Human Capital Development for Public Governance in South Africa

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Abstract

The capacity of the public sector lags far behind public expectations, and critical skills gaps remain a challenge in many areas. To achieve the goals of a developmental state the public service should be skilled appropriately and capable of delivering quality services efficiently. A skills shortage and constrained capacity in the public sector have a detrimental effect on service delivery. The South African democratic transition in 1994 saw the implementation of public sector reforms in all spheres of government. Training and development was embraced as a transformation strategy supported by both policy reform and funding. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of the effectiveness of this training. Drawing on a case study of a government department in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa, this study sought to understand the factors that influence the effective implementation of training and development. Using in-depth interviews, surveys and documentary evidence, this paper reveals a limited budget for training and development in the department. Furthermore, the study established that the money budgeted for training was reallocated to other operational activities due to government-wide austerity measures. These findings have profound implications for policymakers as well as human resources development practitioners as they provide important insights into the reasons for the infectiveness of the training and development programme in the South African public sector.

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1. Introduction and Background

Public sector performance in South Africa has been shown to fall short of expectations in Africa's most successful economy. South Africa is challenged by low productivity in the workplace, by the slow pace of transformation and by a lack of workforce mobility, largely as a result of inadequate training of those already in employment (Department of Higher Education and Training 2018). A deficit in skills and professionalism affects all elements of the public service (National Planning Commission 2012:408). The proper training and development (T&D) of public servants through quality skills development practices, are needed to improve organisational performance and the capacity of employees to deliver high-quality services to the public (Mummenthey 2016:9). Regardless of the various benefits of T&D to organisations, T&D in the public sector and in the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has not received priority attention (Nkwanyana 2016:111). Contributory factors to the poor attention paid to T&D include the absence of needs assessments and the allocation and spending of T&D funds. The GCIS spends a significant amount of money on T&D, but the skills learned during T&D are poorly applied (Nkwanyana 2016:110) compromising the broader objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) to build a capable state. The future ability of the GCIS to deliver quality public services is impeded weak implementation of T&D. Furthermore, resources will continue to be wasted if training is not systematically informed by training needs.

An extensive literature confirms the dire and increasingly more critical skills shortages in most sectors of the South African economy (Berman *et al.* 2010; Mohlala, Phago & Mpehle 2014, Subban & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2014 and Abdulla & McArthur 2018). The authors agree that South Africa lack the essential skills to grow the economy. The skills deficit and prevailing high unemployment rates do not only constrain future economic growth and development (Mummenthey 2016:9), but also presents the greatest challenge towards establishing a more equal society. The requirement to invest in the contemporary work force is more urgent than ever, since the capability of the country to compete is reliant on knowledge development and how well that knowledge is managed and utilised (Nwokeiwu, Ziska & Achilike 2019: 145).

The current president of the country, president Cyril Ramaphosa in the 'State of the Nation Address' (SoNA: 2018) noted that of the one million public servants employed, the majority continues to serve the public with diligence

and commitment. However, the public still face challenges when interacting with the state, receiving either poor services or no services at all. Poor service delivery is arguably the achilles heel of government in the pursuit of its development agenda. It is therefore a given that the contribution of time and effort of capable public servants is central to the attainment of developmental government objectives.

Unfortunately, there is a frustrating dearth of literature on the experiences and actual processes related to T&D in the South African public sector. Most of the scholarship on T&D in South Africa has focused on the professional development of teachers in the basic education sector (Leibowitz *et al*. 2015; Botha & Herselman 2018; and Lundgren *et al*. 2015). There exists a weak body of knowledge on T&D in other public sector organisations. The public knowledge of the processes and plausible causes of the disconnect between T&D and its outcomes is based on assumptions and speculation. Given the lack of evidence-based knowledge on the disconnect between T&D in the South African public sector, this study sought to explore the implementation of T&D in the public sector by eliciting the understandings and perceptions of workers and middle-level managers in the GCIS. Drawing on the GCIS case study, this paper provides insights on how T&D is conducted in the GCIS.

This paper outlines human capital theory as a framework to explain how education and T&D are informed in organisations. The paper is mainly concerned with the view held by economists and organisational scholars of T&D as an investment. The paper further offers insights of how training and development is conducted by articulating a four-stage model for T&D in an establishment.

2. Literature Review

Human Capital Theory

Training and development (T&D) as a construct draw on essential arguments from human capital theory. The proponents of human capital theory (Schultz, Becker & Laureates) advocate for education as the key to unlocking productivity in the organisation. Human capital theory focuses on the development aspect of human capital. According to Goldin (2015:2), the idea originated with Adam Smith who, in his seminal work *The Wealth of Nations*, suggested that investment in physical capital - through expenditure on machines - might have parallels with investment in human capital - through

expenditure on education and training. In the context of public administration, insufficient human capital contributes to the inadequate attainment of developmental government objectives, as it impacts on the delivery of services such as electricity, housing and water (Osuka, Ihejirika & Chinweze 2018:48). Human capital theory emphasizes the need for policy makers to allocate significant resources to the expansion of educational systems.

The embeddedness of intellectual capital in both people and system has been part of a debate in the knowledge sharing and human resource development management field. Human capital theory posits that investment in human capital is a worthwhile endeavour which stands to reason. One criticism of much of the literature on human capital theory is whether T&D can indeed increase the productivity of employees. A case in point is Becker (1926:30) who argues that the efficiency of employees is determined not only by their innate ability and knowledge but also by their motivation or passion for their work. However, both skills and passion should arguably be considered to determine the efficiency of employees. Critics of human capital theory have argued that the productivity of a good worker cannot be fully understood by simply referring to how individual worker skills are related to individual worker productivities. Bowles and Gintis (1975:77) rightfully remarks that a highly skilled work force is not necessarily a profitable work force. Goldin (2014:5) argues that human capital theory is limited in its departure from the assumption that education increases productivity in the workplace and results in higher individual wages. However, the theory provides little insight into the processes through which education and training are translated into higher wages. Human capital theory rejects such uncertainty and strongly asserts that increased knowledge and skills produce enhanced economic outcomes for both individuals and societies. This is especially true in modern societies, where the notion is widely held that knowledge and skills convey a greater economic and social premium than in the past (Crocker 2006:1).

Insufficient T&D contributes significantly to the inadequate attainment of developmental government objectives. Human capital theory emphasises the importance of education in the form of T&D in any organisation and draws a positive association between training and development and the ability of a human being to be productive in the organisation. Human capital theory is useful to conceptualise T&D and to understand how an improvement in the knowledge and skills of workers produce enhanced economic outcomes for both the individual and society.

Four-staged T&D Model

In order for an organisation to address contemporary and future challenges, T&D requires a range of learning activities that employ different methods to improve employees' skills, knowledge and performance. T&D requires a systematic approach to increase effectiveness and consists of a complete cycle of T&D, including a needs identification, T&D planning, training implementation and evaluation of training.

Training and development model

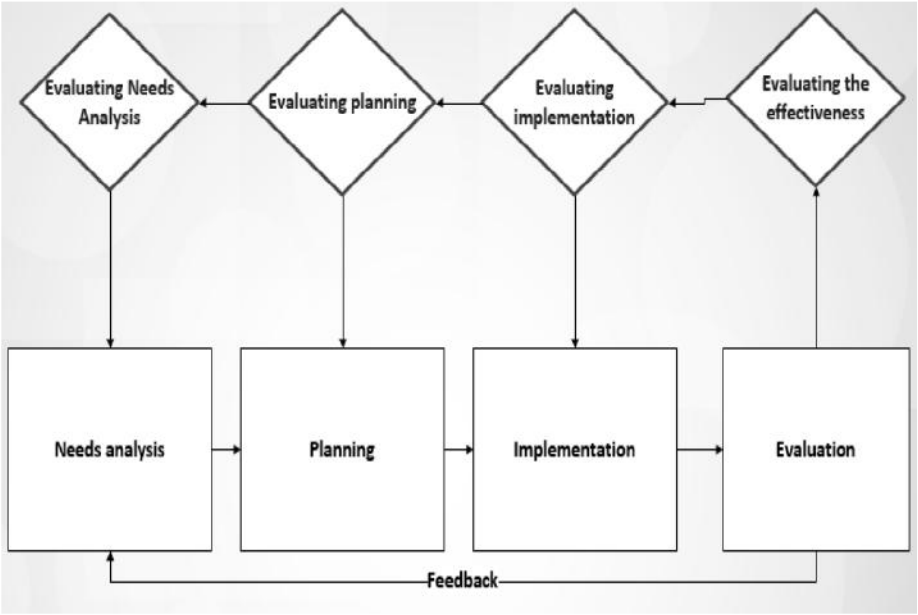

Figure 1: Training and development model
Source: Researcher's perspective (2018)

The different elements of the training and development model (figure 1) are further explained below.

Needs Identification

It has been traditionally argued that the first phase in T&D is a training needs assessment (TNA)[1] (Sarbeng 2013; Nwokeiwu, Ziska & Achilike 2019; Blanchard & Thacker 2013; Arshad, Yusof, Mahmod, Amhed & Akhtar 2015). According to Erasmus *et al*. (2015:18), the specific training needed to improve job performance is identified in this phase. The principal questions that must be asked in this phase are 1.) 'Is there a need for training?' and 2.) 'If something is wrong, is it caused by a performance problem that can be corrected by training?'

A training needs assessment is necessary to enable a organisation to identify specific training opportunities. The results generated from this process provides a clearer direction for the strategies to be considered in the development and training of public officials (Arshad, Yusof, Mahmod, Amhed & Akhtar 2015:671). Similarly Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger and Smith-Jentsch (2012:80) argue that conducting a proper diagnosis of what needs to be trained, for whom, and within what type of organizational system is a critical step in T&D. The outcomes of this first phase are,

> (a) the development of expected learning outcomes;
> (b) providing guidance for training design and delivery
> (c) producing ideas for training evaluation; and
> (d) providing information about the organizational factors that will likely facilitate or hinder training effectiveness.

In the South African public sector context, training needs are identified at three levels, namely an individual worker level, a workplace level and a sector level.

Individual workers are expected to identify their own training needs through performance management (Department of Public Service and Administration 2007). The purpose of the Employee Performance Management and Development System (EPMDS) is not only to reward good performers but also to identify their training needs and develop Personal Development Plans (PDP). At a workplace level, employers are required to perform a skills audit, which documents available skills in order to determine

[1] A Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is a tool utilised to identify what educational courses or activities should be provided to employees to improve their work productivity.

skills gaps. Subsequent to this audit, the employer should develop the workplace Skills Development Plans (SDPs). A report by the Public Service Commission indicates that such SDPs were available in most government departments and that training was indeed taking place. However, concerns were raised on the methods used to identify training needs (*Public Service Commission* 2011:1). Drawing on a survey of 472 respondents, Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) reports that performance management data were the main method (83%) used in TNA. At the sector level, institutions such as the Services Skills Education Training Authorities (Services SETA) can consult employers to determine the skills needs of the sector and design corresponding sector skills plans. However, caution must be exercised when designing workplace plans based on sector skills needs or designing personal development plans based on the workplace skills needs as these skills are not always congruent with the training needs of individual workers. The TNA can therefore be regarded as the most important phase of this T&D model.

Training and Development Planning

A training plan[2] includes the causes of deficiency, what performance standards are not being met, and who the target population is (Salas *et al.* 2012:95). According to Nischithaa (2014:54), training planning is separated into identifying specifying training objectives, designing a training programme, and selecting training methods. The training goals, method, duration, programme structure, location and selection of trainees are all included in this phase. Training planning should identify correct types of T&D interventions to ensure the success of the organisation (Erasmus *et al.* 2015:17). Practical problems are to be answered in the planning stage. Well planned and implemented T&D methods have proven a sufficient catalyst for the improvement and empowerment of both individual and institutional competitiveness (Bangura 2017:33). The most appropriate method of training is selected during this phase, and could include, depending on the identified needs and available resources, on-the-job training, off-the-job-training or information communication technology (ITC) aided training. Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) report that an increase in ITC aided training in South Africa from 27 per cent in 2009 to 33 percent in

[2] Is to identify training needs, recommend objectives and outcomes, and suggest how they can be reached, based on training needs analysis.

2012. The T&D planning stage is very important and requires educational expertise which may be absent in some government departments introducing an overreliance on the new public management induced outsourcing. However, Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) report that there has been a decrease in outsourcing with only 52 per cent of training being outsourced.

Training Implementation

The implementation[3] phase of systematic training includes delivering the training materials and process to learners. Associated activities can include clarifying training materials, supporting group feedback, administering tests and conducting the final evaluation (Edwin 2015:2014). In the same vein Bangura (2017:36) asserts that during this phase, the training and development programme is delivered to the target group. In most organisations there is little congruency between the development of competency standards and the implementation thereof. It is therefore important that the training strategy be implemented according to its design. Certain workplace principles are key to adult learning (Swanepoel *et al.* 2015). Drawing on andragody principles (the science of teaching adults), Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) postulates that trainers must recognise that adult learners need to be actively engaged in their learning and need to focus on real-world problem solving.

Evaluation of Training

Evaluation of training is the final step in the training process in any organization. Evaluation serves to help identify and correct any errors made in the implementation of the training strategy (Khan 2013:40). Evaluation of the T&D assists in ascertaining whether the intended result has been achieved or not. The effectiveness of the training programme is assessed in the evaluation phase (Shenge 2014:52). Recent evidence suggests that evaluation is part of an effective training system. Evaluation allows organizations to continue conducting training that works and to modify or discontinue training that does not work (Salas *et al.* 2012:90). If aT&D needs assessment was not properly

[3] Implementation is the process of turning plans into action. As in strategic business planning the implementation of an organisational strategy for training, purposes is perhaps the single most important step.

done, it could be very difficult to measure and evaluate the success or otherwise of the training. Doing training evaluation consumes valuable time and resources, and many organisations do not have the capacity and resources to implement this phase (Jewson *et al.* 2015; Shenge 2014:53; Bangura 2017:42). It is for this reason that evaluation of T&D is often not conducted in most organisations. Training evaluation is performed at different levels with different measurements. Only nine percent of organisations surveyed in 2012 measured the financial returns on investment in T&D (Swanepoel *et al.* 2015). Such a measure could be problematic for public sector organisations such as the GCIS which provide services that are difficult to cost and where profitability is not a measure of success (Jewson *et al.* 2015).

This study draws on this four-staged T&D model as a heuristic device to explore the implementation of T&D in the public sector using the GCIS case study. The model's emphasis on TNA is especially useful to identify training needs and gaps in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) GCIS. To this end, the model's conceptualisation of T&D is generative for grasping how training should be done, which is, arguably, lacking in practice. It is here also that the model's attention to the evaluation of training is of value for informing the trainer on the success or failure of a training programme.

3. Methodology

The data for this study were obtained from the GICS department in KZN. The KZN GCIS Department employes 15 workers between the ages of 26 and 60, representing all age groups. The majority of employees have a maximum of ten years' experience. followed by a cohort with seven years of experience. The least experienced respondent had one-year experience while the most experienced had worked for the organisation for 29 years. The fact that most staff had significant experience in the organisation enhanced the quality of the responses as they the respondents have historic knowledge of training developments. The staff complement of the KZN GCIS Department consists of one director, two deputy directors, ten regional communication coordinators and two administrators.

Using a mixed method approach, this study draws on interviews and surveys of all the provincial staff as well as document analysis. Fourteen staff members were purposefully selected from GICS in KZN to participate in in-depth interviews. The interviews lasted approximately one hour each.

Interview guides were distributed in advance. The sequencing of questions was not strictly followed, to allow the interviewer to explore themes in-depth that emerged during the interviews. The researchers allowed the interviews to remain conversational and permitted them to be systematic for each respondent. The interviewer received permission from the respondents to audio record the interviewes. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and yielded a total of 160 A4 printed pages.

Based on the themes that emerged during the interviews, a questionnaire was developed and administered to all fifteen workers at the KZN GCIS. The closed-ended questions were designed to determine the views of the GCIS employees about T&D in line with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was developed using a Likert-like scale where respondents are requiered to register their level agreement with statements on T&D in the KZN GCIS. A comprehensive documentary analysis were conducted to access the viewes of persons, subjects and other historic information which might otherwise have been inaccessible due to geographical distance and other practical challenges.

Following the transcription of the interviews, data were analysed against the theoretical framework of the study (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner 2012). The study sought to understand the meaning of the data by identifying manifest and latent themes and patterns emerging from the data. The researchers read and re-read the transcribed interviews and ECSA documents, and identified the different units of analysis at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels. Each identified unit was labelled with a code. Using a constant comparative method (Wagner *et al.* 2012), each new piece of data was compared with previous data themes and labelled accordingly in order to organise the data into categories.

4. Results and Discussions

This section outlines, explains and discusses the findings based on the information collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the participants.

Knowledge of Training Needs Analysis

This study established that a majority of respondents had attended T&D pro-

grammes organised by the GCIS. The preliminary purpose of the study was to elicit the views of the respondents on on TNA in the context of T&D in the GCIS.

Figure 2: Awareness of the training and development needs analysis

Figure 2 shows that about 47 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are aware of the TNA methods employed by the GCIS whilst 27 per cent disagreed with the statement and 27 per cent agreed to some extent. This shows that most of the employees of the GCIS seem to agree to some extent or another that they are aware of the TNA conducted by the GCIS on different levels. The interviewees also articulated their understanding of the TNA in the context of GCIS during the in-depth interviews. Says one interviewee:

> *It's research conducted to identify what training and development are needed by the organization to enhance to better their performance.* **(R9)**

Overall, respondents seemed to have some knowledge of TNA but it was

unclear to them exactly how the TNA is conducted in the Department. Respondents identified the TNA in general as a process of identifying training needs for the employees of the organisation. There was no document on the TNA on the GCIS policy website, and this could be a reason why 26.7 per cent of respondents were unaware of the TNA as they have not seen any document or communication in this regard.

In order to determine the level of understanding of respondents of the link between performance management and T&D, a sub-question was asked to determine the view of the respondents to the TNA as a tool that could assist them in identifying and addressing performance gaps through training. Respondents were also asked if the TNA assists them in identifying and improving their performance. Most of those surveyed (93.3 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that the TNA was key to improved performance. A small minority of 6.7 per cent somewhat agreed with the statement. This indicates that a TNA, when conducted properly, can improve performance in the view of the participants. A TNA assists in identifying training needs of employees. The findings, however, do not indicate if the specific TNA used by GCIS does indeed assist employees in identifying their individual training needs. The findings should therefore be interpreted with caution. The TNA should be done in conjunction with training needs that have been identified by employees in their Personal Development Plans (PDPs). Respondents were asked to specify how the TNA assists the organisation and the following responses reflect some of their views on this matter.

> *It helps the organization because organization gets to know what the shortcomings of the employees are. The employer will know where and how to capacitate the employees.* (**R3)**

> *It helps the organization because it addresses specific areas that are a challenge for an employee. It is not a finder-finder training, it is specific, it is responding to a need which has been identified by that particular person.* (**R7)**

> *I have not seen any means of training need analysis that the department has been doing, except that the Department asses our performance agreements and PDPs, but I have seen that what we put on our PDPs is not actioned.* (**R2)**

> *Every year we have to sign a performance agreement and in the performance agreement, there is a document called the personal development plan and the employee sits down with the supervisor and they identify training needs and those are put in the PDP and that's how the department training needs should be identified but we do not see it happening.* (**R4)**

A common perception was that the TNA assists in identifying training required for employees to improve performance. For instance, R3 pointed out that the TNA assists by identifying shortcomings of employees and recommends the kind of training that can be offered to address better performance. R7 also agreed with R3 that the TNA identifies training needed by employees and helps to address specific performance problems. Respondents are of the view that conducting a TNA is the best solution for improving performance. The GCIS uses Personal Development Plans (PDPs), developed from performance management data, as a tool to identify training needs Respondents were asked if the PDPs were used for T&D needs analysis and for the design and provision of training for the workers. Using performance management to develop PDPs might be useful while using such PDPs to design T&D for the whole workplace or for individual workers might not be appropriate.

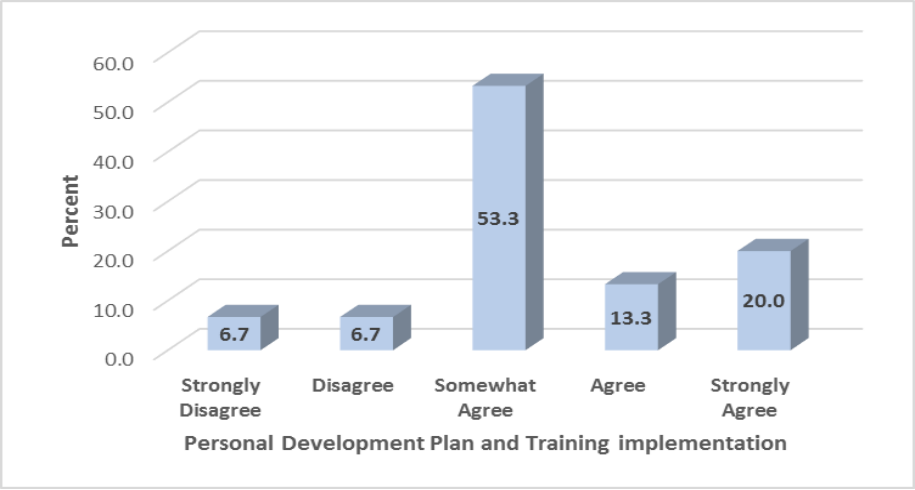

Figure 3 Personal Development Plan and Training Implementation

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of the respondents were not certain about the use of the PDPs for T&D in the Department. The survey results revealed that about half of respondents (53.3 %) somewhat agreed that personal development plans are used in implementing training.

However, Figure 3 seems to show that there is a high level of agreement as another 33.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that personal development plans are used in training implementation whilst 13.3 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. The following quotations from the interviews explain why some respondents did not think that PDPs were used in designing T&D in GCIS.

> *The PDPs help to identify the needs of the training required but the catch is when training needs identified not implemented therefore we do not usually get relevant training because of budgetary constraints.* **(R1)**

> *PDPs yes maybe at times it can be a matter of submitting that an employee wants to do this because in PDP you say you would like to do maybe a short course in the particular quarter but nobody follows.* (**R2)**

Although almost all the respondents acknowledged the use of PDPs in identifying training needs, they raised concerns about the use of such PDPs in designing and implementing training. They felt that the PDPs were developed for compliance only, questioning the relevance of T&D at GCIS. However, as already stated earlier, TNA can take place at the individual worker level, task level, workplace level or sector level. The training GCIS could still be relevant if it is either informed by workplace level needs or sector level needs that individual workers may not be aware of. Combining quantitative and qualitative data in the statement of the TNA conducted by the GCIS, there seems to be a challenge concerning the T&D needs analysis in the organisation. There is no proper or identified GCIS policy framework that guides the GCIS on how the TNA will be or is conducted. The findings of this research prove that there is some level of misalignment between the training needs of employees and the provision of training. There is also a lack of evidence of a TNA conducted before the implementation of the training programmes. Without a TNA the T&D and the skills needs of an organisation might be incompatible.

Training and Development Budget Awareness

Austerity measures in the public sector seem have affected T&D significantly. Respondents viewed budget constraints were as a challenge affecting the implementation of the T&D. The awareness level of the training and development budget is expressed in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Awareness of the budget for training and development

It is clear from the responses that the employees did not have knowledge of the budget allocated for T&D and how it was determined. Most the respondents (93 per cent) indicated that they were not aware of the T&D budget in their province. Only 6.7 per cent of the respondents were aware of the budget. It is important that employees understand the budget allocation and supporting assumptions. The T&D policy, however does not stipulate the percentage of the budget to be allocated to T&D. The policy, does assign responsibility for implementation to managers with support of the Chief Director: Human Resources (GCIS 2016:28). One possible reason for the big proportion of respondents not having awareness of the budget, is the lack of transparency

from GCIS in disclosing the budget for T&D, possibly as a protective measure to staff enquiries about detailed spending. Other possible reasons for the lack of knowledge include the absence of a T&E budget altogether or staff members not possessing the organisational authority to lodge enquiries around the budget. Almost all of the respondents indicated during the interviews that they were not aware of how the budget for training is determined in the GCIS. They did, however, acknowledge that the budget was inadequate. Some of the respondent's views are highlighted below:

> *I have absolutely no idea. I actually think it's thumb-sucked because the budget for training does not match the staff since we do not get much training. Anyway, I have never seen any transparent process.* (**R8)**

> *There are issues with it [budget] because if there is no sufficient budget for the training then the employee suffers. What we see is that training is the first item that is cut. Therefore, many people, even though you have identified your needs, you put it in your PDP, it is still a problem to implement to get the training done because many people would actually suffer when there is no money. They will be told that the training will not happen.* (**R7)**

These views reflect on the austerity measures across all government departments. However, respondents pointed out that the money budgeted for T&D is often used for other operational activities in the event of budget deficits. As a result, the training needs identified in the PDPs are not always appropriately addressed, explaining why almost 55 per cent of respondents reported that training was not relevant to training needs identified in the PDPs. The managers, as indicated previously, are responsible for ensuring appropriate budget allocations for T&D and creating opportunities for officials to attend training. This managerial responsibility might place an additional burden on specifically managers in the provincial office who lack knowledge about human resource development. However, data from a survey conducted for HR and training managers show that South African organisations spent, on average, 3.11 per cent of their payroll on T&D in 2011 (Swanepoel *et al.* 2015: 595). This percentage compares well with other countries and are even higher than the budget spent in some high-income countries.

Training Needs Analysis

This study sought to establish the major factors influencing T&D in the GCIS. One prominent factor that emerged from the data is TNA as a key determining factor in the implementation of T&D and its outcomes. This confirms Ferreira *et al.*'s (2015) and Swanepoel *et al.*'s (2015) assertion that TNA is an important because a T&D programme depends on the quality of information collected at this stage. The findings revealed that the employees of the GCIS seemed to be very knowledgeable about TNA. All participants gave good explanations of what TNA entails. However, the study also revealed that participants are not aware of how TNA is conducted by GCIS. Nevertheless, participants felt that TNA is the best tool for organisations to identify appropriate training needs for employees. This observation is consistent with Nwokeiwu, Ziska & Achilike (2019:145) who argue that TNA ensures that the entire workforce is equipped with the necessary competencies to perform their jobs. The organisation should consider the needs of employees when planning training to contribute towards the growth and success of the organisation. Organisation should take all the necessary steps for employees to regard training as essential to enhance productivity and customer satisfaction to meet the present organisational challenges (Bansal & Tripathi 2017:53).

Hartoyo (2017:145) points out that conducting a TNA requires great consideration and effort since the success of any T&D programme is affected by the thoroughness of the TNA process. The study revealed that the GCIS employees' perceive PDPs, which are informed by performance management, as compliance measures only as implementation is weak. The link between performance management and TNA is not a peculiar to GCIS. A recent study by Shrestha (2016) argues the performance management is important in the identification of affirms the use of PDPs in T&D. Shrestha further argues that TNA should consider the overall job market not just individual worker or workplace needs. This assertion is consistent with the South African approach to sector skills planning.

The lack of a proper TNA reported by the respondents is concerning as it could mean that employees are given training that is not related to their work just for compliance sake. It is, therefore, important that the Department does an evaluation of PDPs and provides feedback to employees with respect to their training needs. This finding also confirms that of Bansal & Triphathi (2017) who highlight that analysis of training needs is a step often skipped in the

process of developing training activities. In the same vein Blanchard & Thacker (2013:109) and Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) also point out that a lack of a TNA could lead to the organisation spending large amounts of money on training not needed. Blanchard & Thacker's (2013) example of employees sent on training not needed, may detract from those employees in need of training and might cause other trainees not to take the training seriously. Consistent with Nwokeiwu, Ziska & Achilike's (2019) finding, this study established that a TNA is necessary for all levels of need as symptoms of a problem frequently manifest at different levels of an organisation. In order to avoid the occurrence of inappropriate training that will result in wasted time and money, it is necessary to identify the training needs (Hartoyo 2017:145). A TNA identifies gaps in performance results so that suitable techniques may be selected for meeting the needs of the organisation. This result also correlates with Meyer's (2007:107) finding, that many training programmes are not flexible enough to meet the unique needs of everyone. Meyer argues that vast amount of money, time and effort are spent and wasted in teaching people what they do not really need to know. Hartoyo (2017:147) points out that organization can save time, money, and effort to solve the right problem by conduction a TNA. Training provided is often too generic and does not cover specific and relevant needs.

Arguably, most respondents' perceptions reflected what they believed were their training needs. But, as Swanepoel *et al.* (2015) point out, training needs can be identified at organisational or workplace level, where the management can 'prescribe' training for their workers after observing what they believe to be lacking as opposed to 'perceptive needs' from the workers themselves. It is, however, difficult to determine if that is the case at GCIS in KZN.

Training and Development Budget

Beyond the issues of TNA, the study also established that austerity measures enforced by government have also resulted in a limited budget for training. A review of literature seems to suggest that the impacts of budget cuts on T&D are not unique to the South African public sector. To illustrate this, Jewson *et al.* (2015) examined how T&D in public sector organisations in the UK were affected by austerity measures. Their data, drawn from individual and establishment levels, reveal that although T&D remained relatively high, its frequency was drastically reduced and only focused on programmes that had an immediate use by front-line workers. What is puzzling about the reported T&D

budget cuts in South Africa is that the South African government fully realises that investment in human capital is critical for service delivery as shown by the *National Skills Development Strategy* and the and the *Skills Development Act* which compels all employers to pay monthly skills development levies. Unfortunately, the public service is excluded from that Act. However, all departments at all spheres of government are expected to ring-fence one per cent of their budget for T&D activities although this is often not the case (Public Service Commission 2011). In agreement with the views of the respondents in this case study, the Public Service Commission (2011) notes that the department did receive the 1% for T&D, but most them felt that the amount was inadequate. The Public Service Commission demonstrates the limitations of the one per cent budget by illustrating how most of the government departments depend on expensive outsourcing consultants to provide the training places strains on the available funds. Regarding the reallocation of the T&D budgeted funds to other operational activities reported in in this study, the Public Service Commission's (2011) report adds that T&D programmes were often shelved until funds could permit. Unlike our findings, Jewson *et al.* (2015) report that the austerity measures in the UK public sector did not reduce the premium of T&D but departments designed coping strategies. One such a strategy was reducing the frequency of courses and the tightening of eligibility criteria for workers needing training. This resulted in the removal of 'nice to have' training and the preservation 'must have' (Jewson *et al.* 2015). Determining this in the public sector could be problematic in the absence of a systematic TNA reported in this study and conformed by Swanepoel *et al.* (2015).

In view of the policies and budget for T&D, it is clear that the South African public sector places a premium on the training of workers and views it as an investment into its human capital. In the context of social and racial inequalities that are residual effects of apartheid, T&D is critical not just in service delivery but also in the economic transformation of the country. Although T&D is costly the benefits outweighs the challenges.

5. Conclusion

The paper determined and further described the factors that influence the success or failure of T&D in the South African public sector as illustrated by the analysis of a case of GCIS in the KZN. Drawing on survey data, in-depth interviews and documentary analysis, it was discovered that T&D in the GCIS

is affected a lack of or weak implementation of the TNA and a budget limitations. Although TNA plays a critical role in T&D programmes, the study revealed that TNA was not properly conducted. Respondents reported performance management data, which identified training needs through the PDP, without using skills audits or other methods of TNA. If the claims about the lack of TNA in the Department reported by respondents and verified by the Public Service Commission are indeed true, then it is likely that the training offered is incongruent with the needs of the workers and even the Department. One consequence of this is that time and resources are being wasted on activities that are insignificant to the work of the Department and its employees. Another significant finding relates to the fact that although all the Departments are expected to ring-fence 1% of the budget for T&D, such money is barely enough to cover T&D programmes. This study established two possible reasons for this inadequate budget. Firstly, most departments rely on external consultants who charge exorbitant fees putting strain on already limited budgets. Secondly, the funds that are allocated to T&D are often reallocated to non-related T&D activities.

The findings of this study provide insights into the future provision of T&D in the GCIS and in the South African public sector. Firstly, there is a need for the public sector to carry out proper TNA that goes beyond reliance on performance management data. The self-reported training needs are not adequate to provide a holistic picture of training needs. Secondly, the design and implementation of training programmes should be informed by the PDPs as well as other identified needs and should go beyond compliance requirements. The shortage of funds for T&D must be addressed and it is suggested that managers design innovative training strategies that require less funding through example, e-learning programmes, train-the-trainer and in-house mentoring and coaching.

The study is limited in that the findings cannot be generalised or inferred as the sample consisted of only one department in KZN. Notwithstanding the sample size, this work offers some insights into the implementation of T&D in the GCIS, which could be useful in informing and improving T&D practice. The findings from this study might be useful to guide public sector HRD practitioners within the GCIS to improve their T&D policy and practices. If the debate of T&D in South African is to be moved forward, a better understanding of the impact of the current T&D is needed in order to determine its effectiveness.

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