be recognised as economic, social, and environmental standards within an institutional context.

According to Srisathan, Ketkaew, and Naruetharadhol (2023), institutional theory elucidates the role of innovative characteristics or capabilities that facilitate the sustainable growth of SMMEs, thus serving as a framework that inspires management practices to aspire towards sustainable business expansion. Key factors influencing this framework encompass organisational culture, the legal and social environment, traditional values, economic incentive programmes, and market valuation. While the initial emphasis was on regulatory frameworks established by institutions, a contemporary perspective has shifted towards institutional entrepreneurship, which involves the adoption of sustainable business models (Hadjimanolis, 2019) and a proactive focus on opportunities. Within this theoretical framework, two primary drivers of organisational behaviour are identified: moral legitimacy and isomorphism. Organisations actively seek legitimacy to address the expectations of stakeholders and the broader society (Ratten and Usmanij, 2020). In response to institutional pressures, firms are increasingly making significant isomorphic decisions aimed at sustainability (Ahmad et al., 2020). Moreover, businesses are engaging with various

stakeholders to foster innovation within the parameters of the institutional framework, thereby supporting the long-term growth of SMMEs.

2.2.2 Contingency theory

In accordance with contingency theory, organisations can enhance their strategic alignment with the external environment and navigate uncertainties to bolster their competitiveness, performance, and sustainability. The primary theoretical framework utilised for analysing organisational dynamics is contingency theory (Dentchev et al., 2018). Central to this theory is the premise that organisational effectiveness results from the alignment of various organisational components, such as structure and external contingencies (Bagnoli and Giachetti, 2015). Contingency plans encompass the environmental context, organisational scale, and overarching strategy (McAdam, Miller, and McSorley, 2019). Organisations seek to validate strategic fit, as effective strategic decisions positively influence overall performance (Van Looy and Van den Bergh, 2018). Companies are encouraged to mitigate misalignment arising from contingency adjustments by adopting new organisational characteristics that correspond with evolving contingency conditions (Victer, 2020). Consequently, organisations are undergoing transformation to implement necessary contingency measures aimed at preventing productivity declines. Thus, the concept of fit, which impacts performance and subsequently drives initiatives for adaptive change and sustainable corporate growth, is integral to the framework of contingency theory (Dobbs and Hamilton, 2017).

The theory of contingency posits that innovation is characterised by the level of novelty and the volume of new products introduced within a specific timeframe that managers strategically choose to pursue. This approach enhances the interdependence between various business units that contribute to the innovation process (McAdam, Miller, and McSorley, 2016). The unique problem-solving demands associated with innovation necessitate the transfer of knowledge across different functional domains (Bagnoli and Giachetti, 2015). Safari and Saleh (2020) have provided insights indicating that the strategies for sustainability, growth, and organisational performance have been re-evaluated through the lens of contingency theory. Consequently, employing a contingency approach can foster a culture of creativity in problem-solving and interdependence, which significantly influences the development of new products that

meet the diverse needs of customers, stakeholders, and the broader social, economic, and environmental sectors (Iheanachor and Etim, 2022).

2.2.3 Resource based view theory

The resource-based view theory represents an evolution of Grant's business growth model. Rezaee, Tsui, Cheng, and Zhou (2019) state that this theory elucidates how a firm's resource performance can confer a sustainable competitive advantage. The resource-based view identifies opportunities based on the distinctiveness of resources, which can lead to competitive benefits. From a managerial perspective, the insights gained from this research (Samsudin and Ismail, 2019) enhance the understanding of strategies necessary for fostering sustainable franchising. It is imperative for business owners, particularly those navigating growth trajectories, to consider the resource-based view. A thorough evaluation of all available resources empowers organisations to effectively achieve their objectives. By selecting a strategic growth plan, managers are better positioned to navigate challenges related to growth and mitigate necessary shifts in direction. Furthermore, the dynamic capabilities theory, which complements the resource-based view, posits that managerial literature requires a framework to elucidate how an organisation's culture of adaptability and innovation can evolve swiftly or with agility in dynamic market environments (Kiiru, 2020).

The limitations of the resource-based view theory regarding organisations suggest that its applicability is often restricted to specific contexts (Davis and DeWitt, 2021). This theory primarily addresses challenges related to organisational capabilities and performance, which have been essential considerations within strategic management literature for an extended period (Darcy, Hill, McCabe, and McGovern, 2017). Notably, SMMEs frequently do not align with the resource-based perspective or the concept of sustained competitive advantage, despite their commendable efforts to maintain and expand their operations (Darcy et al., 2017). Consequently, this study employs institutional theory as a valuable framework for analysing external factors, such as training and development, that have influenced SMMEs in varied ways to attain sustainable growth and enhance their market performance.

2.3 CONCEPT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training and development can be defined as a structured and purposeful effort by SMME management to enhance employees' skills and behaviours in a way that aligns with business growth and performance goals (Lavanya, Saraswathi and Reddy 2020). A focused, short-term training programme is an initiative aimed at providing SMME employees with essential job-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes to overcome business challenges and drive productivity. Many SMME managers recognise the importance of these programmes as a means of improving overall performance and sustaining competitive advantage (Akinsola and Ikhide 2019). With the rapid advancement of new technologies, some traditional roles and skills are becoming obsolete, highlighting the need for SMME workforces to gain adaptable, specialised skills. Bugwandin (2022) notes that jobs eliminated by automation have often been unskilled or semi-skilled, emphasising the importance of skill development programmes to equip employees for more complex roles and enable SMMEs to stay resilient and grow in evolving markets.

The growing recognition among SMMEs on the significance of training and development in recent years can be attributed to heightened competition and the demonstrated success of organisations that prioritise investment in employee enhancement (Collier, Green, Peirson, and Wilkinson 2019). Additionally, advancements in technology and organisational transformation have progressively led SMME management to understand that success is fundamentally linked to the skills and competencies of their workforce, necessitating substantial and ongoing investment in training and development initiatives (Noe 2020). Moreover, human resource management (HRM) principles, including a commitment to organisational objectives and the emphasis on quality improvement, have prompted management to acknowledge the critical importance of training, employee development, and lifelong learning (Jones 2017). These concepts require not only strategic planning but also an increased focus on fostering employee growth and development.

Strategic methodologies are imperative for the successful implementation of training and development initiatives within Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) (McKenzie, 2021). The selection of an appropriate approach must be predicated on a thorough analysis of organisational needs, as well as the attitudes and beliefs of both management and employees, alongside the availability of resources that can be allocated for this purpose (Lavanya, Saraswathi, and Reddy, 2020). A strategic

framework should be employed not only to assess current requirements but also to plan for future organisational needs.

The enhancement of employee capabilities, knowledge, and skills serves as the cornerstone for achieving competitive advantage in today's market landscape. Training and development play a crucial role in fulfilling organisational objectives by aligning the interests of both the organisation and its employees (Jones, 2017). In the current business environment, effective training and development constitute a vital factor for organisational success, as they significantly contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of both employees and the organisation as a whole.

Training represents a strategic initiative undertaken by the organisation to promote continuous learning and development among its workforce (Huang, 2020). This endeavour plays a crucial role in enhancing the existing skills and knowledge base of employees, facilitating their ability to execute job responsibilities effectively. It encompasses both formal and informal methodologies to disseminate knowledge, thereby ensuring that employees attain the required proficiency for optimal performance (Cosh, Duncan, and Hughes, 2018). Furthermore, training serves as a structured process through which employees refine their aptitudes, expertise, and capabilities, enabling them to fulfil specific job functions. This is characterised as a formal and methodical approach to behavioural modification through learning, which is driven by education, instruction, developmental opportunities, and thoughtfully designed experiential activities (Hashim and Ahmad, 2016). Ultimately, training is a meticulously organised activity that yields enhanced skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for effective job performance.

Development is a strategic initiative focused on enhancing employees' competencies for future responsibilities. It encompasses a comprehensive and ongoing array of activities, including training programmes, designed to elevate employees to a higher level of performance, often in preparation for new roles or job functions in the future (Adeyi, Apansile, Okere, and Okafor, 2018). This process involves acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge, and behaviours pertinent to specific roles, thereby equipping employees for increased responsibilities associated with advanced positions. Additionally, it includes various activities such as coaching, formal educational engagements, and experiential learning. Development programmes are

recognised as structured frameworks that foster the growth of employees' personal and professional skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours, ultimately enhancing their ability to perform designated tasks within the organisation (Adeyi et al., 2018). Sultana and Ahmed (2019) noted that development encompasses actions that facilitate the acquisition of new information and skills aimed at personal growth. Opatha (2019) further emphasises that training and development serve as the foundation for supporting employees in the enhancement of their organisational and personal skills, knowledge, and capabilities.

Ngibe and Lekhanya (2019) found that small businesses are less likely to offer formal training to their employees, which can be attributed to a variety of causes. The aforementioned factors may pertain to constraints related to time and financial resources, both of which are often limited in SMMEs. While there is evidence suggesting that the skills and training initiatives implemented by larger organisations provide significant advantages, this appears not to hold true for SMMEs (Cameron, 2018). Development, as highlighted by Sultana and Ahmed (2019), encompasses behaviours that facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and competencies aimed at personal growth. Moreover, training and development serve as a fundamental basis for supporting employees in enhancing both their organisational and personal skills, knowledge, and capabilities (Opatha, 2019). In other words, while development encompasses general abilities like communication, leadership, and project management and extends outside of the firm, training is concentrated on internal company goals and procedures.

Small enterprises are less likely to provide formal training to their employees (Ngibe and Lekhanya 2019), can be attributed to a variety of factors, which may be related to time constraints or financial considerations of which these are resources that SMME's generally lack. There is evidence that large organisations' training and skill development programmes offer clear advantages, but it would seem that this is not always the case for SMMEs (Cameron 2018). The literature goes on to say that SMMEs may not always have the capital to invest in their employees' skill development (Dipboye 2018). In addition, the learner may not stay with the company for a sufficiently long time in order for the expenditure on training costs to be recouped, which presents another difficulty for SMMEs when it comes to the implementation and availability of training initiatives (Kinisa 2019). Panagiotakopoulos (2021) concurs that SMMEs may

not invest as much in the training of external employees due to short-termism and a failure to amortise the costs of training.

Lastly, research conducted by Slavković and Slavković (2019) found a correlation between SMMEs' uneven learning development and their position in the market in terms of productivity and innovation, as well as the size of their company. These varying costs and benefits account for why SMMEs offer fewer opportunities for employee training and development. However, it is well known that the involvement of unskilled workers in SMMEs continues to be a key difficulty for the vast majority of SMMEs (Olaniyan and Ojo 2018).

Training is thought to be the most important factor in enhancing staff competencies, contributing to an organisation's expansion and increased profitability (Hammond and Churchill 2018). According to the study, businesses that invest in training and development for their staff members are more likely to see lower employee turnover, higher levels of productivity, and better financial results.

It is imperative that SMMEs are provided with access to comprehensive training programmes designed to enhance the managerial and business competencies of both their leaders and employees, thereby facilitating the effective operation of their enterprises (Karim, Choudhury and Latif 2019). While the majority of companies agree that training and development should be a crucial component of any organisation, the frameworks already in place frequently do not meet the unique requirements of SMMEs (Singh, Mondal and Das 2020).

2.4 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TO SMMES

The concept of training and development has long been popular in most businesses. The provision of training has changed from being first seen as a considerate gesture on the part of the employers to being more and more important to both the profitability of the company and the welfare of its workers (Alnawfleh 2020). Since it improves the operation of the firm from top to bottom, training and development has advanced to the point where it is a crucial element of the business plan with the highest rate of return on investment.

2.4.1 Improving the working experience of the employee

Along with the more noticeable benefits of training and development, there are additional less noticeable benefits that have a positive influence on individual health and, as a result, indirectly increase corporate effectiveness. If a company's employees truly are its greatest asset, then any business need to act accordingly by investing in its people would definitely reap the rewards (Khaemba 2021). An employee who cares about both his job and the company is probably more productive. A worker also feels more valued if given the chance to learn and develop new skills (Abdullahi 2018). An employee who feels valued is motivated and less bored at work, which results in fewer absences and problems. Abba 2018). Unsurprisingly, one reason why workers might not be loyal to their companies is a lack of internal growth opportunities. Possible explanations for this could be the organisation's poor training and lack of expansion.

2.4.2 Improved loyalty and retention

Individuals who have access to training and development opportunities are more likely to remain with their organisations for an extended period, as they perceive these offerings as a valuable enhancement to their employment experience. By investing in training and development, you provide your staff the chance to advance within your company (Kareem 2019). Employee development and long-term employment at a company are strongly correlated, which lowers turnover rate. Employee loyalty is fostered through empowerment and increased engagement. The value of personnel is reflected in the organisation's commitment to their professional development and learning opportunities. When individuals feel valued and recognised, their likelihood of departing from the organisation diminishes significantly. Employees who experience personal and professional growth are more likely to demonstrate dedication to their employers. Furthermore, maintaining a stable workforce contributes to reduced turnover rates (Chaita and Kalfoglou 2020).

2.4.3 Improved engagement

The primary factors that significantly enhance employee engagement are opportunities for career advancement and role-specific training. Implementing regular training programmes can foster sustained interest and motivation among staff members (Laing, 2021). Organisational training initiatives are specifically designed with employees' needs in mind. Employee engagement tends to improve when individuals recognise that such training represents a valuable investment in their professional development. Furthermore, providing training opportunities yields advantages that extend beyond merely cultivating skilled and confident employees. According to research, learning and growth are important factors that influence engagement (Taufek and Mustafa 2018).

2.4.4 Smaller skills gap

Employee training programmes play a vital role in enabling organisations to address potential skill gaps that may emerge or are currently present. These initiatives serve to strengthen areas of insufficient capability and promote internal recruitment, which is often a more cost-effective alternative to external hiring. As a result, the primary advantage seen by employees is the development or acquisition of new hard and soft skills that allow them to meet prior needs (Zubairi and Khan 2018). This benefit has a direct impact on the company's productivity and efficiency (Ubfal *et al.* 2022). A current employee attempting to develop his abilities makes the organisation more adaptable when coping with sudden changes. Today's successful companies are able to swiftly and repeatedly adapt to the shifting consumer expectations by remaining one step ahead of the change and preserving their competitive edge.

2.5 CURRENT STATUS OF SMME TRAINING

It is challenging to distinguish between management training and other types of training, despite the fact that there is a lot of information on education and training available in different nations. Statistics rarely differentiate by business size, making it difficult to determine the percentage of training funds that are allocated to management training against those that are not (Gherghina, Botezatu, Hosszu and Simionescu

2020). This makes it difficult to estimate the size of the overall market for external management training for SMMEs and how much public funding "underpins" this sector. However, there is data on the scope and character of SMME management training that can be used to draw conclusions for a select nation. The available data shows that smaller businesses are comparatively and categorically less inclined than larger organisations to provide external training opportunities for employees at all levels. (Hyasat, Al-Weshah and Kakeesh, 2022).

2.6 PERCEPTION OF TRAINING NEEDS BY EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS

In many SMMEs, training is not seen as crucial by managers, entrepreneurs, and workers alike for a variety of reasons, sometimes cultural. Training is typically done on the job, quite subconsciously and informally, in micro and small businesses in the craft industries (Cascio 2019). Therefore, traditional classroom instruction may not seem necessary. Perceptions are always influenced by the opportunities one has available to them. As a result, when it is repeatedly stated that current training programmes are not fit for SMMEs, it is often taken at face value, which leads to a decrease in the number of training activities conducted by SMMEs (Ahmad, Kura, Bibi, Khalid and Rahman Jaaffar, 2019).

Only a small number of employees at SMMEs perform many daily responsibilities. There is frequently not enough time to concentrate on very ethereal concerns. For SMMEs, the lack of anticipation is a quasi-cultural problem that is more or less related to a non-existent of HR tools and culture (Opatha 2019). Helping SMMEs create appropriate skills development strategies in accordance with a lifelong learning strategy is vital to meet the needs of a knowledge-based society and the market's rapid transformation (Zhu 2022). Lifelong learning should be available to all employees, regardless of age. Numerous programmes strive to formalise action plans and incorporate such a long-term perspective in order to provide SMMEs with HR tools and alter their vision of what they require (Boerlijst 2020). This may frequently be explained by a lack of knowledge and accessible training options. The range is increased when additional details are provided along with real opportunities. Accordingly, people typically take advantage of their increased access to training opportunities and information (Nkwabi and Mboya, 2019). Public programmes can therefore influence

such cultural elements by orienting preferences and demonstrating that training is not just for those who work for large corporations.

Workers and employers frequently fail to recognise the importance of training and lifetime learning (McKenzie 2021). One of the reasons for that is because they have not taken the time to thoroughly examine the abilities required using customised tools and formalised. For that reason, Nwali and Adekunle (2021) accentuate the importance of information dissemination procedures. To help companies and employees understand the value of skills and ongoing development, many initiatives find that an external needs assessment is essential. A correct diagnosis is the basis for everything. Employers are far more likely to be interested if diagnosis is provided without charge.

2.7 CONCEPTUALISATION OF BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Garavan et al. (2020) articulated that organisations significantly influence the social, economic, and political advancement of nations. Over the past 22 years, this impact has led to the recognition of researchers who have dedicated their efforts to the analysis of various organisations and institutions, culminating in the awarding of nearly six Nobel Prizes for their contributions. A critical focus within management research has been on organisational performance, which stands as a paramount indicator of success. Given that performance measurement varies across different sectors and industries, assessing employee performance presents considerable challenges; consequently, a universal definition of performance in relation to its value remains elusive. According to Hickman and Silva (2018), as referenced in the work of Khalid, Islam, and Ahmed (2019), organisational performance is fundamental to effective management; without the ability to meet established goals and objectives, business entities lack a meaningful purpose for their existence.

Many organisations actively seek to explore diverse avenues to enhance and sustain their overall performance. However, research by Adeyi and Okere (2018) indicates that employee performance is influenced by key factors such as job satisfaction, knowledge, and effective management practices. They highlight a significant correlation between training initiatives and employee performance outcomes. This suggests that the performance of individual employees is crucial for driving

organisational success; thus, training and development (T&D) are essential for enhancing employee capabilities. Optimal performance is achievable only when employees are proficient in their roles, reinforcing the importance of prioritising their development. Organisational performance is maximised when each employee is dedicated to acquiring the requisite knowledge, empowering them to reach objectives efficiently while aligning with the organisation’s standards. Organisational development encompasses long-term strategies that foster positive behaviours within the workplace and encourage collaborative efforts between management and staff.

One of the key dependent variables in this study is business performance, which is recognised as a complex, multi-dimensional construct that poses challenges for accurate measurement (Carton and Hofer, 2016). To address this issue, some experts recommend conceptualising and measuring organisational performance based on the extent to which a firm successfully achieves its critical outcomes. For the purposes of this study, organisational performance is defined as the perceived degree of success in meeting the firm's goals and objectives over the past five years. This perceived performance can be assessed through various dimensions. Susomrith and Coetzer (2015) identified several components of organisational performance, including product quality, customer satisfaction, new product development, employee attraction and retention, as well as the relationship dynamics between management and staff. It is important to note that organisational performance and development are intrinsically linked; a well-functioning organisation cannot thrive without a robust development strategy (Ismael et al., 2021).

2.8 CONCEPTUALISATION OF BUSINESS GROWTH

Business growth can be characterised as a systematic process of adaptation and evolution that transpires under conducive circumstances (Bryan, 2019). The progression of a business organisation parallels the developmental stages of an individual, encompassing infancy, childhood, adulthood, and maturity. Numerous enterprises began as modest initiatives and have significantly expanded over time through sustained growth efforts (Bugwandin, 2022). It is essential to recognise that the growth trajectory is not uniform across all organisations; the velocity and nature of growth differ from one entity to another. Some companies experience accelerated growth, while others progress at a more measured pace. Furthermore, not all

enterprises realise substantial growth, which may be influenced by the inherent characteristics of the firm or the vision of the entrepreneur. Certain entrepreneurs may consciously opt not to pursue expansive growth, prioritising alternative interests, family commitments, or the exploration of diverse business ventures (Hlatywayo, 2022).

The term business growth encompasses a variety of dimensions, including the annual increase in total sales volume, expansion of production capacity, growth in employment levels, enhancement of production volumes, and increased utilisation of raw materials and energy resources (Adesina and Ocholla, 2021). While these indicators signify growth, they do not provide a definitive interpretation of what growth entails. In essence, business growth refers to the expansion of a firm's operational scale, typically accompanied by augmented resources and output (Ross, 2018). The growth of an organisation can yield multiple economies across various domains such as production, purchasing, marketing, finance, and management (Fatoki, 2018). As firms grow, they can take advantage of bulk purchasing of materials, enhanced bargaining power, optimised overhead distribution, and access to expert management. These advantages contribute to a reduced cost of production and an increased profit margin (Higgs and Hill, 2019). Additionally, such growth fosters the full utilisation of production capacity.

2.9 IMPACT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH OF SMMES

The achievements and challenges faced by an organisation are significantly influenced by the performance of its workforce (Mahapatro, 2022). Furthermore, the rapid evolution of technology necessitates that employees acquire the requisite knowledge, skills, and competencies to adapt to new processes and production methodologies. Consequently, it is imperative for management to acknowledge the critical role of training and development initiatives (Vidyavihar, 2019). The principal aim of such training and development efforts is to enhance employees' knowledge and skills, as well as to foster positive changes in their attitudes and behaviours (Abeh, Talib, and Mohammed, 2021). This approach serves as a vital motivational factor that can yield numerous benefits for both the employees and the organisation as a whole.

The emphasis on employee training and development is integral to cultivating a highly skilled workforce, ultimately contributing to the overall performance and growth of the

organisation. Systematic and well-structured implementation of training and development programmes is essential for achieving organisational objectives (Al Aina and Atan 2020). Additionally, the continuous enhancement of skills that foster career advancement not only motivates employees but also helps in retaining talent. It is unequivocally acknowledged that a workforce that is adequately trained and developed represents a significant asset to the organisation (Butali and Njoroge 2019). Such employees enhance organisational efficiency and effectiveness by proficiently fulfilling their responsibilities.

2.10 BARRIERS TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Many publications on the topic, examining the problem from both a theoretical and empirical perspective, reveal that many SMMEs, and small enterprises in general, suffer specific challenges in relation to training (Susomrith and Coetzer 2015). Small businesses routinely report more training hurdles than larger companies in empirical surveys (Panagiotakopoulos 2021). According to Dixit and Sinha (2021), small businesses face more challenges because they have little time to commit to training, fewer resources to provide it, and considerably less grasp of what the formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) system might contribute to their workplace needs. Below is a summary of the key categories of barriers to small firm training that have been identified via this research. These reflect different facets of market failure, or characteristics of how the labour market functions that may lead to less-than-ideal results. Most significantly, from the views of both businesses and the national economy, these processes lead to a shortage of the skills necessary to manufacture items of higher quality and/or to increase productivity and competitiveness (Ayele 2019).

2.10.1 Information deficiencies.

Small enterprises often encounter challenges related to a limited understanding of the training opportunities available to them, as well as insufficient data regarding the benefits of such training. This hinders their ability to effectively assess and navigate both actual and perceived obstacles to engaging in training activities. These

businesses are particularly likely to claim that they are unaware of their options (Mzimela and Chikandiwa 2017). It is also true that determining business advantages is frequently difficult due to the importance of auxiliary elements, variations in costs, wage effects, and so on (Beier and Kanfer 2019). Although research suggests that benefits are possible, they differ amongst businesses, and there is disagreement over the applicability and worth of specific qualifications, especially at lower levels (Ferreira 2016).

2.10.2 Training supply.

Small businesses employees frequently complain about finding training that meets their requirements in terms of type and quality, schedule and location. In light of the expenses associated with designing and tailoring training programmes, coupled with the limited number of participants and the hesitance of employers to fully finance these initiatives, training providers may exhibit a lack of enthusiasm in collaborating with small enterprises. Thus, training is frequently more expensive for smaller firms than for bigger employers (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger,and Smith-Jentsch 2022Smaller enterprises frequently incur training expenses that are threefold higher per employee compared to large corporations, primarily due to their limited ability to leverage economies of scale within the training sector. There is another financial factor that particularly affects small businesses: even when they see the value in training, releasing personnel for training (especially formal training) is more challenging for smaller organisations (Nwali and Adekunle, 2021). With regard to owner-manager training, lost productivity is a particularly significant limitation.

2.10.3 Management capability.

According to Nkwabi and Mboya (2019), one of the main reasons why small businesses do not offer training is that management thinks their employees are already competent. This raises questions about management's capacity to detect skill requirements, not just in regard to latent skill gaps but also in respect to existing training deficits. Owner-managers often perceive that participating in training programmes does not enhance their capability to effectively manage the business. However, there are instances where they may exhibit hesitance to engage in such training due to concerns about revealing potential knowledge deficiencies (Joseph,

2018). This perception creates a limitation on an organisation’s potential to cultivate higher value-added strategies through staff skill development, which introduces an additional layer of management challenges stemming from inadequate skills or qualifications. Enterprises that employ lower value-added strategies frequently overlook the importance of a comprehensive skills or human resources development plan that aligns with both current and anticipated market demands (Saka, Salman and Akewusola 2022).

2.10.4 Externalities

Due to the presence of spillover effects, the advantages associated with workforce upskilling extend beyond the immediate investing employer. These benefits can also be realised by individual employees through higher wages, by the state through increased taxation revenue, and by other employers who may benefit from hiring well-trained workers without incurring the training cost themselves. This scenario diminishes the incentive for employers to invest in comprehensive training programmes and can lead to a preference for training methods designed to mitigate these potential losses (Haugen, Seiler, Sandbakk, and Tnnessen, 2019).

Furthermore, many small employers perceive that formal qualifications hold more value for employees than the offerings of their own organisations, particularly as larger companies often provide more competitive compensation packages. Consequently, it is frequently observed that many organisations opt to deliver only internal, company-specific training, which results in skills that are less transferable within the broader job market (Zubairi and Khan 2018).

2.11 KEY DRIVERS AFFECTING TRAINING NEEDS.

Today's businesses compete in a global market where excellent and high-quality standards are required, and where innovation and entrepreneurship are essential to the success of the business. Employee dedication and a constructive psychological contract between the employer and the employee are prerequisites for performance

to be enhanced and to confront the unpredictable challenge every day (Malik 2018). From the literature review, the following was found:

2.11.1 Quality Assurance

The need to continually improve quality at work emerges as a crucial element in the development of training requirements. However, only a small percentage of organisations have noticed this need, as some have been doing similar work for a while and do not expect any changes in the near future, thereby reducing the need for continual training interventions. For SMMEs in their second stage of development who have established themselves and are aiming to diversify their work processes in order to compete successfully in the market, meeting quality requirements is vital (Morina 2021).

2.11.2 Know the reason behind the training

First, it is important to consider why a training and development programme is necessary in the first place (Polo, Cervai and Kantola 2018). Naturally, a training and development programme has advantages. However, as an SMME, the organisation must have a clear understanding of what the companies must gain from the training. By evaluating the abilities required to achieve the organisation's objectives, the training requirements can be found. The training programme could, for instance, be designed to improve the technical abilities of the workforce. Everyone will be using the appropriate technology efficiently with the help of this type of training. The framework is decided on by the need for training. A safety training session differs from an employee orientation, for instance. It's important to keep in mind that just because people desire to learn, grow, and develop doesn't guarantee that an organisational training and development programme is the best course of action. Nevertheless, delivering uniform content to lots of individuals is best accomplished through training and development (Machado 2018).

2.11.3 Align with management's goals

It is incumbent upon managers to establish objectives that align with the overarching goals of the organisation. This alignment is vital to ensure that the training programme is effectively tailored to meet both managerial and organisational requirements. Consequently, it is imperative to develop a training and development initiative that is grounded in the objectives set forth by management, thereby addressing the specific needs of the company (Salas et al., 2022). For example, if enhancing team communication is identified as a managerial objective, it follows that the training programme should prioritise the instruction of exemplary communication skills.

2.11.4 Use different formats: not all employees learn the same way

Unfortunately, formal education frequently comes across as unneeded and uninteresting. Utilising a variety of employee training techniques is essential when creating an organisational training and development programme. This makes it easier for everyone concerned to fully process the fresh knowledge. The seven various learning styles are advantageous to different persons. Consequently, it is crucial to make an effort to include various learning styles in the training (Younas, Farooq, Khalil-Ur-Rehman and Zreen 2018). For instance, using online training that caters to visual learners by using online videos. Hands-on instruction is advantageous for kinaesthetic learners.

2.11.5 Ask employees for input

It is preferable to solicit employee feedback on the programme, since the programme is designed to benefit them. The performance and needs of the organisation can often be learned through the employees. It is essential to consider the desired outcomes of the training programme from the perspective of our staff members. Conducting employee surveys presents an effective method for collecting the necessary data (Dugguh and Galadanchi 2014). Teams can be consulted to identify any skills gaps. Asking employees open questions encourages them to be honest about the skills they would like to acquire. Anything from software training to bettering their self-management could be included. The information can then be combined once the input from each team member has been collected. Data analysis is required to ascertain the SMMEs' present and most pressing demands (Kareem 2019).

2.11.6 Collect knowledge from within the organisation

Depending on the need for training, a third party may oversee the course. It is important to remember how crucial organisational knowledge is. It might be exactly what's needed for training organisations to be effective. Assembling all the knowledge that can be useful to the business that is present within the organisation (Singh, Mondal and Das 2020). This may encompass expertise in processes and procedures, intellectual property, or specialised product knowledge. A prime example of this type of knowledge transfer is peer-to-peer learning.

2.11.7 Transfer the knowledge via the training programme

Following the selection of the knowledge and skills to be taught, the most effective method of knowledge transfer must be chosen. There are many different kinds of training programmes available. Of importance is which programme is effective for the organisation and what the training's goals are (Hyasat, Al-Weshah and Kakeesh 2022). Contingent upon the available time and resources, the programme may encompass a variety of methodologies, including but not limited to group discussions and activities, experiential training, instructor-led training sessions, e-learning modules, lectures, self-directed learning opportunities, as well as coaching and mentoring initiatives.

2.11.8 Make it part of your company culture

Continuous learning is actively promoted within organisations that foster a culture of learning (Polo, Cervai, and Kantola, 2018). Such ongoing educational initiatives contribute significantly to both the professional and personal development of individuals. Moreover, this commitment to continuous improvement facilitates opportunities for the organisation to enhance overall performance and efficiency. Organisational training must become ingrained in the corporate culture. The accomplishments that came about as a result of the training should then be the main focus. When an employee completes their training, it is important to recognise them and highlight the potential for future advancement. By incorporating training into the

organisational performance evaluation, SMMEs can make it a part of their culture (Kinisa 2019). This is normally where training requirements and suitable training choices are determined.

2.11.9 Measure effectiveness

It is critical to evaluate how well the training and development programme is working. To determine if the programme has been successful, it is essential to look back at the original programme objectives (Ismael *et al.* 2021). Questions such as: Were the goals achieved, why or why not, and what can be done to make the following programme better should be assessed and addressed. There is always a need to implement the most recent concepts due to the rapid developments in technology. The training and development programmes need to be modified and innovated on a constant basis. By doing this, the company retains its competitive edge.

2.11.10 Invest in organisational training and development

It is imperative to enhance the skills and knowledge of employees in an ever-evolving global landscape. Teams must possess the capability to adapt to any challenges that may arise. Regardless of the industry, organisational training is a fundamental component of any comprehensive learning and development strategy essential for business success (Arwab et al. 2022). Through effective knowledge transfer, organisations can augment their efficiency and competitive edge. Furthermore, when employees participate in organisational training, they experience significant professional and personal growth (Khaemba 2021). They are pushed to grow personally and professionally, which speeds up business expansion.

2.12 TYPES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Below are the basic types of training and development initiatives that an SMME might organise:

2.12.1 Orientation

A one-time orientation for new employees that often covers issues including the mission of the organisation, the corporate culture, and administrative procedures.

2.12.2 On-boarding

On-boarding is a component of new employee training, just like orientation. With on-boarding, a new hire can gain the vital skills they require through a series of ongoing lessons or learning experiences (Cesário and Chambel 2019).

2.12.3 Technical and soft skills training

For positions requiring technical expertise, such as data analysis and programming, technical training is necessary. Soft skills training helps workers improve character traits like communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence more generally (Rono, Bomet and Ayiro 2019).

2.12.4 Products and services training

This type of training is used to give staff member’s adequate product knowledge about the most recent goods, services, or features that your business offers so that they can give clients the support they need.

2.12.5 Leadership and safety training

The most talented workers frequently advance into management roles, and when this occurs, they require training in competencies like decision-making, dispute resolution, and project management. Employees are frequently obliged to complete occupational health and safety training in order for their employer to maintain compliance with industry standards (Jiang and Xu 2022).

2.13 EXAMPLES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

A comprehensive and engaging training and development programme integrates a diverse range of instructional methodologies. There is a benefit to engaging participants in the lecture, even though some training components may require lecturing. The session should begin with a question-and-answer period. Employees should be given a chance to participate actively in their education (Jehanzeb and Bashir 2018). Role-playing and scenario-based activities are good ways to let participants show that they grasp the subject matter. In-person and self-service online training can be combined to maintain corporate continuity while still advancing staff training (Dachner, Ellingson, Noe and Saxton 2021).

2.13.1 Instructor-led Training

Instructor-led training serves as an effective pedagogical approach for challenging subjects, as it allows educators to promptly address student inquiries and suggest supplementary training materials (Paul, 2017). Additionally, this instructional method facilitates the provision of personalised coaching for employees concurrently. In comparison to online training options, instructor-led training may be more expensive and time-consuming, which is a possible drawback. It's still important to incorporate it into the training and development plan. Organisations should not disregard live programmes. Digital learning platforms offer a compelling, cost-effective solution for skill enhancement; however, it is important to recognise that humans thrive in collaborative learning environments. Employees should be given the chance to take courses in person, especially if there is a need to learn management or leadership techniques (Chung, Zhan, Noe and Jiang 2022).

2.13.2 E-Learning

This approach facilitates self-paced learning for employees across various devices, thereby contributing to the significant rise in popularity of online employee training in recent years. Online films, quizzes, and gamified elements are used in e-learning programmes to keep participants interested and increase knowledge retention (Kaizer, Silva, de Pavia and Zerbini 2020). The capacity to train lots of people economically is one of the main benefits of online training.

2.13.3 Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring and coaching represent distinct methodologies of personalised, practical training conducted on a one-on-one basis. The primary differentiation lies in the fact that coaching is facilitated by a qualified professional external to the organisation, whereas mentoring occurs within the organisation with an internal member (Hussey and Campbell-Meier, 2021). Both approaches are particularly pertinent in sectors such as sales, where employees benefit from ongoing, hands-on guidance provided by an experienced expert. While this training approach requires a significant investment of time, it affords employees the opportunity to receive tailored attention and have their inquiries addressed comprehensively.

2.13.4 Cross-training

Employees that have undergone cross-training can now execute tasks that are not typically part of their job description. A marketer might cross-train in graphic design, while a cashier might learn customer service. The organisation and the employee both gain from cross-training (Paul 2017). The corporation creates a more adaptable workforce, the employee gains more value and is far more likely to develop in her career (Doe and Reio 2018). Job rotation and job enlargement and enrichment are two of the most used cross-training strategies.

2.13.5 On-the-job Training

On-the-job training (OJT), as the name implies, is a training strategy that enables workers to pick up new abilities as they go about their work (Ma, Nakab and Vidart 2021). A typical illustration of OJT is when a software provider trains HR staff members to use a new talent management system. Since this style of training involves one-on-one instruction, it works best when there are sufficient resources available to support staff throughout the programme (Marcato 2021). Stretch assignments and shadowing are examples of possible methods.

2.14 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the legislative framework governing training and development plays a vital role in fostering the growth and sustainability of Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). A key component of this framework is the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998), which aims to enhance the quality of the South African workforce by facilitating access to skills development opportunities, particularly for entrepreneurs and small business owners (Moganedi and Sithole, 2020). This Act facilitated the creation of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which provide targeted training initiatives, including short-term programs, to support SMMEs.

Additionally, the Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999) requires businesses, including qualifying SMMEs, to contribute levies toward the national skills development effort, enabling access to grants and learnerships that support employee training (Subban, and Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2014). The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (No. 67 of 2008) ensures that training whether short-term or long-term, is standardised, quality-assured, and formally recognised through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), thereby enhancing the credibility and value of SMME training initiatives (Bolton, Chetty, Akindolani, Mokwele and Lebooa, 2023).

Furthermore, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act (No. 53 of 2003) encourages larger corporations to support skills development within black-owned SMMEs, promoting partnerships and supply chain development (Musabayana and Mutambara, 2022). The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) underscores the importance of accessible, industry-responsive training, particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas such as Umkomaas, where SMMEs may have limited access to formal skills development resources (Khuluvhe, Netshifhefhe, Ganyaupfu and Negogogo, 2021). Together, these legislative instruments establish a comprehensive framework that not only mandates but also promotes short-term training as a strategic approach to enhancing the productivity, innovation, and long-term viability of SMMEs across South Africa.

2.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) hold a pivotal role in the economic landscape of developing countries. They are regarded as essential catalysts for diminishing unemployment rates, fostering economic growth and development, alleviating poverty, and enhancing the overall living standards of communities. A robust SMME sector is instrumental in bolstering the economy, significantly contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through the mitigation of unemployment. However, despite their crucial contributions to economic advancement, SMMEs worldwide, including those in South Africa, encounter a myriad of challenges that impede entrepreneurial growth, restrict their long-term viability, and ultimately affect their development and sustainability. Training and development courses among SMMEs are lacking as these small businesses do not see the significance of it and deem it as expensive. The barriers to training and development were discussed and the benefits that the SMMEs can accrue were highlighted together with the types of training and development the SMME can engage in.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology is a systematic approach used to analyse and solve problems. According to Budert-Waltz (2021), research methodology involves mapping out a structured approach to identify and address research problems. The chapter provides an outline of the procedures and methodologies utilised in research design, including the identification of the population to be studied, the segmentation of the population into representative samples, determination of sample size, selection of research instruments and data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and assessment of the validity and reliability of research instruments.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The process of designing a research study involves carefully planning the collection and analysis of data in order to obtain the desired information. Essentially, a research design outlines how a study is be conducted, ensuring that factors potentially affecting the validity of findings are controlled (Asenahabi 2019). It serves as a framework for addressing research questions or testing hypotheses (Sileyew 2019), ultimately leading to accurate and satisfactory outcomes.

Various research designs, such as quantitative and qualitative methods, exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive approaches, as well as survey and case study designs, offer different ways of collecting and analysing data (Leavy 2017). The choice of a research design depends on factors like the nature of the study, its goals, data availability and costs, research questions, and problems (Mackey and Gass 2022). A research design includes determining the instruments to be used, data collection methods, and the analysis approach (Asenahabi 2019).

A qualitative research design was utilised to examine the effects of short-term training and development initiatives on the growth and performance metrics of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) located in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal. Qualitative research entails collecting data through face-to-face interactions with individuals in their environments, portraying and interpreting their social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions (Mehrad and Zangeneh 2019). This approach reveals the human dimensions of a subject by exploring intricate behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and interpersonal relationships (Kyngäs 2019). Qualitative methodologies play a crucial role in recognising intangible elements, including social norms, socio-economic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, that may impact the research topic. (Babbie 2010). This approach presents data in a narrative form, providing a comprehensive understanding of social or cultural phenomena (Aspers and Corte 2019).

By utilising qualitative research methods, this study delves deep into the experiences, perspectives, and insights of SMME owners and employees, shedding light on the effectiveness of training and development initiatives.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

The term target population refers to individuals, events, or data sets that contain the desired information necessary to address the research inquiries (Maxwell 2021). Essentially, the target population holds the specific information sought by the research and to which references are to be made. Kumar (2018) noted that the target population refers to any collective of individuals or organisations that possess one or more shared attributes relevant to the researcher's inquiry. This group must meet the researcher's criteria for study. In this particular study, the target population consisted of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal which are estimated to be approximately 500-1000 due to Umkomaas being a small coastal village. The SMMEs represented various sectors of the economy in order to obtain diverse perspectives from different industries regarding the impact of short-term training programmes. Business owners and managers within the SMMEs were considered for inclusion in the target population.

3.4 SAMPLING

A sample, as defined by Singh and Singh (2018), pertains to a segment of the research population. Sampling, as described by Rajasekar and Philominathan (2015), is a systematic approach utilised by a researcher to selectively choose a limited selection of representative items or individuals from a predetermined population. In light of various constraints, including transportation costs, limited time availability, and the overall expenses related to the research project, it was determined that sampling the entire target population was not practical. Consequently, a representative sample of the target population was strategically selected to effectively serve as a proxy for the comprehensive population.

As outlined by Jain and Chetty (2020), the selection of the sampling method and technique is contingent upon the research study's type, nature, and purpose. In this particular research endeavour, a purposive sampling technique was employed to identify participants with direct exposure to short-term training and development programmes in Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) within the KwaZulu-Natal region. The sample size consisted of ten SMMEs in Umkomaas, KZN, with

considerations made based on data saturation - the point at which no new information or insights emerge from the data collected (Mweshi and Sakyi 2020).

3.5 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Qualitative recruiting refers to the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and arranging suitable participants for qualitative market research endeavours (Alele and Malau-Aduli 2023). The recruitment procedure involved ascertaining if the potential candidates were affiliated with or owned a Small, Micro or Medium Enterprise (SMME), met the minimum age requirement of 18 years, and possessed adequate literacy skills. To minimise expenses and mitigate potential biases, the researcher opted to select participants who were readily accessible while still ensuring the acquisition of pertinent information.

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Bhandari (2020) provides a definition of a research instrument as a pertinent tool utilised for data collection. Corte (2021) discovered that a research instrument facilitates the availability of information on methods to acquire essential data upon which findings and conclusions are grounded. In the present investigation, semi-structured interviews were employed to ensure the collection of relevant and fitting data.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Dooley (2018), an interview is a structured discourse between two individuals, namely the interviewer and the interviewee, wherein the interviewer poses inquiries to gather information from the interviewee. In the present study, semi-structured interviews were employed.

3.6.1.1 Definition of semi-structured interview technique

McCleod (2023) articulates that a semi-structured interview constitutes a qualitative research methodology, effectively integrating a set of pre-established open-ended questions designed to foster discussion. This approach provides the interviewer with

the flexibility to explore certain themes or responses in greater detail. As Salkind (2014) aptly characterises it, a semi-structured interview represents a conversation with a purpose, characterised by a formal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer develops and employs a structured interview guide that outlines a series of open-ended questions and topics to be addressed during the dialogue, typically following a specified sequence. The open-ended nature of these inquiries delineates the focus of the investigation while simultaneously enabling both participants to delve deeper into selected subjects of interest. Additionally, these questions may be supplemented with prompts to facilitate thorough responses from the interviewee. While the interviewer generally adheres to the guide, there is an allowance for the exploration of pertinent avenues of questioning that may diverge from the original framework, as deemed appropriate (Saldana, 2016).

3.6.1.2 Justification for semi-structured interviews

Given that a semi-structured interview encompasses elements of both unstructured and structured interviews, it offers the benefits of each approach. This format allows interviewees to share their perspectives and seek clarification from the interviewer as needed, thereby facilitating a richer exchange of information, including insights on sensitive topics, for qualitative research purposes. Moreover, interviewees are able to provide rationale for their responses during the interview process. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) state that the adaptable nature of semi-structured interviews enables researchers to guide the conversation, either by prompting interviewees for further details or pursuing new avenues of inquiry based on the dialogue. This methodology empowers researchers to delve deeper into topics of interest and allows interviewees the freedom to articulate their thoughts in a manner that is most comfortable for them (Magaldi and Berler 2020). Semi-structured interviews are particularly effective when interviewers need to address several key areas of discussion.

3.6.2 Interview guide

A comprehensive interview guide (see Appendix C) was utilised to maintain consistency in the collection of data. This guide consists of open-ended questions and prompts aimed at investigating various topics including the perceived benefits of

training programmes, developments in skills and knowledge, enhancements in operational efficiency, business expansion, and overall improvement in performance.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The collection of data is a critical stage in the research process, as it is widely acknowledged that the quality of a research project is contingent upon the data collected. In this study, data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with SMME owners whose businesses are involved in short-term training and development initiatives. These qualitative research methods were employed to enable participants to articulate their viewpoints, experiences, and perceptions on the influence of short-term training and development programmes on the growth and performance of SMMEs.

3.8 TYPES OF DATA

There are two principal categories of data utilised in research: primary data and secondary data. Bryman and Bell (2019) delineated that primary data pertains to information that is directly gathered by the researcher specifically for the research project in question. This type of data is original and collected firsthand, independent of pre-existing records (Creswell, 2017). Common methodologies for collecting primary data include surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. Conversely, secondary data refers to information that has already been collected, documented, and preserved for future reference. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), secondary data comprises information that has been previously acquired and is readily accessible from external sources. Examples of secondary data sources may encompass books, academic journals, sales and financial records, in addition to electronically stored data such as online resources. For the purposes of this research study, the researcher relied on primary data sources for data collection.

The research study utilised primary data due to its inherent freedom from misinterpretations. Primary data, as defined by Ghauri, Grønhaug and Strange (2020), refers to data collected directly by the researcher, without reliance on written records or secondary sources. This approach was chosen in order to grant the researcher

greater control over data collection methods, allowing for a more targeted focus on specific aspects of the research. By concentrating on key issues of interest, the researchers sought to obtain more detailed and pertinent information.

Primary data, obtained firsthand from respondents, served to enhance the accuracy of the research study and align with its objectives. This direct engagement with participants also facilitated a more active role for the researcher, thereby enabling greater oversight of the research process (Gupta and Gupta 2022). The choice of primary data collection was further justified by its provision of current information and practical insights relevant to the topic at hand. While primary data offers heightened reliability, it is worth noting that this approach can be time-consuming and may result in the accumulation of large volumes of data, some of which may be extraneous to the research objectives (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2020).

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis encompasses data processing, organisation, summarisation, categorisation, and description to facilitate a clearer understanding of data (Taherdoost 2022). It involves procedures such as data cleaning, inspection, manipulation, and modelling to highlight significant information, support decision-making, and draw conclusions (Desiderio 2019). The qualitative data collected underwent a rigorous analysis using established qualitative analysis techniques. This process included steps such as transcription of interviews, coding of data to identify themes and patterns, categorisation of codes, and interpretation of findings. Techniques such as thematic analysis or content analysis, supported by the latest version of NVivo software, were employed to identify key themes and gain meaningful insights.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability are reframed within the broader framework of trustworthiness, which aims to uphold the integrity, credibility, and authenticity of the study’s findings.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility pertains to the confidence placed in the accuracy and truthfulness of the data and its interpretation (Adler, 2022). To strengthen credibility in this research, the investigator engaged in prolonged interactions with participants, established rapport prior to data collection, and utilised member checking to confirm the accuracy of transcribed responses. Additionally, methodological triangulation was employed by comparing data across multiple participants to identify consistent themes.

3.10.2 Dependability

Haq, Rasheed, Rashid and Akhter (2023) indicate that dependability relates to the consistency and stability of the research process over time. This was addressed by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail that documented interview procedures, coding processes, and theme development stages. The implementation of a semi-structured interview guide further ensured standardised data collection across all participants.

3.10.3 Transferability

According to Ahmed (2024), transferability involves the extent to which the research findings are applicable to other contexts. In this study, detailed descriptions of the research setting (Umkomaas), participant demographics, and contextual factors were provided to facilitate evaluative judgments regarding the applicability of results to similar environments.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability concerns the degree to which findings are grounded in the participants' responses, minimising researcher bias (Adler, 2022). To support confirmability, the researcher maintained reflective notes throughout the study and cross-referenced analytical findings with direct quotations from participants. The inclusion of verbatim excerpts in the analysis further aids in demonstrating objectivity and the authenticity of the insights presented.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research process strictly adhered to ethical principles, such as informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Durban University of Technology Research Ethics Committee. Additionally, gatekeeper permission was secured from relevant businesses and institutions within

Umkomaas that participated to ensure access and voluntary participation. Participants were furnished with detailed information concerning the objectives of the study, along with a clear outline of their rights to voluntary participation and the option to withdraw at any time. Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises were not compelled to participate in the study, and a comprehensive explanation was provided to them regarding this decision. The study's purpose and the potential access to findings were transparently communicated to all participants. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the investigation (Arifin 2018). No participant was coerced into participating in interviews against their will. Participants' privacy rights were respected by not requiring their names or any form of identification (Pandey and Pandey 2021). Participants were explicitly informed of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason deemed necessary, and that their responses would remain confidential.

Data collected was stored digitally on the researchers' computer for period of five years to allow for accessible retrieval, after which it is to be securely erased. Measures were put in place to oversee data usage, ensuring compliance and transparency while the data remains stored.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter delves into the planned research methodology to be employed in response to the research objectives. To ensure the accuracy of the data obtained, the chapter outlines the research design employed by the researcher, which is a descriptive research design. This design was chosen for its objectivity and independence from the researcher, as well as its efficiency in terms of time. The chapter also examines the population and sample size. The population under study was small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas in KwaZulu Natal of approximately 500-1000 business owners, and a sample size of ten was selected from this population. The research utilised purposive sampling techniques. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the research instrument due to their potential to elicit accurate responses from participants through voluntary participation. Primary data was utilised to prevent bias in the results. Data collection procedures were outlined to explain how the data was collected and analysed. The chapter also addresses the reliability and validity of the research instrument. A pilot study and

supervisor review of the instrument were conducted to ensure the instrument's effectiveness. Lastly, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Training and development have become integral components of business success in today's fast-paced and highly competitive global marketplace. As industries continue to evolve, driven by technological advancements, shifting consumer preferences, and changing regulatory landscapes, businesses must equip their workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to these changes. Effective training programmes are essential for improving employee performance, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring business sustainability.

However, while the importance of training is widely acknowledged, businesses frequently encounter considerable obstacles in the development and sustained execution of robust training initiatives. Limited financial resources, time constraints, and the rapid pace of industry innovation frequently hinder the ability of companies, particularly SMMEs, to provide ongoing, relevant training for their employees. In this context, evaluating the effectiveness of training programmes becomes critical to

ensuring that the investment in workforce development yields positive outcomes for both employees and the organisation.

This chapter sought to explore the various dimensions of training within business environments, focusing on the evaluation of training effectiveness, the benefits of training for businesses, the challenges encountered in implementing training programmes, and the potential areas of assistance that could enhance training efforts. Through a detailed analysis of participant responses, this chapter aims to provide insights into how businesses are navigating the complexities of training, what barriers they face, and what support they need to optimise employee development. The researcher conducted in-person interviews that were digitally recorded, and thematically analysed. Thematic analysis was chosen for its structured yet flexible approach, allowing the researcher to organise data into clear themes and subthemes. Conducting interviews face-to-face ensured the reliability of the data collected, while electronic recordings maintained the integrity of the information.

The transcribed interviews were then imported into QSR NVivo 12 to streamline the analysis process. NVivo facilitated the systematic organisation of coded data into established themes and subthemes, as delineated by the interview guide. This process enhanced data management and categorisation efficiency. The analytical approach included objective comparisons of the data, ensuring alignment with the research questions and compliance with Spencer's (2011) qualitative research recommendations. The themes and subthemes were developed inductively throughout both the data collection and analysis phases. To support the study's interpretation, direct quotations from participants were utilised verbatim, ensuring the confidentiality of their identities.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 4.1 provided details about the participants in a business-related study, focusing on their business start year, sector, and role within SMMEs. The businesses ranged from being established as early as 2010 to as recent as 2023. Most businesses started in the 2010s, with two launching in 2023. In addition, the data showed a diverse group of entrepreneurs and managers operating in various sectors, with a mix of leadership and operational roles. The participants were predominantly business owners, with

some involved in the technology and services sectors, while others manage food-related businesses, logistics, and handcrafted products.

Table 4.1: Participant demographic information

Participant	Business start year	Sector	Role within SMMEs
1	2011	Food and beverages	Business owner
2	2015	Fresh pigs operate in the informal trade sector, selling fresh foods directly to consumers when they store it	Business owner, manager, operator and a marketer
3	2023	Small business	Manager as well as the CEO of the business
4	2021	Salon	Manager
5	2015	Handcrafted jewellery and a few accessories	Business owner/CEO
6	2010	Services sector	Business owner/CEO
7	2022	Technology sector, specifically artificial intelligence and machine learning	Business owner/CEO
8	2015	Technology sector, specifically focusing on software development and IT services	Chief Operation Officer
9	2023	Transport and logistics	Business owner
10	2022	Fast food business	Manager

Source: Field data, 2024

Theme 1: Characteristics of Business/Participation in Trainings

Table 4.2 summarised the emerged themes and subthemes on the characteristics of business/participation in trainings.

Table 4.2: Data from participants on the Characteristics of Business/Participation in Trainings

Research Inquiry	*Illustrative Quotes*	*Keynotes*	*No of times*	*Subthemes*

Characteristics of Business / Participation in Training	*Yes, our enterprise began trading in 2015...our business is operating in **retail and e-commerce sector**...I am the **founder and the CEO** of this company, I am responsible for overseeing the overall strategic direction of the business (Participant 5)*	*Commerce sector*	*6*	*Characteristic/ s of Business*
	*In our organisational context, training refers to **structured programmes** designed to **enhance skills, knowledge, and competencies** of our employees to improve their performance and productivity (Participant 2)*	*Skills enhancement programmes*	*5*	*Notion about Training*
	*Yes, **I have training. I** have attended training sessions since the start. I believe in continuous learning and self-improvement. These sessions have helped me refine my **leadership skills and stay updated** on industry trends (Participant 6)*	*Leadership improvement training*	*5*	*Participation in Training*

Source: Field data 2024

Subtheme 1.1: Characteristics of Businesses

Businesses are run for profit making, but that boils down to good and top-notch management. Notwithstanding the kind of business in question or its duration, the expertise with which the business is run, goes a long way in ensuring the success or failure achieved. Most of the businesses in this study were either sole proprietorship or very small scaled in nature, as highlighted by participant three who states that "*established in 2023 ... It belongs to the small business ... I am the manager as well as the CEO of the business*".

Many of these women engage in varieties of businesses, for instance, some deal in the food sector as opined by the participant ten below:

> *Well, I started my business in 2022. I run a fast-food business, of which its characteristics are focused on the demand supply of brand quality service to our customers ... primarily I'm a manager and I make sure the business gets everything. I provide employees with equipment to utilise ... (Participant ten).*

Additionally, some of the participants also deal in the service sector, offering one or more services to numerous customers or clients. The views of participant six lays credence to this when she highlights "*our enterprise began trading in 2010...Our SMME belongs to the services sector. Specifically, we operate in the consulting and advisory space, helping clients solve complex problems ... I am the founder and the CEO*".
This shows that most of the businesses in the locality have been in operation for a decade or less, indicating their level of expertise in the commerce fields.

Participants two and five indicated that they offer the following services:

> *My business gained lime light in 2015 ... specifically, fresh pigs operate in the informal trade sector ... my role is being an owner, manager, operator and a marketer. As a street vendor, I handle all aspects of the business myself (Participant two)*
>
> *Yes, our enterprise began trading in 2015 ... our business is operating in retail and e-commerce sector ... I am the founder and the CEO of this company; I am responsible for overseeing the overall strategic direction of the business (Participant five)*

This lays credence to the fact that the commercial sector is booming with activities in the locality, as there are many SMMEs in existence as well as those springing up annually. This adds a lot to the GDP of the authorities, hence improving the service sector and encouraging more people to come in to do business seamlessly.

Another angle to this service rendering business is the salon enterprise, which is also in the informal sector but responsible for beauty enhancement of both male and female. Participant four shares his views:

> *Our salon officially opened its doors in 2001 ... it has employees fewer than 100 ... I am a manager, and I am responsible for helping employees be effective in their own goals, grow in their positions and develop their skills ... (Participant four).*

Furthermore, some of these businesses offer services in other areas such as in the technology niche, helping in developing software and in revolutionising the way and manner in which things are done.

> *Our enterprise began trading in 2022 ... Our SMME belongs to the technology sector, specifically artificial intelligence and machine learning ... I am the founder and CEO of the company (Participant seven).*

> *We began training in 2015...Belong to the technology sector, specifically focusing on software development and IT services ... I am the Chief Operation Officer (Participant eight).*

The responses indicated that diverse businesses exist in the location, pointing to the fact that the citizens are industrious, commerce-oriented and dedicated in their enterprise. The diversity of business types in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) can be attributed to the region's distinctive cultural and demographic characteristics. According to Lekhanya and Mason (2017), the cultural richness in KZN, which encompasses Indian, African, and European heritage, cultivates a variety of entrepreneurial opportunities. This cultural diversity contributes to a spectrum of businesses, ranging from traditional crafts to contemporary retail and service sectors, as observed in Umkomaas. Rogerson (2010) notes that such sectoral diversity in regions like KZN enhances economic resilience by distributing economic activities across multiple industries. This is particularly advantageous for semi-urban, resource-rich areas like Umkomaas, which are recognised for their agricultural and coastal tourism potentials. Given the relatively long life-span of some of the businesses, the doggedness and good management of these individuals is evident, even though more training is needed to upgrade the managerial experience they possess.

Subtheme 1.2: Notion about Training

The participants in this study understand the term "training" through various lenses. Most often, it depended on the kind of goods or services they offer to their customers or clients. Participant six indicates that training has to do with upgrading an already existing knowledge in a particular context. He understands that training is the bedrock to achieving huge success in today's business world.

... so, training means upskilling and reskilling employees to enhance performance and productivity. It's essential to stay competitive in today's fast-paced business environment by investing in training, we empower our team to deliver exceptional results (Participant six)

This perspective aligns with the Resource-Based View by acknowledging skills as valuable internal resources that, when cultivated, can deliver a sustainable competitive advantage for the organisation.

Furthermore, participant two highlights that training is "Skill enhancement for better service .... yes, it improves skills and service quality". In this same vein, another businessman indicates that training in his field, helps to improve upon his skills as well as that of this employee, hence bringing about good results.

In our organisational context, training refers to structured programmes designed to enhance skills, knowledge, and competencies of our employees to improve their performance and productivity (Participant two)

For participant three, training is "showing the new staff members rules or their duties... new techniques and teaching them to improve the operations ...". This alludes to the fact that every training session brings in something new into business, hence it's importance. Participant nine corroborates this by highlighting that "*training plays an important role ... involves people working in our business to have a lot of knowledge to work for us ...".*

The training concept is viewed collectively as a platform to increase competence, knowledge and improve on the mode of operations in the business in line with trends and global best practices.

The training is considered giving employees or anyone in the business new skills on how to run a business, how to be effective, use everything and how they can make a business run... (Participant ten)

Training typically refers to the process of educating and instructing salon staff in various aspects of their role and responsibilities (Participant four)

These corroborate the view of this businesswoman, who indicates that training is aimed at progressing professional development of the employees, and by extension, the business, rather than the business directly. This view shows that when the employees are well equipped, it would have a ripple effect on the business, hence leading to success and advancements for the business in general.

> *I believe training in our organisational context, include a range of activities such as onboarding new staff and maybe arranging some ongoing professional developments and also upskilling everyone (Participant five).*

According to Goldstein and Ford (2022), organisations often define training in relation to their specific strategic objectives. For example, in industries characterised by rapid technological advancements, training may prioritise updating technical skills, whereas in service-oriented sectors, the focus may shift to enhancing customer service skills (Jacobs and Washington 2018). This illustrates how industry dynamics contribute to varying interpretations of training, emphasising the skills that are most pertinent to each sector. Furthermore, an organisation's definition of training is shaped by various factors, including industry characteristics, strategic goals, resource availability, cultural perspectives, and the needs of the workforce. Each organisation customises its approach to training to align with its distinct operational context and objectives (Aguinis and Kraiger 2019).

Subtheme 1.3: Participation in Trainings

Many businesses in the locality indicate that they partook in one business training or another. The nature of the training is dependent on the kind of business being operated as well as the result expected. Participant four indicates that participating in training has been a bedrock for the progresses witnessed in his business.

> *Yes, absolutely ... since the inception of my salon, training have been integral to our success. We've prioritised continuous learning to ensure our team excels in technical skills like hair styling, colouring, stay updated in industry trains, maintains high standards and customer service (Participant four).*

Continuous learning is vital for organisations to effectively respond to evolving market dynamics and shifts in consumer preferences. A study conducted by Noe and

Ellingson (2017) indicates that companies that prioritise investment in employee development not only enhance individual skillsets but also cultivate a culture of continuous improvement. This perspective is supported by participant four, who highlighted the significance of training in the success of their salon. By emphasising continuous learning, businesses can ensure that their teams maintain proficiency in both technical competencies and customer service elements that are essential for sustaining a competitive edge.

The improvements brought about by business training cannot be overemphasised as highlighted by participant ten, *"it makes our business what it is today ... we acquire many skills that our business needs to run".* This implies that most training is directed towards ensuring that businesses are advanced in a standardised manner. Though, the pedigree and expertise of trainers and industry specialists handling these trainings needs serious scrutiny to ensure the aim is well achieved. The development of relevant skills through training is closely linked to improved business performance. According to research by Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, and Smith-Jentsch (2022), effective training programmes contribute to enhanced job performance, increased employee satisfaction, and reduced turnover rates. Participant ten's observation regarding the acquisition of essential skills supports this evidence; when organisations provide their employees with the appropriate tools and knowledge, they are more effectively positioned to meet operational requirements and fulfil customer expectations.

Participants three and seven indicated that they have received some level of training in their technological business niche, and it has been helpful in achieving success.

> *Yes, it is important to keep up with the new technology, learning more advanced ways of doing business, keeping up to the standards and to the market. (Participant three)*
>
> *Yes, I have gone through training and development session since the start of my SMME's focusing on leadership, AI technologies and entrepreneurship (Participant seven)*

Participant three highlighted the importance of staying abreast of emerging technologies, which is essential for ensuring competitiveness in today's rapidly evolving market. This perspective is supported by Bessen (2019), who argued that

ongoing technology training not only improves operational efficiency but also promotes innovation within organisations. Given the swift pace of technological advancements, it is critical for entrepreneurs to remain knowledgeable about developments that may affect their industry. Strong leadership skills are fundamental for effectively managing teams, particularly in technology-driven environments characterised by constant change. Research indicates a direct relationship between effective leadership and employee satisfaction and retention, key factors for SMMEs seeking sustainable growth (Northouse 2021). Additionally, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into training initiatives can greatly enhance decision-making capabilities within organisations. As AI continues to spread across various industries, it is essential for entrepreneurs to understand its applications to maximise its benefits effectively.

However, these businessmen and women see this training as being helpful in advancing their business niches, improving their service rendition and ensuring good customer satisfaction. Some businesses, mainly the distant ones, go the route of online training as highlighted by participant five, "*We also sometimes encourage our staff to take online courses in all various learning platforms, maybe courses that will help them in".* This ensures all employees are not left out in the knowledge acquisition to move the business forward. Participants six and eight highlight that the training they attended has improved their business immensely.

> *Yes, I have training. I have attended training sessions since the start. I believe in continuous learning and self-improvement. These sessions have helped me refine my leadership skills and stay updated on industry trends (Participant six).*
>
> *Yes, since the start, we have conducted several training and development sessions to keep our team updated with the latest industries, trends and technologies (Participant eight).*

Participant six’s observation regarding the enhancement of their leadership skills through training is particularly significant. The development of leadership capabilities is essential for promoting effective management practices within organisations. This aligns with the principles of the Resource-Based View (RBV), as employee training initiatives contribute to the development of internal capabilities that comprise the company's distinct and valuable resources, which are critical for maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. Research has shown that

strong leadership is associated with increased employee engagement, productivity, and retention (Larsson 2017). Through participation in training sessions, leaders can gain valuable strategies to motivate their teams, address challenges, and facilitate organisational change. Additionally, participant eight emphasises the necessity of conducting regular training sessions to ensure that teams are updated on the latest industry trends and technologies. In the current fast-paced business environment, it is crucial to remain informed about technological advancements and market dynamics to sustain a competitive advantage. A study by Noe (2020) indicates that organisations that emphasise continuous employee development tend to outperform their competitors in both financial performance and innovation. This highlights the importance of investing in training to effectively adapt to market fluctuations.

Nonetheless, even some relatively new businesses have also seen the importance of engaging in training to boost their economic growth and development. Many of them have undergone some trainings, whereas some have set different trainings in motion for the future, all attesting to the importance of such trainings.

> *... we have recently started this business in 2023, but we are planning to do one training for employees very quickly in the coming few days ... so we need to be updated and improve our business, we have to have quite a lot of trainings happening in our business (Participant nine).*

Theme 2: Impact of Training

Table 4.3 summarised the emerged theme and subthemes on the impact of training on businesses.

Table 4.3: Data from participants on Impact of Training

Research Inquiry	*Illustrative Quotes*	*Keynotes*	*Frequency*	*Subthemes*

Impact of Training	*To ensure effective training, we set clear objectives, use **interactive methods, provide feedback** and evaluate progress...Certain methods used to include workshops, online courses, mentorship, and hands on projects (Participant 7)*	*Interactions and feedback mechanisms*	*7*	*Ensuring Effective Training*
	*... employee confidence, **productivity** and innovation driving business growth. It **helps us stay ahead of the competition** and adapt to changing market conditions ... by investing in training, we invest in our future (Participant 6)*	*Improved competition and productivity*	*4*	*Impact of Training on Business*
	*Yes, if more training and development courses were available to us, it would likely enhance our growth and. Moments like equipping us with **advanced skills and knowledge**...We identify training needs through performance reviews, employee feedback, industry trend analysis and skill gap assesSMMEnts. (Participant 8)*	*Advancement of skills and knowledge*	*4*	*Impact of Training and Developme nt Courses Availability*

Source: Field data 2024

Subtheme 2.1: Ensuring Effective Training

In providing the training to the staff and employees of each business, the managers/business owners ensured they put certain measures in place to achieve greater outcomes from the training. Participant two highlighted the ways in which he attracts relevance to these trainings and hence, ensure full participation and outcomes.

> *To ensure effective training for an employee are wasted, clear goals and objects. Teams and provide interactive and practical training sessions ... the different methods that could be used in the process of training employees is the classroom training and coaching and mentoring (Participant two).*

Participant two's reference to interactive and practical training sessions underscores a vital element of adult learning theory. Research indicated that adults acquire knowledge most effectively through experiential learning rather than conventional lecture formats. A meta-analysis by Sitzmann and Ely (2017) demonstrated that active learning techniques substantially enhance knowledge retention and application within workplace environments. This evidence supports the notion that integrating hands-on

activities, simulations, or role-playing in training programmes can significantly improve engagement and overall training effectiveness.

Alluding to this fact, participant one indicated that "*Continuous assessmentand feedback ... workshops on on-the-job training, mentoring ...",* are all ways to ensure that training is efficient for the employees of businesses. The means of getting knowledge down to every member of personnel is very pertinent, important and beneficial. This is because these human resources are the major drivers of the success to be achieved, hence, their proper understanding of trends, industry practices and innovations is a key promoter of progress. Hattie and Timperley (2017) identified feedback as an effective instrument for improving employee performance, as it offers individuals insights regarding their progress in relation to established goals. In a corporate environment, this underscores the importance of regular evaluations during training sessions, which can reveal areas of difficulty for employees and enable trainers to tailor their approaches effectively. Participants four and five highlighted the systems they employ to ensure the training they offer gets to the very least ranked personnel in their organisation.

> *I set clear objectives and goals for each training session. Employees understand what they need to learn or improve upon, which keeps them focused and motivated during training. Secondly, are hands-on learning and providing opportunities for employees to practice new techniques or skills in controlled environments before applying them with clients (Participant four)*
>
> *Well, I mean positively influence our SMME's ... with broader access to advanced training programmes, our team could acquire new skills. They can stay updated with the various industry trends leading to improved decision making and everything else, including operational strategies (Participant five)*

Some organisations leverage virtual training methods to enhance accessibility for their employees and ensure effective knowledge retention and application. With the advancements in technology, particularly in the current era, many training programmes are now offered online. This shift is attributed to the convenience, flexibility, and self-paced nature of these training opportunities, which ultimately enrich the learning experience for participants (Els and Meyer 2023). Participants seven and eight indicated some of the online techniques they utilise in relation to other methods.

> *To ensure effective training, we set clear objectives, use interactive methods, provide feedback and evaluate progress ...Certain methods used to include workshops, online courses, mentorship, and hands on projects (Participant seven).*
>
> *... we use relevant and practical content, provide hands-on practice, and follow up with the assessment and feedback ... we use methods including in person workshops, online courses and on the job training (Participant eight).*

Participant eight's approach exemplifies the principles of contingency theory, which posits that training programs should be tailored to the specific context of the organisation, including industry requirements, employee responsibilities, and available resources, in order to maximise effectiveness.

These views are corroborated by participant six who highlighted that, *"This approach ensures maximum impact on our return of investments."* This implies that a combination of these methods yields the desired results and improves the reputation and economic viability of the businesses.

However, before embarking on these lines of action, the training needs of these personnel are assessed adequately, to avert a misalignment of training with outcomes which can lead to wastage of valuable resources. Participant three highlights his thoughts.

> *... we can look at all the roles of the employees in the business and train the employees according to the needs of their roles in the business ... include them in the training process so that you can listen to their ideas of which training process you can use for the business to be effective. (Participant three).*

This aligns with previous research conducted by Davies and Farquharson (2018), which suggested that training is most effective when tailored to specific needs. An inclusive training system is considered essential for business success, particularly as many customers prioritise high-quality service in their purchasing decisions (Carnevale 2019). Therefore, training programmes that emphasise these aspects are crucial for organisational growth. Participant nine echoed this sentiment, sharing her perspective on the matter.

... So firstly, we need to identify the needs of training to provide access to the gaps that we have in our business. So based on that, we make sure that the employees have been provided with proper training based on whatever they have capacity in ... we can have some online trainings, we can try providing shadowing like hands on practice or on the job training. It may be communication skills because our business requires a lot of communication skills, and the employees need to have proper training in that (Participant nine).

Effective communication is frequently recognised as a fundamental competency within the workplace (Robinson 2020). Organisations that prioritise the development of communication skills generally experience enhancements in team collaboration, customer service, and overall productivity. Training programmes aimed at improving communication may include workshops on active listening, conflict resolution, public speaking, and interpersonal communication techniques. Research suggested that these focused training initiatives not only improve individual performance but also foster a positive organisational culture (Hargie 2018).

Subtheme 2.2: Impact of Training on Business

As mentioned earlier, businesses thrive when the right training is offered to the right people, for the right purpose and at the right time. The level of impact trainings has on businesses are so numerous and most times, cannot be quantified. Participant three highlighted some of the impacts of having the right training on his business.

It improves productivity, retain customers, customer satisfaction and enhance job performance ... through performance management survey from customers experience, experience. (Participant three).

These results are consistent with the principles of the Resource-Based View (RBV), suggesting that enhanced knowledge, increased productivity, and higher customer satisfaction are valuable strategic resources gained through training initiatives. Participant three's observation regarding the relationship between effective training and improved productivity is substantiated by a variety of studies in organisational behaviour and human resource management. Research demonstrates that well-designed training programmes provide employees with the essential skills and

knowledge required for more efficient task execution (Aragón-Sánchez, Barba-Aragón and Sanz-Valle 2019). For example, a meta-analysis by Khan, Khan and Khan (2021) revealed a positive correlation between employee training and productivity outcomes across multiple industries. This indicates that organisations that invest in comprehensive training initiatives are likely to experience enhanced operational efficiency.

The ability to improve overall productivity is reiterated by past studies as a major impact of obtaining good trainings for businesses. Participant nine, in this vein, indicates that *"without proper training, it's a bit difficult to be in the market for a longer period of time".* This statement alludes to the fact that training is inevitable for any business that wants to achieve growth and sustained success. Participant four posits that effective training improves his service delivery.

> *Firstly, it enhances customer experience ... training can help employees develop interpersonal skills, making interactions with clients more positive and memorable ... it is likely to attract more clients through positive word of mouth and online reviews (Participant four).*

From a Resource-Based View perspective, interpersonal and customer service skills constitute valuable intangible assets that serve to distinguish the organisation within the marketplace. Training not only improves employees' technical competencies but also cultivates essential interpersonal skills that contribute to effective client interactions. A study conducted by Robinson and Robinson (2018) indicated that organisations that emphasise employee training tend to experience elevated levels of customer satisfaction. When customers are satisfied, they are more likely to demonstrate loyalty, resulting in higher retention rates, which are critical for sustained business success.

Supportively, Participant one highlighted that "*Yes, it would improve growth and performance",* reiterating the fact that training is very important to the overall growth and development of businesses as evident by many global businesses. Participant six opines that training impacts businesses to maintain healthy competitiveness among their contemporaries, hence staying motivated all through to achieve more success.

... employee confidence, productivity and innovation driving business growth. It helps us stay ahead of the competition and adapt to changing market conditions ... by investing in training, we invest in our future (Participant six).

This statement aligns with the current body of research, which demonstrates that effectively organised training programmes can significantly improve employee confidence. Lang (2021) noted that when employees receive sufficient training, they experience an increase in their competence, ultimately resulting in higher productivity levels. Additionally, research conducted by Lee, Malik and Sharma (2020) supported this perspective, showing that organisations that invest in employee training report substantial improvements in performance metrics.

The effect of training is further advocated by participant two in these words, "it is improving productivity, efficiency and enhancing product knowledge and quality." This lays further credence to the impactful nature of trainings on businesses. Training not only provides employees with essential skills but also expands their understanding of the organisation's products and services. Research conducted by Baldwin and Ford (2019) indicated that effective training improves both declarative knowledge (understanding what actions to take) and procedural knowledge (knowing how to execute those actions). This comprehensive development ultimately results in higher quality outputs, as employees become more proficient in applying their knowledge effectively. For participant seven, training begets innovativeness in businesses, hence needs to be sustained.

Yes, I believe training and development are crucial for employee growth, productivity and innovation (Participant seven).

Innovation is increasingly acknowledged as a critical factor for business success in today's rapidly changing environment. Research suggests that organisations that cultivate a culture of continuous learning are more likely to promote creative thinking among their employees (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick 2020). Implementing training programmes aimed at enhancing innovative thinking can result in significant advances in product development and process improvements within an organisation. A study conducted by Dostie (2018) discovered that companies with well-established training

frameworks experienced higher levels of innovation output compared to those that invested minimally in employee development.

Subtheme 2.3: Impact of Training and Development Courses Availability

Training and development courses are very vital to the improvement of businesses, especially in the locality. The availability of these courses is one important aspect that might make or mar the businesses, given the fact that not all business owners have access to these courses. Participant two opined that having access to these training courses will go a long way in changing the face of his business for good.

> *Yes, I believe that having access to training and development courses would significantly improve the growth and performance of fresh pigs as it would enable me to acquire new skills and knowledge and as well, enhance customer service (Participant two).*

This is consistent with research by Ongori and Nzonzo (2011) which affirmed that regular down-to-earth training courses should be made available to businesses to boost their earnings. Participant ten corroborated the impact of development courses in these words, "*I really think that my business would be suffering if it wasn't for training and development courses made available to us so."* This perspective aligned with research indicating that continuous professional development is linked to improved employee performance and satisfaction. For instance, a study by (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2020) found that organisations investing in employee training experience higher productivity levels due to enhanced skill sets. The importance of trainings and participation in courses shouldn't be swept under the carpet. In developed climes, training is part of the operational strategies of most businesses. Participant four highlights that training courses are vital to his salon business.

> *Absolutely, investing in training and development courses can impact the growth and performance of my small salon business in several ways. For instance, adaptability training can help salons adapt to change in customer preferences, industry regulations and market demands. This flexibility is essential for long-term success and sustainability (Participant four).*

Adaptability training provides employees with essential skills to respond effectively to changes in customer preferences, industry regulations, and market demands. This

flexibility is vital for long-term success, as organisations that do not adapt may experience stagnation or decline. A report by McKinsey and Company (2021) highlighted that companies prioritising employee development are better equipped to navigate disruptions and leverage emerging opportunities.

Participant eight yearned for the opportunity to have more and more development courses come in the way of his business. Having identified the needs of his establishment, he needs trainings to fill in those gaps and soar higher to the next level. This is due to the huge positive impact he experienced in the past concerning training courses and would like more of such to come his way again.

> *Yes, if more training and development courses were available to us, it would likely enhance our growth and moments like equipping us with advanced skills and knowledge ... we identify training needs through performance reviews, employee feedback, industry trend analysis and skill gap assessments (Participant eight).*

This comprehensive strategy is essential for aligning training initiatives with individual employee needs and overarching organisational objectives. Performance reviews enable organisations to evaluate existing competencies in relation to desired outcomes, while employee feedback offers valuable insights into perceived deficiencies in knowledge or skills (Sonnentag, Niessen and Ohly,2019). Additionally, analysing industry trends ensures that training remains pertinent in a rapidly evolving market landscape, and skill gap assessments identify specific areas where employees may benefit from further development.

This is corroborated by past research that training is an essential part of the growth of any establishment. Participant nine, a car dealer, also supports this view by highlighting that *"... they need to have quite a lot of knowledge about cars, the technical issues and everything, so based on that, we try to give training to the employees*". The quest for knowledge by this participant is supported by participant 5 who stated that her establishment can do more if more advanced training opportunities are made available to her. It would ensure her business is up to date in the scheme of things and as well, improve her decision-making abilities.

Well, I mean positively influence our SMME's, its growth and its performance. So, I believe that with broader access to advanced training programmes, our team could acquire new skills. They can stay updated with the various industry trends leading to improved decision making and everything else, including operational strategies (Participant five).

Participant five's insights regarding expanded access to advanced training correspond with Institutional Theory, indicating that organisations pursue such training initiatives to align with external expectations set forth by governmental agencies, clients, and industry standards, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of their operational practices.

The observation that these programmes facilitate skill acquisition among teams highlighted the positive relationship between employee development and organisational success. By remaining informed about industry trends, employees are better positioned to make informed decisions that impact operational strategies. This finding is consistent with existing research indicating that continuous professional development is associated with improved job performance and overall job satisfaction (Noe, Tews and Dachner 2018).

These statements by the various participants make it evident that development courses are very inevitable for businesses that need sustainable growth. The effectiveness, efficiency, performance upscaling and satisfaction to be derived by imbibing the tenets of these trainings and courses cannot be overemphasised. To buttress this point, participant six opined that *"training is crucial for employees' growth and business success. It boosts confidence, morale and job satisfaction*."

Theme 3: Evaluation of Training

Table 4.4 gave a summary of the theme and subthemes that emerged on the evaluation of training.

Table 4.4: Data from participants on the evaluation of training

Research Inquiry	*Illustrative Quotes*	*Keynotes*	*Frequency*	*Subthemes*

Evaluation of Training	*So, we use various methods such as. **Feedback surveys, performance assessments,** and one-on-one interviews, in fact, to actually gauge the effectiveness of whatever training or workshop (Participant five)*	*Performance assessments*	*5*	*Evaluating the Training Effectiveness*
	*Yes, they learned new **customer techniques** adapted to **new technology** and kept up with the trends and the standards of different... (Participant three)*	*Customer techniques and technology*	*4*	*Benefits of Training*
	*Of course, challenges are always there, especially in the business... **industry or sector funds** to take all the employees free training and we have to get or to apply for his own time to get something done or get some certain training (Participant ten)*	*Funding*	*4*	*Challenges in Training*
	*We need assistance in areas like funding, mentorship and market access... **government initiatives, donor support and partnerships** can help bridge these gaps. These collaborative efforts can drive growth, innovation and job creation (Participant 6)*	*Government/ donor partnership*	*6*	*Areas of assistance in the Training*

Source: Field data 2024

Subtheme 3.1: Evaluating the Training Effectiveness

This subtheme discussed the ways through which the businesses evaluate how effective the trainings are. Participant five highlighted that she identifies and evaluates each training intervention through interaction with her employees after the training.

> *So, we use various methods such as feedback surveys, performance assessments, and one-on-one interviews, in fact, to gauge the effectiveness of whatever training or workshop (Participant five).*

Research indicated that feedback is instrumental not only in assessing immediate outcomes but also in promoting long-term learning (Hattie and Timperley 2017). Feedback surveys enable organisations to gather data directly from participants regarding their perceptions of the training's relevance and effectiveness. This

qualitative data is essential for gaining insights into participant experiences and pinpointing areas that may require improvement.

This is very consistent with past studies which stated that feedback mechanisms are very prudent way of assessment. In the same vein, Participant one opined that his evaluation of trainings is *"through performance reviews and via performance assessments".* In addition to this, the continuity of the evaluation and assessment is vital as opined by Participant 6. He reiterated that sustained efforts on the evaluation yields the best form of results.

> *Yes, we do evaluate training through surveys, assessments and performance mentoring. This helps us measure impact, identify areas for improvement and refine our training strategies. Continuous evaluation ensures maximum return on investments (Participant six).*

Research demonstrated that ongoing evaluation initiatives contribute to improved outcomes by enabling organisations to adjust their strategies based on real-time feedback (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick 2020). Continuous evaluation not only promotes accountability but also cultivates a culture of improvement within organisations. By pinpointing areas for enhancement, organisations can optimise their training strategies to remain relevant and effective over time. This iterative process is corroborated by evidence suggesting that adaptive learning environments lead to increased engagement levels among participants (Brusilovsky and Millán 2018).

Reiterating further, Participant two stated that he uses quizzes to test the level of understanding of his employees after each training, given their cadre of employment. In his opinion, this means of evaluation is best for his staff and brings out the best possible response from them. This lays credence to previous studies that quizzing is adequate, especially for low level personnel in an organisation.

> *Yes, evaluation of training is carried out at fresh pigs as I use the following method to evaluate training effectiveness. They are feedback forms, surveys, quizzes and assessments (Participant two).*

However, Participant three preferred the practical implementation of the training to determine how well the employees respond to them. In his opinion, it is better to implement the training on the employees rather than quizzing them. This is because

practical knowledge is far more essential than the theoretical knowledge and resonates with the popular saying, "practice makes perfect".

> *...You check on the performance before and after the training and see if it was effective ... you choose and see how the employees were performing before the training, then you implement the training and afterwards, check how they're doing it after the training to see if it was effective (Participant three).*

In a similar vein, Participant ten evaluated the effectiveness of training through setting a "challenge" for the staff, to test their skills and ideas based on the training. In his words, *"... we do give out task of which we'll challenge the employees to give ideas and skills that we learned by the training*". Through these means, the ideas from the best set of employees are aggregated as the effective approaches to the respective tasks. This approach is consistent with current theories in adult learning and organisational behaviour, which emphasise the importance of experiential learning where individuals gain knowledge through experience and reflection – for effective skill retention and application (Kolb 2018). By encouraging employees to apply their training in real-world scenarios, organisations can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. For Participant four, the setting of performance metrics before the training serves as a standard of measurement for effectiveness and efficiency. In doing so, grey areas or areas for improvement are highlighted and acted upon for further success.

> *Yes, after training sessions at our salon, we evaluate the effectiveness using feedback surveys, observations on how skills are applied and comparing performance metrics before and after training. These evaluations help us ensure that our training needs and its goals are met... It also identifies areas where we can improve or provide additional support (Participant four).*

The implementation of feedback surveys, observational assessments, and comparative analyses of performance metrics before and after training reflects a comprehensive evaluation framework. This multifaceted approach not only assesses immediate outcomes but also promotes ongoing development by identifying areas where additional support or training may be required. Research supports the notion that goal-setting theory significantly enhances employee performance (Locke and Latham 2020). Additionally, these insights align with best practices in human resource

development, emphasising the importance of continuous feedback loops in fostering employee growth and aligning individual capabilities with organisational objectives (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick 2020). By integrating these methodologies, organisations can effectively measure success while also nurturing an adaptive learning culture that proactively addresses identified gaps.

Subtheme 3.2: Benefits of Training

This subtheme highlighted and discussed the benefits of training in businesses. Participant six highlighted the various benefits accruing to his business because of partaking in business training and development courses. To him, these trainings are worthwhile and had been the booster for the growth experienced in his business over the years.

> *Yes, benefits include improved employee morale, retention and business efficiency. Training also enhances our reputation by attracting top talents and clients ... by investing in training, we have built a strong and sustainable business (Participant six).*

This is consistent with past research which alluded to the fact that trainings are a prerequisite for growth, especially in the business niche of this present dispensation. Employee morale is greatly affected by the professional development opportunities offered by an organisation. When employees perceive that their employer is committed to their growth through training programmes, they are more inclined to experience enhanced job satisfaction and loyalty. Research indicates that organisations with strong training initiatives typically enjoy lower turnover rates (Usha, Nandhini and Palanivelu 2019). This retention not only reduces costs related to hiring and onboarding new staff but also promotes a culture of continuity and expertise within the workforce. For participant one, he reiterated the importance of training as thus: "Improves skills and productivity". The level of growth experienced by a business can be equated to its level of advancement, knowledge and upgrade. This is because the business space continues to evolve on a daily basis and only proper research can help one stay abreast. This can be measured through various metrics, including increased productivity per employee and decreased error rates in tasks. A comprehensive study conducted by the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) has shown

that organisations that allocate resources towards extensive training programmes achieve a profit margin that is 24% greater than their counterparts that do not engage in such investments (ASTD, 2020). This underscores the importance of effective training in enhancing performance outcomes, which in turn contributes to the overall success of the organisation. Participant five resonates with this view by indicating that his business has benefitted immensely from training opportunities.

> *... our employees are more skilled and confident in their roles, which has led to increased productivity and efficiency over the years. So, we've also seen improvement in customer satisfaction due to better devices and product quality, which in fact, we owe the training we've been giving to our employees (Participant five).*

These achievements highlight the significance of the Resource-Based View (RBV), which emphasises the importance of human capital development as a fundamental driver of sustained competitive advantage within organisations. Research indicated a strong correlation between employee confidence and their perceived competence in their roles. A study conducted by Noe and Kodwani (2018) demonstrates that effective training programmes not only enhance specific job-related skills but also significantly boost employees' self-efficacy. This increase in confidence often results in improved job performance, as employees feel more equipped to address challenges and make independent decisions. Additionally, the link between skill development and productivity is well-documented. A meta-analysis by Salas, DiazGranados and Halpin (2018) revealed that organisations that invest in comprehensive training programmes experience notable enhancements in productivity metrics. Findings from participant five corroborated this research, indicating that as employees acquire new skills through training, they tend to execute their tasks more efficiently, thereby positively impacting the organisation’s overall performance.

Resonating further, participant three highlighted that these training courses have exposed them to the world of technology application in his business, hence, going with the latest trends in his business niche.

> *Yes, they learned new customer techniques adapted to new technology and kept up with the trends and the standards of different ... (Participant three).*

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, it is essential for organisations to remain agile and responsive to technological advancements. This adaptability not only improves service delivery but also aligns with contemporary consumer expectations. The incorporation of technology into customer service can result in more efficient processes, personalised experiences, and, ultimately, increased customer loyalty. Research demonstrates that organisations investing in technology training for their employees frequently experience enhanced operational efficiency and improved customer interactions (Bersin 2019). This is especially significant in service-oriented sectors such as salons, where client engagement is crucial.

Participant four indicated that the level of satisfaction received by his employees and clients is top notch, all thanks to the training he has given his business to. This has led to great improvement for him as reiterated by participant nine, "*we can see the improvement in the employees in relation to the customers.*" These improvements are very vital for business growth, overall development and business retention as well as advancement.

> *Our salon firm has significant benefits from our training programmes. They've improved team morale and hence service quality and boosted client satisfaction. Our staff now feel more confidence in their skills, leading to increased productivity and a stronger sense of teamwork (Participant four).*

Employee training is associated with increased job satisfaction which, in turn, is correlated with enhanced customer satisfaction (Harter, Schmidt and Hayes 2022). When employees feel competent and valued through ongoing education, they are more inclined to deliver exceptional service. The development of communication skills, product knowledge, and service techniques gained through training plays a significant role in fostering positive customer experiences. Additionally, the relationship between employee confidence developed through training and heightened productivity is crucial. Confident employees are more likely to engage proactively with customers, resulting in improved service outcomes (Saks and Burke-Smalley 2018). This increase in client satisfaction provides a competitive advantage for businesses in saturated markets, such as salons.

With these benefits, businesses should avail themselves of the diverse training available both physically and virtually. This will serve as a means of boosting the

reputation of the business and setting a bit up for success as highlighted by participant ten, "*it benefits by maintaining a good image of your business*". This is reiterated by past research that an advanced business is likely to be recommended for better opportunities in a respective sector (Cavusgil 2021).

Subtheme 3.3: Challenges in Training

This subtheme discussed the challenges accruing from participating in trainings for businesses. Participant ten highlighted that the major constraint his business faces in accessing these training courses is a lack of funds. This is because some of these training courses are very expensive and not many businesses can afford it.

> *Of course, challenges are always there, especially in the business ... industry or sector funds to take all the employees' free training and we have to get or to apply for his own time to get something done or get some certain training (Participant ten).*

This demonstrates an institutional constraint that may influence a business's ability to meet training requirements, often depending on access to external support or funding sources. This observation is consistent with existing research that identifies funding as a significant barrier to employee development. A study conducted by Noe and Kodwani (2018) indicated that organisations frequently prioritise immediate operational needs over long-term investments in employee training due to budget constraints. The financial demands of professional development can discourage businesses from pursuing essential training opportunities, particularly for SMMEs that typically operate on tighter budgets. Furthermore, the financial considerations extend beyond course fees, encompassing indirect costs such as lost productivity during training sessions and potential travel expenses for off-site programmes. As highlighted by Tharenou, Saks and Moore (2017), these additional costs can exacerbate the financial challenges faced by businesses, further complicating efforts to allocate resources towards employee training.

Reiterating further, Participant seven highlighted his constraint as thus: "...challenges in providing training include time constraints, budget limitations and finding relevant programmes". This implies that apart from the funding, other challenges subsist,

indicating that majority of businesses in the locality are willing to participate in trainings but few of them have the enabling environment to do so. Participant four, a salon owner highlights a myriad of challenges he faces in organising training for his staff. This most times sets him back in this quest for growth and development.

> *Yes, providing entrepreneurship training at our salon firm presents some challenges such as finding participants, backgrounds, and experience levels, differing learning speeds and managing group dynamics to overcome these obstacles... all these are crucial to tailoring the training content (Participant four).*

Research highlighted that adult learners bring diverse experiences and knowledge backgrounds, which can influence their engagement and retention of new information (Knowles 2019). It is crucial to customise training content to address these variations to enhance overall effectiveness. For example, a study by Bierema (2019) underscored the significance of recognising individual learning styles and adjusting instructional methods accordingly. In a salon environment, this may involve providing a combination of hands-on demonstrations, visual aids, and theoretical discussions to accommodate various learning preferences. Furthermore, effective management of group dynamics is essential; facilitators should cultivate an inclusive atmosphere where all participants feel valued and empowered to contribute.

Another challenge highlighted by participant five is that of constant changes that are brought into the system of operations in his business. This results in employees feeling "fed up" each time, decreasing their productivity and often, subjecting them to relearning everything that they already knew with respect to the business.

> *So, we face challenges with limited resources time constraints ... our staff remain updated and also, they remain oppressed with every new development in this industry (Participant five).*

This phenomenon is in line with research on organisational change management, which indicated that frequent changes can lead to resistance among employees (Stober 2018). When employees feel that they are obliged to continually relearn processes or adjust to new systems, it can result in feelings of being overwhelmed, as expressed by one participant. Additionally, ongoing operational changes may disrupt established routines and workflows, potentially resulting in inefficiencies. A study by

Armenakis, Harris and Feild (2020) emphasised the critical role of effective communication during times of change. Organisations should provide clear rationale for the necessity of changes and articulate how these adjustments benefit both employees and the organisation. Such an approach can help reduce resistance and promote a more adaptable workforce.

In addition to these challenges, participant three indicated that the presence of limited resources to facilitate these trainings whenever they are available is another huge challenge. Sometimes, opportunities might arise, and trainings become available, but accessing qualified and certified trainers to execute them proves difficult. This is because most businesses in the locality are either small or medium in size, hence, lack the financial power to drive the logistics involved in such trainings.

> *Because you don't normally find a free training, so financing the training becomes difficult because my business is still small, and I end up using e-learning because it's the cheap mode rather than having the training where there will be a facilitator or instructor ... (Participant three).*

E-learning can offer notable cost benefits; however, it is important to recognise its limitations. The lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors may affect the learning experience for some individuals who thrive on direct engagement and immediate feedback (Garrison, Anderson and Archer 2017). Additionally, the effectiveness of e-learning can differ depending on individual learning styles and levels of self-discipline, as not all employees may excel in an online learning environment.

The challenges identified by participants underscore the complexities involved in providing entrepreneurship training within salon firms. Addressing participant diversity through tailored content delivery methods, managing employee responses to constant operational changes through effective communication strategies, and overcoming resource limitations by integrating training into existing workflows are critical steps toward enhancing the effectiveness of such programmes.

Subtheme 3.4: Areas of assistance in the Training

This subtheme discussed the areas that need assistance as it pertains to trainings for businesses in the locality. Even though training is essential for businesses to thrive,

there are still grey areas that needs improvement and assistance from government, private agencies and similar, in order to facilitate the smooth availability for small and medium businesses. Participant four indicated that financial assistance is top of his list to boost training and improve his business.

> *Firstly, I would like to mention funding assistance with money to enhance and maintain salon services ... and policy support clear, which provides clear rules and advice to ensure fair and smooth salon operations (Participant four).*

Research indicated that financial aid can significantly impact business growth. A report by the Kauffman Foundation emphasised that businesses with access to financial resources are more likely to innovate and expand their services (Kauffman Foundation 2019). In the context of salons, this means being able to offer enhanced services that meet customer demands while also ensuring staff are well-trained in the latest techniques.

This is reiterated by participant one, who identifies "financial aid, training resource and expert guidance" as his own areas that require assistance to facilitate smooth training of his staff. The findings of previous studies support the notion that public-private partnerships are vital for fostering a smooth and progressive business environment. Effective training programmes are crucial for upholding high service standards in salons. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) emphasises that ongoing training not only enhances employee skills but also improves job satisfaction and retention rates (NIOSH 2021). Furthermore, expert guidance can equip salon owners with valuable insights into best practices for effectively managing their businesses. This includes a comprehension of market trends, customer preferences, and regulatory requirements areas in which many small business owners may lack proficiency. Accessing mentorship or consulting services can help bridge this gap, enabling salon owners to make informed decisions that have a positive impact on their operations.

Stemming from this, participant five indicated other areas of assistance that his business requires in order to thrive and survive beyond his expectations.

> *... we need to have some access to expertise, you know, collaborations with industry experts or government agencies that I believe could provide us with some valuable insights and mentorship for our team as well...we need support*

in acquiring modern training infrastructure and technology because these things are very much expensive (Participant five).

Reiterating further, participant seven stated that, "... industry connections and access to cutting edge research and technologies," are other areas that need collaboration for his business. This lays credence to the fact that outside financial aids, several businesses in the locality seek assistance in other areas. Participant three highlights the areas of assistance peculiar to his business.

In funding for more equipment to expand the business and create more job opportunities, register employees for UI benefits in case they lose their current jobs... (Participant three).

The procurement of new equipment has the potential to enhance productivity and efficiency, thereby contributing to job creation. Research highlights that limited access to capital is a significant obstacle to growth for small businesses (Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt 2017). Additionally, enrolling employees in Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits offers a safety net that can bolster employee morale and retention by providing security in the event of job loss. This is consistent with research indicating that employee benefits positively influence overall job satisfaction and loyalty (Yamamoto 2021).

Resonating further, participant six highlighted some areas of assistance for his business, most of which are outside financial assistance. This is consistent with previous studies which indicate that there are several aspects of business that require a lot of synergy to improve the economic sector of any nation.

We need assistance in areas like funding, mentorship and market access... government initiatives, donor support and partnerships can help bridge these gaps. These collaborative efforts can drive growth, innovation and job creation (Participant six).

The request for market access and mentorship demonstrates the organisation's responses to institutional considerations and resource requirements, emphasising the importance of external legitimacy and collaboration for capacity development. This perspective is supported by existing research, which indicated that mentorship, market access, and networking opportunities are essential components of entrepreneurial

success (St-Jean and Audet 2022). Effective mentorship offers invaluable guidance and facilitates the transfer of knowledge from seasoned entrepreneurs to newcomers, thereby fostering innovation and minimising the risk of failure. Additionally, access to markets is crucial; without it, even well-capitalised businesses may encounter difficulties in achieving sustainable growth. Prior studies have demonstrated that collaborative frameworks can significantly improve resource availability and cultivate an ecosystem conducive to business innovation and expansion (Acs and Audretsch 2010). For example, government initiatives designed to support small enterprises through grants or tax incentives have proven to effectively stimulate economic development.

This is corroborated by Participant two, who identified the areas of assistance as, "*First, access to funding and plans, second, training facility facilities and equipment and lastly technology and infrastructure upgrades.*" With these views, it is evident that there are myriads of aspects that need cooperation and collaboration among businesses, the private sector and the government agencies. For participant nine, his car rental business requires some level of regulatory assistance, especially from the government, to ensure its smooth running, efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

> *Yes, we do require quite a lot of assistance, not only from the government and even for the from the donors, especially with this regarding the financial aspects ... we may need quite a lot of registrations and licensing which government can provide us. And nowadays, we need a general car park for customers, so government can try to see to that ... they can provide the proper facility for us in the car rental business (Participant nine).*

The necessity of government support is a significant topic in discussions surrounding the development of SMMEs. Research suggested that simplifying registration and licensing processes can significantly enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem, enabling SMMEs to concentrate on their core business functions rather than grappling with complex regulatory requirements (Beck and Demirgüç-Kunt 2017). Additionally, the availability of essential infrastructure, such as parking facilities, is vital for ensuring customer accessibility, which directly impacts business performance. Studies indicated that enhanced infrastructure correlates with increased customer foot traffic

and improved sales volumes for SMMEs (Gamble, Caton, Aujogue and Lee 2020). Therefore, government intervention in the provision of these facilities could play a crucial role in cultivating a favourable environment for SMME growth.

This is consistent with past research that a collaborative effort is needed to boost businesses, especially the small and medium businesses. Participant eight, in furtherance of these areas of support and assistance, indicated the aspects of assistance required for his business as thus:

> *We need assistance in funding for advanced training programmes, access to government sponsored training initiatives and support in creating tailored training content relevant to our sector (Participant eight).*

Access to government-sponsored training initiatives can provide business owners and employees with essential skills that are specifically designed for their respective sectors. Research consistently indicates that investing in human capital through training enhances productivity and competitiveness among SMMEs (Drábek, Lorincová and Javorčíková 2017). There is a significant need for tailored training content, as generic programmes may not adequately address the unique challenges encountered by various sectors. Customising training initiatives ensures their relevance and applicability, thereby maximising the benefits derived from these programmes. Collaborative efforts among government agencies, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders are crucial for developing effective training frameworks that cater to the specific needs of SMMEs.

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The word cloud image displays the most common words or phrases extracted from a set of interviews or responses, with the size of each word indicating its frequency or importance. Training and development are central themes, indicating a strong emphasis on employee skills and professional growth within businesses. Terms like effective, skills, programmes, and assistance suggest that providing training and programmes to develop skills is seen as a crucial way to support employees.

Employees, performance, and business are also highlighted, suggesting that discussions revolve around employee performance and its impact on business

operations and development. Words like challenges, improve, ensure, and benefits show that businesses face challenges but aim to overcome them by focusing on improvement and ensuring the effectiveness of their strategies. References to sector, company, and industry highlight discussions about the broader business context and the specific challenges or characteristics of different sectors. Government and programmes suggest the involvement of public initiatives or policies to support business development.

Overall, the word cloud suggests that the data from these interviews focuses on business and employee development, addressing challenges through training, skill enhancement, and performance improvement. It also highlights the importance of identifying needs and ensuring growth within specific sectors or industries.

Figure 4.1: Word Cloud of common dialogue emerging from the study

Source: Field data 2024

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored the effectiveness, benefits, challenges, and areas of assistance related to training programmes in businesses, based on responses from participants in various sectors. The analysis was divided into three key themes. The findings revealed that businesses recognise the essential role of training in improving employee performance and overall business success. The benefits of training are substantial, ranging from skill development to improved customer service and business growth. However, the effectiveness of training programmes largely depends

on how they are evaluated, with most businesses using a combination of methods like feedback surveys, performance assessments, and practical implementations.

Despite the evident benefits, businesses face several challenges, particularly financial constraints and limited access to quality training resources. These challenges hinder many from fully realising the potential of training programmes. The lack of funding and time were significant barriers, especially for small businesses that lack the resources to offer comprehensive training programmes or hire expert trainers.

To address these challenges, there is a strong demand for external assistance, particularly in the form of financial aid, mentorship, and access to modern training infrastructure. Government support, private sector partnerships, and collaborative efforts can all help to bridge the gaps in funding and resource availability, enabling businesses to scale their training programmes effectively.

Ultimately, training plays a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainability and growth of businesses, but ongoing evaluation and support are required to ensure these programmes yield long-term success. The insights from this study underscore the importance of continued investment in employee development and the need for a supportive ecosystem to facilitate impactful training across businesses.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented a summary of the key findings from the study examining the effects of short-term training and development on the growth and performance of SMMEs in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal. It delineated the primary conclusions derived from the research, offers actionable recommendations for stakeholders, and highlighted opportunities for future research. By evaluating the results of short-term training initiatives, this study yielded valuable insights into the influence of training on the sustainability of SMMEs and identifies potential avenues for enhancing training effectiveness for small businesses in comparable contexts.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study indicated that short-term training and development programmes substantially enhance the growth and performance of SMMEs across various dimensions, including financial outcomes, employee productivity, and operational efficiency.

5.2.1 Enhanced Financial Growth

One of the key findings from this research is the positive relationship between short-term training initiatives and the financial growth of SMMEs in Umkomaas. Training programmes aimed at enhancing skills in areas such as financial management, customer service, and sales techniques have been associated with increases in both profitability and revenue generation. By targeting specific skill gaps, businesses can streamline their operations and make more informed decisions that significantly contribute to improved profit margins. This outcome is consistent with existing literature, which suggests that effectively designed training programmes frequently yield measurable financial benefits for small businesses (Manresa, Bikfalvi and Simon 2019; Jehanzeb and Bashir 2018). It is important to note, however, that the financial impact of such training initiatives may vary, based on factors such as the size of the business, resource availability, and the type of training implemented.

5.2.2 Improved Employee Productivity and Skills

The research findings indicate that short-term training and development programmes significantly enhance employee productivity within SMMEs in Umkomaas. By providing employees with the latest skills pertinent to their roles, these programmes not only streamline work processes but also cultivate a proactive mindset geared towards continuous improvement. Training initiatives whether aimed at technical, operational, or customer service competencies equip employees to execute their tasks with increased precision, confidence, and efficiency. This boost in productivity translates to higher output and improved quality of products and services (Sal and Raja 2020).

The study further emphasises that short-term training effectively addresses immediate skills gaps, which is particularly advantageous for small businesses operating with limited resources. Research by Karim, Choudhury and Latif (2019) suggests that employees who engage in training demonstrate greater commitment to their roles, enhanced job satisfaction, and elevated levels of engagement, all of which contribute to increased productivity. Training empowers employees to tackle complex challenges, make informed decisions, and drive innovation in their daily functions, thus supporting the overall growth of the business.

Moreover, the research reveals that SMME owners who prioritise investing in employee training and development perceive it as a strategic investment in long-term business resilience. Despite the focused nature of short-term training, it provides essential skills and knowledge that enable employees to adapt to changing business demands. Such adaptability is crucial for SMMEs striving to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving market landscape.

5.2.3 Enhanced Operational Efficiency

In addition to immediate financial benefits, short-term training significantly improves operational efficiency within SMMEs. According to Al Doghan and Sundram (2023), enhanced efficiency leads to lower operational costs and allows businesses to allocate resources more effectively toward growth and expansion initiatives. Training in essential areas such as digital skills, time management, and resource allocation equips employees with the tools necessary to perform their tasks more proficiently, thereby reducing waste and increasing output. Consequently, these enterprises experience enhanced cash flow and resource management, which contribute to their long-term sustainability and financial stability (Nwaeke and Obiekwe 2017). Many SMMEs have reported improvements in operational processes following short-term training, resulting in streamlined workflows and better resource allocation. However, challenges such as limited resources and the short duration of training sessions have been shown to impact the depth and sustainability of these enhancements.

5.2.4 Business Resilience and Adaptability

Organisations that have introduced short-term training programmes have observed significant enhancements in key performance indicators, including sales growth, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. Such training initiatives have demonstrated their importance in equipping SMMEs to respond adeptly to economic and market changes. The capacity to swiftly adapt to evolving demands, advancing technologies, and competitive pressures has enabled these businesses to sustain financial growth, even in challenging circumstances. Training in areas such as problem-solving, strategic planning, and innovation empowers these organisations to

effectively address challenges, thereby strengthening their resilience and financial sustainability (Kotsios 2023).

5.2.5 Variations in Perceived Training Value

The research indicated that business owners and managers have varying perceptions of the value of short-term training, largely influenced by industry requirements, financial capabilities, and organisational objectives. This highlights the necessity of customising training programmes to address the unique needs of each organisation. Financial resources significantly affect how training is valued; businesses with constrained budgets may perceive short-term training as a cost rather than an investment in human capital. Conversely, organisations with more financial flexibility may regard short-term training as a strategic asset that enhances productivity and competitiveness. This variation emphasises the importance of aligning training initiatives with the financial realities of each organisation to secure stakeholder support. Additionally, the primary goals of an organisation play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of short-term training. Companies aiming for rapid growth or innovation may prioritise agile learning solutions that allow employees to quickly acquire new skills, while those focused on stability and long-term employee development might favour comprehensive programmes that offer in-depth knowledge over time (To and Leung 2024). Customising training programmes to align with these organisational strategies ensures their relevance and effectiveness.

Given the variability in perceptions across different industries, financial capacities, and organisational objectives, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach to training is not effective. Customising training programmes enables organisations to address their specific challenges and capitalise on opportunities more effectively. By performing comprehensive assessments of individual organisational contexts such as skill gaps within the workforce, strategic priorities, and budget limitations, training providers can develop targeted interventions that enhance impact (Au, Altman and Roussel 2018). Furthermore, involving stakeholders throughout this process promotes a sense of ownership and commitment to the training initiatives. When employees recognise that their needs are being considered through tailored programmes, they are more likely to engage actively in their learning experiences.

In summary, while short-term training programmes have been shown to positively influence the growth and performance of SMMEs, challenges such as limited training scope, inadequate follow-up, and financial constraints can impede the realisation of maximum potential benefits

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations aimed at optimising the efficacy of short-term training initiatives for SMMEs in Umkomaas are suggested:

5.3.1 Develop Tailored Training Programmes

Kuna, Hašková, and Hodál (2022) emphasise the importance of tailored training programmes, which are specifically designed learning experiences aimed at addressing the unique needs, objectives, and challenges faced by various SMMEs. Industry-specific training that considers business size, available resources, and strategic goals can facilitate more relevant and practical applications. It is recommended that training organisations conduct thorough assessments to comprehensively understand the specific requirements of each SMME (Pratt, Mueser and Bartels 2017). These assessments may involve interviews, surveys, and focus groups with business owners and employees to identify skills gaps, operational challenges, and growth opportunities.

Given the distinct skill requirements across different industries and roles, training should be customised to address these needs, focusing on what will provide the most significant benefits to each sector and position. Programmes should align with the SMME's strategic objectives, which may include improving profitability, enhancing customer service, or increasing productivity (Viterouli, Belias and Papademetriou 2024). For instance, if a business seeks to broaden its market reach, training initiatives in digital marketing, customer relationship management, or sales may be prioritised.

Incorporating examples from local businesses and engaging local experts as trainers can enhance the relatability and effectiveness of the training programmes. Participants are more likely to grasp and retain concepts when they are presented through familiar, local business scenarios. Furthermore, the unique economic, cultural, and regulatory contexts of Umkomaas and KwaZulu-Natal should be considered in training

programmes. This includes insights into local customer behaviour, regional market dynamics, and compliance with relevant local laws.

5.3.2 Enhance Accessibility and Affordability of Training

Government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private institutions should collaborate to subsidise training costs, thereby enhancing accessibility for SMMEs with limited financial resources. Implementing reduced fees and providing flexible scheduling options would enable more small business owners to engage in training opportunities (Ladzani and Van Vuuren 2022).

Large corporations can play a significant role in advancing the SMME sector by sponsoring training programmes as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Collaborations with banks, telecommunications companies, and manufacturing firms could further help to lessen financial burdens for small businesses. Utilising digital platforms presents a cost-effective means of delivering training to a broader audience. Online courses, webinars, and workshops can minimise expenses related to travel and venue rental, thereby making training more economical (Ramukumba 2017). Additionally, recorded sessions provide businesses with the flexibility to access training at their convenience.

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises possessing specific expertise can facilitate knowledge sharing through organised peer-led workshops or mentoring groups. This method fosters affordable skill transfer within the community by leveraging the existing expertise. According to Kuna, Hašková, and Hodál (2022), businesses can also implement in-house training programmes were seasoned employees' mentor newer staff members. Training providers can support this model by supplying resources or guidelines to structure internal training sessions effectively.

5.3.3 Integrate Follow-up and Continuous Learning Opportunities

Khoase, Mutinta and McArthur (2018) emphasise that the integration of follow-up and continuous learning opportunities is essential for reinforcing the skills acquired during training and ensuring sustained growth for SMMEs. Such initiatives support the reinforcement of initial training outcomes, adaptation to changing business

requirements, and the promotion of a culture of lifelong learning. Establishing follow-up mechanisms and providing continuous learning resources can help solidify the skills gained from short-term training. This may include mentorship programmes, online resources, or additional workshops aimed at sustaining and enhancing the benefits of the initial training (Nieman 2021). Furthermore, scheduling regular check-in sessions with SMME participants enables the evaluation of the application of learned skills. These sessions can help address any challenges they may encounter, track progress, and reinforce the key concepts from the original training.

5.3.4 Encourage Participation in Networking Events

Networking events provide crucial opportunities for small, medium, and micro enterprises to develop business relationships, share insights, and engage with potential customers, suppliers, and partners (Gilmore, Carson and Rocks 2019). For SMMEs in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal, these events can also function as a platform for acquiring knowledge about industry trends and best practices, thereby promoting innovation and growth. Thaver (2020) emphasises that, in addition to skills development, SMME owners and employees can gain significant advantages from participating in networking events. Training programmes should consider incorporating sessions designed to foster connections with industry peers, suppliers, and potential clients, as these relationships are vital for business expansion. It is essential to encourage SMMEs to recognise networking as an integral component of their growth strategy, equating its importance with marketing and sales efforts. A well-structured business growth plan that includes scheduled networking events can assist them in prioritising and preparing for these valuable opportunities (Malecki and Tootle 2019).

5.3.5 Leverage Technology for Flexible Learning

Matima (2022) emphasises the significant role that technology plays in improving the flexibility and accessibility of learning opportunities for SMMEs. By utilising a range of digital tools and platforms, SMMEs in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal, could provide tailored learning experiences that accommodate their employees' schedules and preferred learning styles. Leveraging online platforms for training can enhance accessibility for SMME employees, allowing them to complete modules at their own pace without interrupting operational workflows. E-learning options can also expand

the breadth and effectiveness of training initiatives (Ekechi, Chukwurah and Okeke 2024).

Organisations are encouraged to optimise learning materials for mobile devices, enabling employees to access training content at their convenience. The use of mobile applications or responsive web designs supports learning on-the-go, effectively accommodating the demanding schedules of SMME employees (Ajibade and Mutula 2020). By strategically harnessing technology to facilitate flexible learning, SMMEs in Umkomaas can cultivate a responsive and supportive learning environment. These approaches not only enhance employee engagement and promote continuous improvement but also equip businesses with essential skills to thrive in an ever-evolving market landscape.

5.4 PROPOSED MODEL FOR ENHANCING TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS IN SMMES

Based on current research and best practices in the field, the following conceptual framework is proposed:

Step 1: Perform comprehensive needs assessments in collaboration with small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

Step 2: Develop customised training programs tailored to the specific industry context and organisational stage.

Step 3: Deliver practical, skills-oriented short-term training utilising a blended learning approach.

Step 4: Provide ongoing mentorship and post-training support to ensure effective knowledge transfer and application.

Step 5: Measure training effectiveness through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as revenue growth, employee productivity metrics, and customer satisfaction indices.

This model incorporates principles from Contingency and Institutional theories to improve flexibility, responsiveness, and alignment with stakeholder needs.

5.5 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has yielded valuable insights; however, additional research is essential to address existing limitations and to investigate other factors that may affect training effectiveness in SMMEs. Future research could focus on the long-term impacts of short-term training programmes on SMMEs. By tracking business performance over multiple years, we can gain more profound insights into the sustainability of the benefits derived from training initiatives. Moreover, exploring employee retention following training would provide SMME owners with important information on maintaining a stable workforce. Additionally, investigating the role of government policies in supporting SMME training could offer valuable guidance on optimising policy frameworks to promote growth through skill development.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY (GATE KEEPER LETTER)

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Winnie Snegugu Xulu, and I am a Masters' student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a Masters in Management Sciences. My topic is titled: *The impact of short-term training and development programmes on the growth and performance of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KZN.*

The main aim of the study is to explore the impact of short-term training and development on the growth and performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KZN. Furthermore, the research will establish the benefits that are accrued when an SMME engages in training courses and determine the challenges that result from SMMEs not engaging and participating in short-term training courses. This will be done using a qualitative approach and interviews will be conducted to SMMEs to determine the impact of short term training on their growth and performance.

I am hereby seeking your consent to use your organisation as a case study, and conduct interviews. This research is meant to solve challenges that are related to training and development and how these affect growth and performance. You are assured that data collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be divulged to any other party. Furthermore, the results of this research are for statistical purpose only and the summary of the results will be disclosed to you.

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide a bound copy of the thesis. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on wsneguguxulu@gmail.com or contact me on 0789056561 or get in touch with my supervisor Prof K Motaung on TtiDirector@dut.ac.za

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Winnie Snegugu Xulu

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: Exploring The Provision Of Short-Term Training Courses For Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in Amahlongwa Mission, Umkomaas, KZN

Principal Investigator/s/researcher:
Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: My name is Winnie Snegugu Xulu, and I am a Masters' student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a Masters in Management Sciences. My topic is titled: *The impact of short-term training and development programmes on the growth and performance of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KZN.*

Outline of the Procedures: The research aims to explore the provision of short-term training courses for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KZN. Furthermore, the research will establish the benefits that are accrued when an SMME engages in training courses and to determine the challenges that result to SMMEs not engaging and participating in short-term training and development programmes. To successfully complete my Masters' degree, the latter part of the empirical framework involves the conduction of semi-structured interviews. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. Please note that you are free to not answer any questions which you may not feel comfortable with. Furthermore, your name will not be be mentioned on the interview guide and you will remain anonymous. Your participation is merely voluntary and there is no coercion or undue influence in answering questions. In addition, the responses to the interview, once collated, will be used for statistical purposes only.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort to you as a participant in being part of this study.

Explain to the participant the reasons he/she may be withdrawn from the Study: Please note that participation in this research is voluntary and therefore you are free to withdraw from the study at any time should you wish to.

Remuneration: You will not be compensated for participating in this study. Participation is voluntary.

Costs of the Study: You will not be required to pay any costs in relation to this study.

Confidentiality: Your name should not be mentioned on the interview guide and you will remain anonymous.

Results: The results of the study will be available to you upon the study's completion. This will be through the use of the contact details attached on the consent form. A link will also be shared for you to have access to emails where you can access the information and results of the study. The results will be shared in layman terms so that they can be easily understood.

Research-related Injury: There are no research related injuries as a result of this study.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings: This study's data will be kept in a safe place for 5 years and discarded accordingly in line with DUT policy.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Please do not hesitate to contact me on; or my supervisor can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Prof K Motaung on TtiDirector@dut.ac.za

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Full Title of the Study: The impact of short-term training and development programmes of the growth and performance of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal.

Names of Researcher/s:

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Winnie Snegugu Xulu, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant	**Date**	**Time**	**Signature / Right Thumbprint**

I, _____ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	**Date**	**Signature**

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION:

My name is Winnie Snegugu Xulu, and I am a Master's student at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). I am currently pursuing a Masters in Management Sciences. My topic is titled: ***THE IMPACT OF SHORT-TERM TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES ON THE GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL, MEDIUM AND MIRCO ENTERPRISES (SMMEs) IN UMKOMAAS, KZN.***The research aims to explore the provision of the short-term training programmes for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomaas, KZN. Furthermore, the research will establish the benefits that are accrued when an SMME engages in training programmes and determine the challenges that result to SMMEs not engaging and participating when it comes to the issue of short-term training programme.

This interview will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to complete. Please note that participation is voluntary and therefore there is no obligation on your part to answer any questions which make you uncomfortable. Please feel free to stop the me at any point during the interview where you need some clarity or where you feel that you no longer wish to continue with the interview.

Please rest assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and no names will be divulged to any third party. The collated responses will only be used for statistical analysis. A brief summary of the main findings will be posted to you on completion of the project. Please let me know if you are happy with proceeding with the interview and with me recording the session.

Respondent Code:_____ Date: _____

Designation: _____ Time: _____

1. First, I would like to ask some questions about the characteristics of your business. In what year did your firm begin trading?
2. In which sector does your SMME belong to
3. What is your role within the SMME?
4. What is training in organisational context?
5. Have you gone through training and development session since the start of the SMME?
6. Do you think training and development is important? Why?
7. How would you ensure that the training is effective for an employee within the company?
8. What are the different methods that could be used in the process of training employees?
9. What impact does training have on the growth of your SMME.
10. Do you think the growth and performance of your SMME would change if training and development courses where availed to you?
11. How does your firm identify training needs?
12. After the training has been done, is evaluation of the training carried out? If yes, how? If no. why?
13. Have there been any benefits for your firm resulting from these training programmes?
14. Do you face challenges in providing these entrepreneurship trainings? If yes, how do you overcome the challenges?
15. In which areas do you need the assistance of government, donors and others?

END OF INTERVIEW. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

EDITOR'S LETTER

Researchers Beyond-Borders
(PTY) LTD Umhlanga,
Durban
South Africa
22 November 2024

To whom it may concern

Editing of Masters Dissertation: Winnie Snegugu Xulu **(Student number -**20252149**)**

Title of dissertation: The impact of short term training and development on the growth and performance of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMES) in Umkomaas KwaZulu-Natal

This letter serves as confirmation that the aforementioned dissertation has been language edited. Any queries may be directed to the author of this letter.

Regards

Maleni Pillay
Researchers Beyond-Borders
consult@researchersbeyondborders.com
www.researchersbeyondborders.com

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics

www.dut.ac.za

27 March 2024

Ms W S Xulu
P O Box 30020
Umkomaas
4170

Dear Ms Xulu

The impact of short-term Training and Development on the growth and performance of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in Umkomass, KwaZulu-Natal
Ethical Clearance number IREC 140/23

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

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Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Winnie Snegugu Xulu

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Introduction to Research Ethics

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

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Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

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