

**THE ROLE OF CHAMBER COMMITTEES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTOR SKILLS PLAN AT merSETA**

BY

HOSEA MATSUOE MORAPEDI

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, Law and Commerce at the University of Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

February 2013

ABSTRACT

The Skills Development Act of 1998 was introduced to usher in the new skills development trajectory in the post 1994 SA. SETAs, intermediary bodies, were established to oversee processes for the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, an important instrument for industry skills planning through the mobilisation of industry stakeholder sub-sectoral – Chamber committees. These interventions were meant, through SSP processes tailored to respond to industry skills shortages, to contribute in increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, create economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SSPs from the merSETA Chamber Committee perspective. The analysis of the findings points at the existence of complexities and gaps in respect to the planning, implementation and the evaluation of the SSP. The analysis further suggests a need for a revised and a much more industry specific and policy aligned SSP process, with clearly defined outcomes and appropriately designed implementation, monitoring and evaluation tools for maximum and inclusive participation for enhancing ownership, and buy-in into the process by the participating industry stakeholders.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AATP	Accelerated Artisan Training Programme
ATR	Annual Training Report
APDP	Automotive Production and Development Program
AMIC	Automotive Industry Certificate
AU	African Union
AURCO	Audit, Risk and Control Company
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ESSA	Employment Services of South Africa
GDS	Growth Development Summit
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HR	Human Resource
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
IPAP	Industry Policy Action Plan
NBF	National Bargaining Forum
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NOPF	National Occupational Pathways Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate

NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA
MIDP	Motor industry development programme
PUI	Poverty Unemployment and Inequality
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade Occupations
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Council
SDPU	Skills Development Planning Unit
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted for the requirement of the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Hosea Matsue Morapedi

28 February 2013

DEDICATION

I first and foremost dedicate this project to the Almighty for His blessings and giving me the strength for the trials and tribulations gone through; my Ancestors and parents - DiPhuthi for instilling self belief in me from childhood; my family, my wife Nomsa; my children Nonhlanhla, Tsholofelo, Lesedi and Phuthi, for all the love and support I needed most and, to my brother-in-law, Professor Maake, for the unwavering support throughout my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely acknowledge the invaluable support and guidance received from my supervisor, Mr. Tshotse Motswaledi, throughout the research process.

Many thanks to the focus group members for your valuable time and willingness in providing valuable data for the purpose of the research study.

Thanks to you too, my friends at merSETA, Professor Akoojee, Nkrumah, Lulamile and Pinki, for your relentless encouragement and support.

Contents

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	ii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
List of Figures	xi
1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	xi
List of Tables.....	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	3
1.3 Problem Statement.....	5
1.4 Knowledge gap.....	5
1.5 Purpose Statement	6
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Conceptual framework	6
1.8 Structure of the research report.....	10
CHAPTER 2	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Definitions of concepts	13
2.2.2The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).....	13
2.2.3Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process	13
2.2.4 Chamber Committees	15
2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment	16
2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’	18

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas	18
2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness	19
2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa	20
2.8 Conclusion	23
CHAPTER 3	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research methodology	25
3.3 Research design	26
3.4 Sampling	27
3.5 Primary data collection	28
3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview	28
3.6 Secondary data	29
3.7 Data presentation	29
3.8 Data analysis and interpretation	30
3.9 Validity and Reliability	31
3.10 Significance of the Study	31
3.11 Ethical Considerations	32
3.12 Limitations of Study	32
3.13 Conclusion	33
CHAPTER 4	35
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members	37
4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses	38
4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans	39
4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes	40
4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes	41
4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	44
4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity	44

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content	46
4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations	47
4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs	48
4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports.....	50
4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	51
4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP	51
4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP	52
4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes.....	53
4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes	54
4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly.....	55
4.4 Summary of findings	55
4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP	55
4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	56
4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	57
4.5 Conclusion	59
CHAPTER 5	60
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP	61
5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory	61
5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond	63
5.3.1 SSP Format	64
5.3.2 SSP Content.....	66
5.3.3 SSP Approach	67
5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP	71
5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes	72
5.4.2 Funding.....	75
5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach	75
5.4.4 Capacity building.....	78

5.5 Conclusion.....	80
CHAPTER 6	81
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	81
6.1 Introduction	81
6.2 Conclusions	81
6.3 Recommendations	85
6.4 Future research	87
REFERENCES	89
APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	93

List of Figures

1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	8
4.1 Chamber assessments results of the 1 st Focus Group	42
4.2 Chamber assessments results of the 2 nd Focus Group	43
4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy	58

List of Tables

2.1merSETAConstitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference	16
4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group.....	37
4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group	38
4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)	48

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Lessons drawn from the international arena, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Germany, inform the establishment of intermediary bodies within the broad framework of vocational education and training systems to influence and facilitate how education and skills training is delivered. The delivery of skills development through the intermediary bodies has often been in response to identified industry skills needs so as to improve productivity to stimulate the economy and increase employment opportunities. However, the unemployment sector has continued to grow while the country is still in search of the correct formula to respond to industry skills needs.

Experiences on the continent suggest that, since after gaining political independence in the 1950s and 1960s, African nations have struggled for economic independence and strived to develop a unique set of African solutions to its challenges, which include in the main, challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Education and training initiatives in Africa to prepare youth and adults for the world of work continue to receive less attention. There are more factors that thwart progress towards universal education and training, which include the link between urban and rural divide, race, gender and disability and marginalization in education. The challenges faced by VET systems and the responses to these challenges, include the history of VET on the continent and in the region.

The continent has experienced too much global interference and different socio-economic development models, including forms of international development assistance Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, pp. 105 – 108). However, the influence and impact of socio-economic development programmes have not always been negative, it exposed the continent to the international socio-economic development models but, many of

these programmes are still foreign and based on Western economic principles and Western notions for solving Africa's social problems and, the broad effects of the integrated global economy.

Although the situation has now changed, with Africa realising the need for regional economic cooperation and integration with the formation of new institutions such as the NEPAD, AU, SADC for Africa to economically assert itself in the global village Mhone (2000, pp.23 – 24) ;Sako (2006, pp. 19 – 20); Mbeki (2009, pp. 151 – 154); Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, 83 – 90); Mills (2012, pp. 174 – 175) diverse views and development approaches still persist as to what appropriate socio-economic strategies should be followed. Africa's vocational education and skills training efforts unfortunately amount to a lacklustre performance of regional cooperation and integration schemes thus far.

Similar challenges of persisting unemployment in the Euro zone and America are still being experienced on the continent and southern Africa, including South Africa, despite initiatives in education and skills development within the realm of vocational education and training systems.

These challenges broadly result from the dictates of a free market global economy, the historical legacy of colonialism and subsequent socio-economic policies adopted in the post-colonial phase. Most Southern Africa countries (Mauritius; Swaziland; Lesotho; Botswana; Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi and South Africa) have in common is colonial systems of vocational education and training that they inherited, with strong reliance and preference on white expatriate skills for both the formal labour market for skills, and formal provision of intermediate skills- depending on the level of economic activity Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005,p.1) .

In the southern Africa, most of the vocational education and training initiatives to address the supply and demand in the labour market have been badly neglected, despite the VET having a potential of being an important policy nexus – located between economic and educational policy, between the state and the market, and between concerns with poverty and growth Akoojee, et al (2005, p. 2)

With the dawning of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the era marked the welcoming of South Africa into the global economy. Being a global economic player, South African adopted an export led economic growth path to compete with other global players already in the global league. In pursuit of Porters' notion of competitiveness Porter (1980, pp.215 – 221), South Africa depended on this stimulating both its supply and demand side factors when it was experiencing from the demand side a low economic activity characterised by the declining mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the inward looking economic strategy of the pre – 1994, whilst on the flip side experiencing poverty, high unemployment rates at over 25%, and inequalities with Africans being the poorest and most affected with limited and no access to economic opportunities and basic services.

South Africa logically had to prioritise both its supply and demand side measures. This study primarily looks at both the supply and demand side measures involving the South African Government initiatives post 1994 in the provision of skills development, using the SETA model as a vehicle for its skills development trajectory.

The vocational education and training initiatives experiences in South Africa via the SETA model since the advent of democracy, post 1994, can be described as both a slow and complex process with neither immediate nor sustainable and impactful results in addressing the country's skills needs and the main challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

1.2 Background to the Study

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority is one of the 23 SETAs established through the Skills Development Act no. 96 of 1998 to facilitate and guide skills development through the development and the implementation of sector skills plan in response to industry skills needs.

MerSETA facilitates skills development in the following sub sectors:

- Metal and engineering.

- Auto manufacturing.
- Motor retail and component manufacturing.
- Tyre manufacturing and
- Plastics industries.

All the five sub-sectors of merSETA comprise approximately 44000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 600 000. The total annual levy income is approximately 600 million rand.

merSETA, like all other SETAs, plays a central role in making sure that the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is fulfilled.

merSETA does not collect levies, but instead receives collected levies from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Seventy percent of the levies are disbursed as grants and 10% is kept for administration.

merSETA does not train but instead it facilitates the process of training by paying grants, registering moderators and assessors, identifying scarce skills, accrediting training providers, monitoring the quality of training and implementing projects to close the skills gap.

This research study, in light of the background here provided, seeks to assess the impact of merSETA through its Chamber Committees in developing and implementing the Sector Skills Plan in response to industry skills needs based on priority skills and/ or scarce and critical jobs identified for improving production and creating employment opportunities.

More than a decade since the inception of SETAs, there are still widespread concerns about the efficacy of the SETA institutions in growing the implementation of a skills development policy to address unemployment challenges in the country.

1.3 Problem Statement

The problem this study seeks to investigate and assess is the role of Chamber committees at merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan process, invariably a 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System', a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority jobs in the industry) in order to contribute to increasing productivity in the economy, and in the process, to address unemployment through creating employment opportunities.

At the heart of the study, is the unemployment that continues unabated, despite SETA efforts in implementing skills development initiatives through the Sector Skills Plan within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy I; II and beyond, which is meant to address industry skills needs in the country to curb unemployment.

The key question is, has the Sector Skills Plan process been effective in responding to industry skills demands and serving as a catalyst to curb unemployment?

1.4 Knowledge gap

The knowledge gap exist in this regard, in that the earlier work of SETA review studies, including, Marock, Harrison-Train, Soobrayan and Gunthorpe (2007); NEDLAC (2007); Kraak (2008) Archer (2010), never investigated the extent of the participation by SETA stakeholder committees responsible for identifying and determining industry current skills trends and predicting skills needs for socio- economic needs in post 1994 democratic South Africa(Government Gazette, 2006). This study, therefore, finds it necessary to consider empowering and capacitating participating stakeholders in Chamber committees for effective citizenry participatory processes and governance Karl (2000); Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 2-3; 39-47) and Ramphele (2012, pp.60-64) and to understand Chamber Committees in their role of leading the development and implementation of the SSP process.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the Sector Skills Plan used by SETAs and to explore the best approaches in response to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The study seeks to investigate with merSETA Chamber Committees factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP), establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the SSP, analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

1.6 Research Questions

The primary research aim is to broadly deliberate on the following research questions, which according to the guidance of Marshall and Rossman (1995, p.26) state that the qualitative research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study. This suggests that the questions and objectives of the study need to make provision for flexibility in qualitative research:

1. What are the factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP?
2. What are the trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP?
3. What are the strategies for future consideration?

1.7 Conceptual framework

In order to understand and achieve the broad research aims in this regard, the following conceptual framework (demonstrated in Figure 1 below), by the Department of Labour and GTZ, will be used as a point of reference in this study to demonstrate and enhance understanding of the supply and demand for industry skills and the central role fulfilled by Sector Education and Training Authorities, in particular the Chamber Committees (stakeholder bodies) responsible for making inputs through identifying industry skills needs.

Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.18 – 22) suggest that research should construct a conceptual framework to help “decide which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analysed – at least at the outset.”

Conceptual Framework for the Development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan in the Demand Driven Occupational Learning

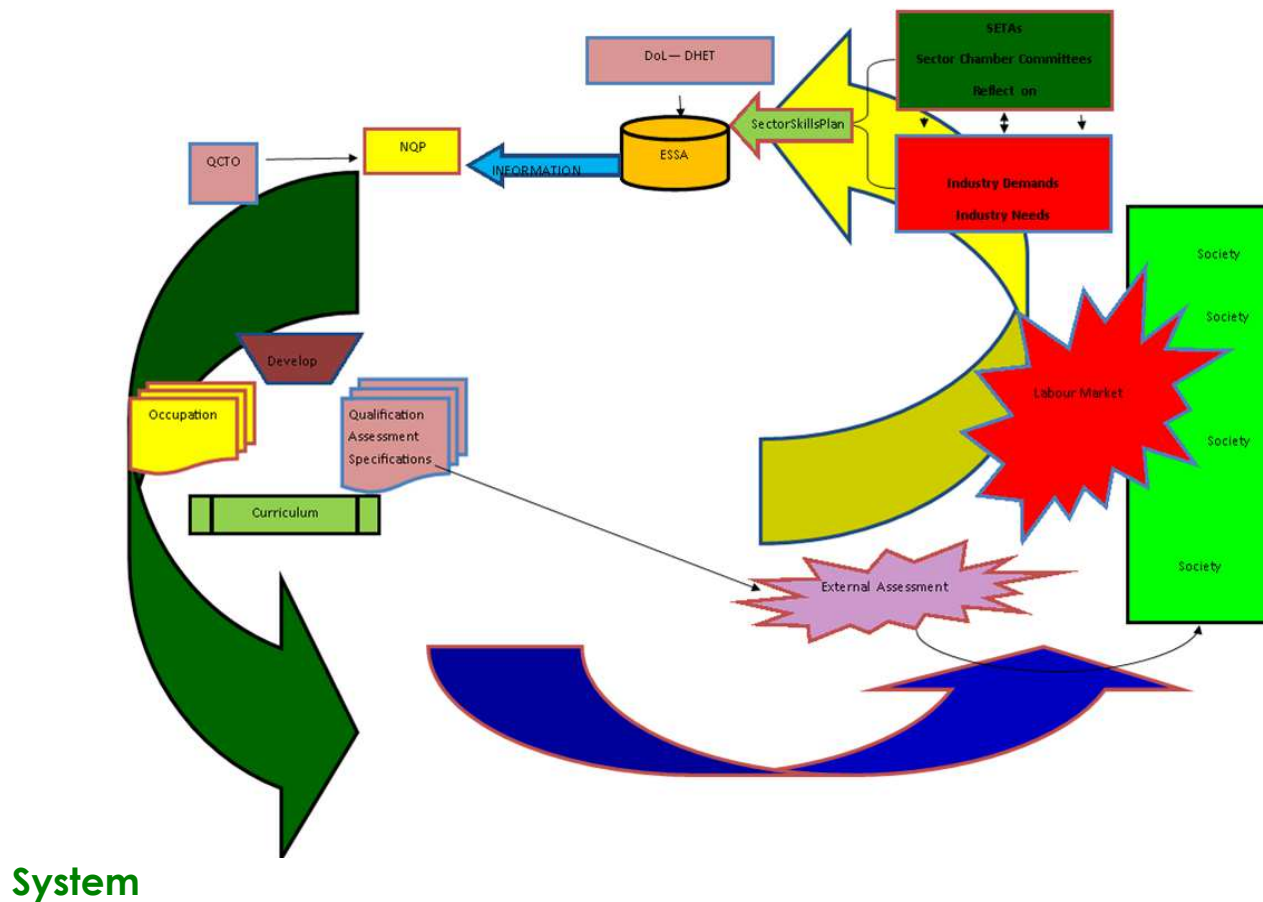


Figure 1:1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System - source Department of Labour (DoL) & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ): 2004. (South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The joint DoL (and now DHET) and GTZ model for the supply and demand of the industry skills, seeks to demonstrate the process flow of skills development approach in SA.

SETAs in this regard play an important institutional role in consulting with the industry and other industry related bodies in developing sector skills plans. merSETA through its Chamber committees consults with all relevant industry bodies to develop sector skills plans informing the skills needs within its predominantly manufacturing sub sectors under the merSETA scope, which include metal engineering, motor retail and automotive components manufacturers, plastics and related products manufacturers, new tyre and auto assemblers and manufacturers.

Once the sector skills plan is developed and approved, the next phase is implementation. Institutions and government departments involved in the implementation include the following: The drawing up of the National scarce and critical skills list by the DoL, DHET and Department of Home Affairs. The list reflecting skills needs across twenty three SETAs in the country is then published on Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) a sub-division within the Department of Labour.

The National skills list is used in the main as an information source to update and advise on occupational skills needed in the country, for the recruitment of employees by business, and for training purposes by relevant bodies and institutions, for publishing national occupational pathways, quality councils for trade occupations for developing relevant occupational qualifications, and curricula needed by the industry for an investment in productivity, through skills development, to help the country to address the current poverty, unemployment and inequalities existing in the labour market and society in general.

1.8 Structure of the research report

This research report is structured into six chapters, namely: introduction to the study; literature review; research methodology; presentation of findings; analysis and interpretation of data, and conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

In Chapter one, background to the study is explained, including the problem statement, research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

In Chapter two, a wide-ranging literature review is undertaken. This include SETA review studies; participatory and governance literature; policy formulation, implementation and evaluation to provide in this regard, a theoretical understanding of the past, current and future opportunities and constraints in the South African skills development trajectory.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

In Chapter three, the research methodology followed during which data gathering is explained, including interview techniques as a research method, the research sample which includes composition and participants in the study and the mechanisms used to ensure data credibility.

Chapter Four: Presentation of findings

Chapter four presents data extracted from focus group interviews held with representatives of the Chamber committees. The data is categorised in terms of the three main research questions attached to this report as Appendix 1 and themes which emerged the focus groups interviews.

Chapter Five: Analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter five builds on chapter four and provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the study on how the development and the implementation of the sector skills plan is viewed from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter six follows from the analysis in chapter five. Conclusions are drawn about the findings of the study linked to the research topic. The critical issues that require attention are identified and recommendations are submitted with a view to enhance the effectiveness in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans by Chamber Committees.

Areas for further research

Areas for further research are identified as a measure to deepen the understanding and advancement of the emerging trends in the new vocationalism skills development trajectory.

In conclusion, the introduction to and background of the study were explained. The contextual issues underpinning the study and fundamental questions that research seeks to address were highlighted and conclusions reached.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to focus on the literature relating to the skills development trajectory in South Africa to gain insight with regard to approaches followed and trends identified, for this study to benefit from the existing body of knowledge and be able to identify blind alleys and stimulate new ideas – Neuman (2011, p. 111) In pursuit of the existing body of knowledge in the skills development arena, the literature here reviewed has been widely, but selectively, chosen to provide balanced views, seeking to shed light on the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

The literature reviewed range from Government's DoL and DHET guides and documentations relating to the definition; description and application of Skills development using the SSP processes; literature on the review of SETA performance in pursuit of skills development aims and objectives, including strategies and approaches being developed and implemented to address unemployment, using SSPs as a tool and a means to the end; literature in policy development; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess and investigate what underpins trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and possibly determine considerations for future strategies; citizenry participatory processes and governance literature which this study is of the view is necessary, because the skills development policy is driven by both public and private institutions, including the Government which is responsible for the creation of the enabling environment – hence the necessity of the citizenry participatory processes and governance literature in the current initiatives being considered towards transforming the education and training system in the country which includes the DHET Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training in SA for consideration for future strategies.

2.2 Definitions of concepts

2.2.1 Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs)

SETAs intermediary bodies were established in 2000 to usher in a new skills development dispensation in the post 1994 democratic South Africa. SETAs are a special type of state owned enterprises (SOEs), established through various pieces of legislation including in the main, the amended Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 (SDLA). SETAs by their nature seek to redress occupational skills gaps and skills shortages in various key industrial sectors of the South African economy Baker (2008, p. 220); (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, p. 61).

2.2.2 The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

The NSDS is built on the Skills Development Act, of 1998 as amended. The strategy is meant to advance the process of a skills development policy in South Africa by identifying the priorities for skills development and providing mechanism for measuring SETA performance and monitoring progress (Lundall, 2003, p. 4) ; Kraak (2008, p. 10). It also charts the way forward for the DoL, and now the DHET, since November 2009, SETAs and other key supporting institutions in the skills development arena. The strategy is reviewed on a five year cycle on the basis of previous performances against national targets set.

This research looks at the role of the manufacturing, engineering and related merSETA during and beyond the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) one (I) and two (II) spanning 2000 to 2010/11 and now NSDS III which has just commenced in 2011.

2.2.3 Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process

This study defines the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) based on the Department of Labour (DoL) and Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) SSP Guide, given the periods being reviewed, that is, National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) I and II spanning the better part of 2000 to 2010/11, and beyond.

The SSP process can be best understood and described within the context of **Figure 1** 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the DoL & GTZ:(South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) as the name suggest, is a skills planning tool informed by various processes including workplace skills plan (WSP); annual training reports (ATR) - Marock et al (2007, p.61) This is a framework that seeks to inform and provide guidance about skills trends and priorities for improving the performance of the sector, and those working in it, through skills development.

The framework details industry current skills, training trends and future training needs, often referred to as 'scarce and critical skills' or skills in demand by various sectors, based on the analysis and the review of the current and past sector performance.

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) further serves to analyse current, and determine future skills prospects, and to formulate strategies to address industry future skills and training needs for sectoral economic growth and Skills Development Policy national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS within the Skills Development Act, 1998, as amended (Labour, 1998).

The Sector Skills Plan process based on the views articulated in the DoL's SSP guidelines (DoL, 2004,p. 15) is described as a necessary and valuable strategic tool and research process report. Each SETA, through its structures, as a performance indicator, is expected to develop a SSP report every five years in line with the NSDS and, annually update the plan. Apart from using the information in the SSP to meet NSDS priorities, including SETA operational planning and mobilisations of training funds, the information is also used by the DHET to write the National Scarce Skills List, which is published annually, representing a consolidated national snapshot of skills shortages.

The Department of Labour (DoL) and the Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) Sector Skills Plan guide DoL (2004, p.8) serves to provide technical assistance to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and committees responsible for the development of Sector Skills Plans. In this case, this is merSETA and its five sectors

namely, Metal and engineering; Auto manufacturing; Motor retail and component manufacturing; Tyre manufacturing and Plastics manufacturing sector.

2.2.4 Chamber Committees

Per the merSETA Constitution, DoL Government Gazette number 29113, (Government Gazette, 2006) Sector or Chamber committees are committees comprising equal representatives members nominated and recommended from organised business, and Trade Unions falling within the scope of the SETA. At merSETA there are five sub-sectors overseen by these operational and strategic governance structures called Chamber Committees.

The Chamber committees or sector committees are Constitutional sub-committees of the merSETA Governing Board. They fulfil both governance and operational roles within their respective sub-sectors. The research study in this regard, intends to look at the composition of Chamber Committees, how the selection of the participating stakeholders is made and what underpins and guide the nomination process for representation in order to assess the extent and quality of stakeholders and their state of readiness for participating in the process leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP - Karl (2000, pp1-6) and Kusek and Rist (2004,p.1).

Table 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committee terms of reference

Chamber Committee terms of reference (ToR)
• Develop sub sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines of the merSETA. • Identify education and training needs in the sector. • Monitor the development implementation of apprenticeships, learnerships, skills programmes, ABET as well as all other training in the sub-sector. • Make inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector. • Liaise with relevant bargaining councils, forums, professional associations and specialised sub sector providers. • Reviewing the activities of the Regional Committees and reporting to these committees on sub sectoral needs, scarce skills and other appropriate matters.

Source: The merSETA Constitution - Government Gazette, 11 August 2006 (Government Gazette, 2006),

Based on the literature reviewed, the following emerging trends begin to form themes on which this research should be premised.

2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment

The SETA review studies by NEDLAC (2007, pp. 43 – 44) ; Marock et al (2007 p.61); Marock (2008 , pp. 25 – 26) Archer (2007 pp. 15 – 16) and Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25 – 44) and Lynch (2007), despite in their findings arguing that SETA's Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process is a complex one, further argue that it is often not an appropriate intervention for intermediary agents like SETAs for determining and forecasting industry skills training needs.

SETA review studies here cites point to limitations which include the separation of education from training; the fact that supply and demand of labour matters is market driven and the process is even more complex, that both free markets and planned economies often fail to predict accurately, due to too much and often contradictory self-regulatory measures in the market and the effects of the current integrated global economic trajectory.

Literature reviewed in this regard suggest alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', but include models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy - Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25-44). These alternative models are said to be basic to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources; employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and to harness them to improved performance.

According to Archer (2010), the current trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP, existing and continuously revised regulations provide very limited guidance about the requirements for SSP and, as such, the alleged relationship and the interconnectedness with WSPs; economic growth skills planning strategies and the national skills development strategy NSDS is blurred and without evidence or footprints.

Archer (2010) further suggest that the purpose and factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP are still vague and a fallacy.

2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’

Kraak (2009) and Chang (2009), in their literature argue that, for policy considerations including policy formulation; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact, initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably will require development strategies that are uniquely customised to meet specific sectoral conditions. The assertion here being made by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320) and Chang (2009), is that the industrial policy does not mean any policy that affects the industry but a very particular type of policy that affects industries’ – an assertion that policies are commonly known as ‘selective industrial policy’ or ‘targeting’ – ‘namely a policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others, against market signals, usually to enhance efficiency and promote productivity growth’ Chang (2009, p.83).

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas

Linked to preceding paragraphs, Marock et al (2007, p.61) and Marock (2008, pp.25 – 26) argue that it might be differing points of emphasis for policy consideration between the broad skills development policy objectives expressed in the NSDS I and II (and possibly NSDS III), which focuses on issues of redress and equity, and the SSP, which emphasises the need for sectoral economic growth.

Often industry priorities including education and training matters are seen to be invariably based on employer profit motives and the need to yield more on investment Marock (2008). South Africa’s skills development model, based on SETA model principles of ‘Demand driven occupational learning system’ as in figure 1, is inherently constrained and likely to fail to address issues of equity transformative agendas since the model adopted reduces and subjects national socio–political-economic imperatives as articulated in NSDS 1 and II, to the discretion of the companies and the industries that are by and large free market driven Marock (2008).

2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness

According to Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5) notion of state of readiness, the merSETA Chamber committee's state of readiness from a participatory perspective in grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address the challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, is viewed as a necessary area for consideration for the assessment of the SETA performance for the state of readiness by SETA participating stakeholders. The State of readiness further brings to the fore the citizenry participatory process and governance issues as in – Archer (2010, p. 28; 34; 48); Karl (2000, pp. 1-6); and Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5); Leumer (2010); Lynch (2007); Pozzoni and Kumar (p.23); (DHET, HRD-SA, 2009, p. 23) and Ramphele (2012, pp. 147 – 148; 175).

Local initiatives to skills development using SETAs as a vehicle, accentuate the view that the Skills Development Act has placed the responsibility for skills development squarely with organised labour and business. The stakeholders in development agencies (SETAs) are not just participants but beneficiaries since they benefit from both outputs and outcomes. Local industry skills facilitating bodies compared to their counterparts internationally are more than just advisory skills development intermediary bodies since they are also beneficiaries Karl (2000, pp. 1-6).

According to Ramphele (2012), issues of good governance and accountability are very critical in the review of the functioning and effectiveness of stakeholders. In this regard, merSETA Sector – Chamber Committees members do not nominate nor appoint themselves to serve on these committees, members are often accountable to their constituencies such that holding the balance between economic and social goals and between committee members from diverse backgrounds and their new merSETA communal goals becomes a key consideration for factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP).

The question to be asked in this regard is whether SETAs, including the Chamber Committees, are ready, on the basis of their mandate, technical capabilities and representational considerations, are Chamber committees able to see and participate beyond immediate SETA quantitative targets and outputs set by the DHET, in line with training funding allocated and disbursed by the SETA ?.

Findings from the afore literature in this regard particularly SETA review studies by Marock (2008) and Kraak (2008) , portray a picture of local industry skills facilitating bodies - SETAs , in this case Chamber Committees to be lacking sufficient capacity and ability to be critical or see beyond. SETA review literature here cited further point to lack of effective indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate outcomes and impacts of their interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, in determining factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP); trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and establish strategies for future consideration. It is also reported that the SETA activities require the degree of knowledge and experience; labour representatives do not have NEDLAC (2007, pp. 20 – 21) and Grawitzky (2006, p.28).

2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa

Literature reviewed in this regard, including the following initiatives DHET's Green paper for post-school education and training - (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, pp. 34-36;61-70); Lowana (2012); Bird (2012) Kraak (2008, p.13) - Zide's Higher Education and Training transformation process argued in Zide's 2010 Professorial Public inaugural address at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Zide (2010); the new Ministry of National Economic Planning's (Commission, 2012) national development plan socio economic plan and, suggestions for the rethink of the current skills development initiatives to include forms of new vocationalism, which argue that technical and vocational education is more effective when focused on skills closely linked to market demand

Adam (2012, p. 4), these cited initiatives are underpinned by the ongoing poverty and inequalities resulting from unemployment and the inability of the majority of citizens to fend for themselves, economically and socially. The prevailing situation continues to mar progress achieved since democracy - thus there are ongoing attempts to address shortcomings within the current skills development initiatives.

Emerging trends in the literature reviewed, suggests South Africa has a lot to consider in getting its skills development strategies right to close the existing gaps and shortcomings in the pre- and post- education phases despite almost two decades of the post democratic era.

The recent September 2012 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report for 2012/2013 ranking South Africa number 140 out of 144 countries on the quality of education system indicator, confirms this research proposal that, despite South Africa arguably being on the right course in preparing the country for the competitive world of work according to Porter's notion of 'competitiveness' Porter (1980, pp 215 – 221) there is a need for more exploratory research to recommend strategies for future consideration towards building a clear vision for South Africa's education and related fields in the pre- and post- education phase.

The emerging trends in this regard re-emphasise why South Africa needs to consider a holistic and coordinated approach to its human resources development strategies for its social and economic challenges, to make a meaningful and impactful contributions to crush poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Following from the emerging trends in the literature reviewed, the following suggestions are noted:

The limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, calls for a relook on the purpose and underlying assumptions to the SSP and, propose alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', including models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy.

Alternative models said to be crucial to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources include employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and harness them to improved performance.

A shift from a narrow scarce and critical skills central in the Sector Skills Plan process, is necessary for the effective SSP.

The limitations with 'one size fit all approach and the all-encompassing policy', suggest a need for alignment between industrial and skills development policies is critical. Industrial policy should precede and inform skills development policy and its regulatory measures.

Generic Sector Skills Plans should be avoided and instead be more attuned to the specifics of each sector and their varied sub sectors

Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of a social equity transformative agenda, suggest that the formulation of clear implementation guidelines and performance indicators and targets is vital for an effective strategy.

The mechanisms and /or predetermined frameworks for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and impacts of interventions should be clearly stated from the beginning.

SETA state of readiness based on the literature reviewed is necessary from a participatory perspective for effective grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, and in this regard, the SETA mandate in executing the transformation agenda through the skills development trajectory.

Ongoing focused research and capacity building engagements to bolster economic and social consciousness of the key informants and participants is necessary to enhance the state of readiness and the performance of stakeholders towards the attainment of clearly spelt out economic and social objectives.

The performance of SETA structures, through its stakeholders, should include the ability to align the development and implementation of SSP in line with Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy within the country's development agenda.

Ongoing attempts to review pre- and post- school education and training in South Africa is another necessary intervention and SETAs need to consider holistic and coordinated approaches which do not leave everything to government alone, and be proactive through self-initiatives led by communities and individuals working together to address social and economic challenges which contribute to challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Individual governmental departmental initiatives are necessary to contribute to the ongoing transformational agenda, but should not be an end in themselves, instead they should begin a collaborative and partnership team work effort, informed by a commonly understood and striven for vision.

2.8 Conclusion

The emerging trends from the literature reviewed, identify and confirm shortcomings with regard to the current South Africa's VET intervention that use in the main, the SSP

as a guiding tool to respond to industry skills demand needs in striving to holistically make South Africa's economy competitive, a preferred destination for established and aspiring – emerging investors, and in the process, grow and create more employment opportunities, and in so doing, address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality (PUI).

Based on the shortcomings identified in South Africa's skills development initiatives in the literature reviewed, this research seeks to identify possible alternative models and strategies that can be explored and researched in the quest to address shortcomings inhibiting efforts geared towards the realisation of a viable economy to create more economic and social opportunities in attracting investors and addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality. These models include wider and all-encompassing approaches, which go beyond the current strategy that looks only at industry skills development needs.

The relevance of the literature reviewed in this regard, is that it begins to provide background knowledge and information which forms a paradigm that enables this research to strive to expand and see beyond the current skills development initiatives and begin to explore models that go beyond current models of industry led skills development processes, however, it is the view of this research study that these models are still a matter for further research and consideration.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to present and explain the research methodology followed by the study with regard to the research approach, research design, and population sampling procedure, data collection, data presentation, analysis and the means of validation.

3.2 Research methodology

The study investigated the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA to address socio – economic challenges resulting from unemployment, poverty and inequality and to identify challenges. The study intended to establish challenges and best practices, if any, for future considerations in the development and implementation of SSP and, submits its recommendations to the stakeholders in the vocational education and training fraternity.

The research was based on the qualitative research approach. The reason for choosing the qualitative method is mainly due to the nature of the study and as a means to respond to the research questions. According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004, 2, p.12) research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, researchers bring with them background knowledge which they use to interpret what they see. The background knowledge “tells us what exists, how to understand it, and – most concretely – how to study it”. In the social sciences, such background knowledge’s are called paradigms’ Terreblanche and Durkheim (2002, p.3).

The research took place within the interpretative paradigm and was premised from the presupposition that the current SETAs’ Sector Skills Plan (SSP) approach that is

industry demand driven, inherently has shortcomings that has often failed to deliver on the intended objectives. The interpretative paradigm guided the researcher to understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it – Neuman (2011, p.91).

The focus in the research is about understanding what is going on from the position of participants, in this case, merSETA Chamber Committee stakeholders, who according to the merSETA Constitution – Government Gazette (Government Gazette, 2006), are tasked with the responsibility of developing and implementing Sector Skills Plan, a process central to the mandate of the SETAs for identifying industry skills needs through the demand led national skills development strategy. In this regard, the Chamber Committee stakeholders represent the real world out there which is independent of the researcher's knowledge.

3.3 Research design

The study was a predominantly qualitative research seeking to understand from the perspective of merSETA participating Chamber Committees stakeholders, what are their experiences in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan by interacting rather than predicting what will happen from the position of an outsider. In this paradigm, the stakeholders' subjective experiences are considered to be real and are taken seriously Neuman (2011, p. 107).

The definition of qualitative research that fits best with the researchers ontology and epistemology is that of Creswell (1998, p. 15) who states that qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.'

The proposed research design of a qualitative approach in this regard is further supported by - Patton (2002), Bogdan and Bilken (2003) and

Staruss and Carbin (1998) in their submission that the social world can only be understood if the natural social context is taken into consideration – in this case, the natural context is South Africa in the post 1994 era in trying to implement a skills development policy to address its economic and social challenges which have resulted in high unemployment due to skills shortages.

3.4 Sampling

Given the overall aims and objectives of the study, that is, investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA, and according to Creswell in his notion of “purposeful sampling” and “key informants”, Creswell (2007, p118). Chamber committees of the merSETA became the most appropriate organisational structure and people to form a sample from which the researcher gathered data and information required to address the research questions. The appropriateness of Chamber committees at merSETA to be used as informants is further confirmed by their strategic role, as defined by the merSETA Constitution explained in Chapter two (2) Table 2.1merSETA Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

In line with Neuman, the primary purpose of sampling is to “collect specific information” Neuman (2011, p219) to enhance what the researcher seeks to investigate which in this regard was about the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan.

Two Chamber committees of the merSETA’s population of five Chambers Committees participated in the semi structured focus group interviews. Based on Table 4.1 and 4.2, in page forty nine (49) and fifty (50), the composition Focus groups and sample is balanced to provide fair balanced views from both business and labour perspectives to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings from the study, and this arrangement, according to Neuman, provides a good sampling frame which is necessary for good sampling Neuman (2011, p.225).

3.5 Primary data collection

3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview

The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi structured focus group interviews. The choice of the semi structured focus group interview as a data collection instrument was primarily based on the need to create a research enquiry and a dialogue with Chamber committee members to understand their thoughts, views and expectations in the SETA work, particularly in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan. According to Neuman, focus groups are a special qualitative research technique with the advantage of a natural setting, allowing participants in a relaxed mode, to express their opinions Neuman (2011, p. 142) a very critical element for the success of this study with regard to the data required and gathered through the small groups of participants interacting freely Neuman (2011, p. 414). In this study, the first and the second focus groups comprised of fourteen (14) and nine (9) participants respectively.

Other forms of primary data collection within the broad qualitative discipline, included follow up telephonic interviews from participants in the focus groups for more clarity on the information and data collected during the focus group sessions, although these follow up telephonic interviews sessions were on a small scale, they proved to be useful in providing more clarity on the data already collected.

The primary data was also supplemented by the documentary analysis of the minutes of Chamber meetings and Chamber Committees files; Chamber performance assessment reports and training reports. According to Robson, the advantages of document analysis is that documents are unobtrusive and can be used without imposing on participants; they can be checked and re-checked for reliability - Robson (2002, p.358).

According to Grooves (1998, p.273), the quantitative research data gathering instruments like survey questionnaires is only considered in cases where it is

necessary to determine 'preferences, opinions; past or present behaviour' based among others, on committee members' years of service in the Sector – Chamber committee - new or long serving committee members. This was only used to supply supplementary information that was statistical in nature, from AURCOR Chamber performance self assessments (AURCO, 2012).

3.6 Secondary data

The secondary data included both the reports received from focus group members and desktop research; merSETA annual general meeting (AGM) and Chamber committees files involving, SSP reports compiled during NSDS I;II and III, for the period translating into 2002 to 2012 were used as additional secondary data over and above the literature reviewed in Chapter two of the study.

According to Boslaugh, the advantage of using secondary data is the breadth of data available, Boslaugh (2007, p.4) secondary data helps to make primary data collection more specific since with the help of secondary data, we are able to make out where the gaps and deficiencies are, and what additional information needs to be collected.

3.7 Data presentation

In line with Neuman's recommendations, data collected was structured for presentation purpose in accordance with the research questions drawn to guide study discussions so as to proceed in a logical step-by-step manner - Neuman (2011, p. 491).

In this study, data was summarised and presented in various forms, mainly in a narrative form due to the qualitative research method employed in the study. Other forms of data presentation included tabulation and diagrammatic bar charts to complement and condense a large mass of data to bring out the distinct patterns in data in an attractive form that enables comparison to be made easily among classes of data collected.

As data presentation begins to shape data analysis, other techniques used in the study to present data are themes and sub themes, either informed by the literature review or by emerging trends from data collection.

3. 8 Data analysis and interpretation

Data collected from the two semi-structured focus group interviews, was refined and analysing firstly, in accordance with the three research questions pursued in the study and secondly, according to themes and sub-themes drawn when the researcher was reviewing and analysing interviewing notes and minutes for identifying emerging patterns themes.

Data were also categorised and analysed based on the themes drawn and identified from the literature reviewed for matching similar patterns and new emerging patterns from the focus group interviews.

The approach followed by the researcher has also been consistent and guided by the literature reviewed in the area of data analysis so as to enhance the credibility of the study and avoid any unwittingly tendencies that might lead to some biased findings and misleading conclusions and in the process, which might compromise the study.

According to Neuman, Neuman (2011, p. 343) data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data collected. In this study, data were collected, summarised and refined into categories related to themes in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two, and important to the research questions being studied Boslaugh, (2007, p13).

The data was analysed using, among others, Glaser and Strauss 'grounded theory cited in Elliot and Higgins, that data analysis and verification is comparative analysis involving case study techniques Hartley (2004) and Yin (2003) that seeks to discover theory from data through the general method that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experience, in order to understand the emerging trends with regard to the responses to the research questions –Elliot and Higgins (2012,p.2) .

3.9 Validity and Reliability

The approach followed by the researcher for analysing data collected, consciously sought to avoid and eliminate any possibilities of inconsistencies that might lead to some bias and skewed results and, in the process, compromise the validity and the reliability of the study results.

Various instruments were used in the study to collect data, which included, semi structured focus group interviews, follow up telephonic interviews, documentary analysis and literature reviewed, assisted in comparing data collected to ascertain the reliability and validity of data collected and the elimination of inconsistencies and in the process, enhance the validity and the reliability of the study findings and conclusion.

The strategy followed by the researcher in using and employing various instruments to collect data, including a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods often referred to as triangulation, is supported by Patton (2001) and Maxwell (1998) cited in Golafshani (2003, p. 603) where it is argued that the approach has a potential to strengthen the study by combining data collection methods.

3.10 Significance of the Study

The business intention of this research study is to contribute to the on-going debate seeking to assess the efficacy of SETAs and related institutions in using the current skills development initiatives as a critical catalyst in alleviating post 1994 South Africa's problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Based on the DoL (and subsequently DHET), merSETA has been rated as one of the high performing SETAs, through delivering in the development of the SSP. The study is hoping to share lessons learnt in merSETA Chamber committees and makes recommendations to merSETA and its related Chamber Committees not participating in the study, and further recommendations to the SETA and vocational education training fraternity in South Africa, SADC, the continent of Africa and the international training institutions.

Based on the problem statement of this research and the literature reviewed, there is still a need for more research to explore alternative approaches and strategies for future consideration for effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands, but to look at human resource development in totality to address poverty, unemployment and inequality locally and internationally. The significance of this research study is embedded in seeking to make a contribution in efforts to explore effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands to address South Africa's post 1994 socio economic needs.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Neuman, conducting a research study and reporting its results can create controversy and raise contentious ethical issues, so that it is necessary to protect research subjects to maintain integrity while doing research Neuman (2011, p. 490).

The researcher endeavoured to observe all ethical considerations during and beyond the research process by relating to study participants with respect and dignity, assuring participants the information shared whilst doing the research, during the group interviews and beyond, will be kept confidential and the anonymity of the study subjects will be kept as such by using symbols instead of real names - Neuman (2011, p. 138 – 142).

The researcher further assured participants that the study was conducted purely for academic purposes and not for publicity or commercial gain, that both the integrity and reputation of the merSETA and WITS University School of Public Development and Management would be maintained and respected during and beyond the study.

3.12 Limitations of Study

Given the limited resources and the magnitude of the study, inherently there were limitations to the study and potential weaknesses in the sense that the study sampling was reduced and excluded data collection evidence within broad SETA institutional

structures, and data from the other twenty SETAs, and related fraternal institutions within the skills development sector.

Due to non-availability and geographical spread of Chamber committees and focus group members in this study, the researcher was compelled to target two Chamber committees available at the time to participate in the focus group sessions. Despite these challenges, the volume and quality of data collected was sufficient for the study to be conclusive in its findings, given SETA's generic approach in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

As stated in Chapter one, this study sought to supplement the existing knowledge gap resulting from the earlier work of SETA review studies by (Marock, C et al , 2007) and the NEDLAC (2007) which excluded significant data and information from SETA stakeholders committees responsible for the development and implementation of SSPs.

Despite the researcher in this study being the employee of the merSETA, and participating focus group members being levy paying members of the merSETA, the researcher cautioned participating focus group members upfront, that there might be a “conflict of interest” given participants’ relations with merSETA. That the study findings and conclusions arrived at, might be viewed to be biased in an attempt to support and maintain current and future relations with both the participating focus group Chamber committees and merSETA. However, it is necessary for the credibility of the study to be “professional and responsible” in approaching the study and members are at liberty not to participate if not comfortable - Neuman (522 – 524).

3.13 Conclusion

This Chapter attempted to describe and explain the research methodology followed to collect, present and analyse the data in a manner required to respond to the research questions seeking to provide clarity on the study research problem. The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi-structured focus group interviews. As a strategy, triangulation was considered thereby allowing findings to be compared and then corroborated for validation and reliability. The two focus group

sessions were held in November 2012 during Chamber committee meetings, two Chamber committees participated in the study. Conclusive findings were arrived at, based on data collected and analysed to provide clarity and insight with regard to the challenges and possible solutions in improving the processes employed by Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The next Chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the problem this study is investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP, the performance of SETAs, in this regard, how merSETA Chamber Committees develop and implement the Sector Skills Plan, a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority occupations in the industry) meant to contribute to increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, creating economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country.

The purpose of the study is therefore, to investigate the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan to assess the effectiveness of SSP tool against the intended objective(s), that is, is the SSP the way it is being developed and implemented effectively responding to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and creating opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality. The study seeks to explore best approaches to address challenges in the SSP processes by conducting an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber Committees based on their role and their experiences in grappling with factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP; to establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the Saputo analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The data collected from the two chamber committees which participated in the semi-structured focus group sessions and document analysis is presented and explained. In this regard, with the involvement of SETAs in particular Chamber Committees in the skills development, an analogy can be made with the participatory literature reviewed in Chapter two where citizens (Chamber Committees) are urged to become more involved

in a participatory democracy in which they play an active role in the reconceptualization, and the reconstruction and development of their country Ramphela (2012, p. 175)

The following responses received are categorised into various themes which emerged during group interviews in both focus group sessions represented by the two Chamber committees participating in the study.

The following themes drawn from the study, supported by the accompanying quoted comments coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory, cited in Neuman (2011, p.157) and Creswell (2007, p.42) where key points are categorised and coded based on extracts from the group interview texts and verbatim notes developed during the process of research. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts* in order to make them more workable, as in Thompson, cited in Neuman (2011, p.425)

This chapter starts by describing the profile of the respondents who are, in the main, Chamber committee members. A profile of Chamber Committee members is necessary to provide background information to give more insight into the composition and accompanying perspectives within Chamber Committee structures beyond just the description of organised business and trade unions in the sector.

In keeping with the principles of confidentiality and privacy, the identities of respondents and/or participating Chamber Committees were protected by using code names or referring to the focus groups as, 1st Focus Group and 2nd Focus Group, as shown in Table 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below.

4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members

Table 4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
HRD Manager	Engineering Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	National Senior Certificate – NSC
HR Training & Development Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	Admin. Diploma
HR Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HR Manager	Post Graduate	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Human Resource Director	HR Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Artisan
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Diploma	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

Table 4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
Training & Development Manager	Education Post Graduate Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Coordinator	Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Manager	Mechanical Engineer Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Training Manager	Artisan	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
SDF	HR Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HRD Manager	Post Graduate	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses

Similar sets of semi-structured focus group questions were used and applied in both separately arranged focus group sessions held on different dates, one on Wednesday, 21 November 2012 and the second focus group held on Friday, 30 November 2012. Refer to Appendix 1 on page ninety three (93).

The focus group sessions were held during the normal Chamber committee meeting schedule. Chairpersons of both Chamber Committees were very generous and accommodating in allowing and agreeing to put two hours each aside to convene focus group sessions for the purpose of the study. Of significance to this study, is that both these Chamber committees formed a quorum, confirming the legitimacy in representation and ability for both the Chamber and the focus groups for the purpose of the study to make decisions. According to Neuman and Creswell, the two focus group sessions can also be confirmed to be representative samples for a population of all five Chambers at merSETA Creswell (2007, p.125) and Neuman (2011, p 219).

Minutes of the focus group sessions were electronically recorded by the professional Administration Support Services, contracted to record minutes of the Chamber committee meetings at merSETA, most important for the research is that minutes were in verbatim format to make it possible to categorise and code, re-package and re-allocate responses, according to the research questions and themes drawn during the group interviews and from the literature reviewed in chapter two (2).

The following emerging themes supported by the quoted comments made during the group interviews are underpinned by the responses received during evidence led in response to the research questions presented before focus group members.

4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans

SETA are required to develop and implement Sector Skills Plans in line with SETA performance indicators set out by the DHET within the skills development discourse in post 1994 South Africa.

Under factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, in line with one of the objectives of this study in describing the understanding and experiences of Chamber Committees of merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan, the following findings can be confirmed:

4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes

The theme about the significance of awareness and state of readiness of Chamber committee members about their responsibilities at merSETA within committees on which they serve, emerged from the literature review in Chapter two and merSETA Chamber committee annual self assessments by Audit, Risk and Control Company (AUCOR) –Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2 and during the two focus group sessions conducted separately for the purpose of this study.

In both separate focus group sessions held with the merSETA Chamber committees, the need and requirement by the DoL (and now DHET) to develop and implement Sector Skills plans was confirmed. Although the two Chambers sampled in this study were able to some extent to demonstrate awareness of the purpose of the Sector Skills Plan as required in the National Skills Development Strategy for the implementation of Skills Development Policy, there has been some unevenness and elements of uncertainty among the focus group with regard to the purpose and what constitute the Sector Skills Plan. In both focus group sessions responses indicated some doubt, demonstrated by comments such as . . . “Can I try” to some certainty like . . . “Sector Skills Plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”.

In further unpacking findings under this theme, it can be confirmed that in both focus group sessions, the business constituency in Chamber committees are more aware of the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP as compared to labour constituency, where in both focus group sessions only two members mainly appeared to be spokespersons, and were the ones talking and others demonstrating affirmation of responses made.

It can be confirmed that there is a relatively sufficient awareness among Chamber Committee members of the need and factors leading to the development and

implementation of the SSP, given the responses received irrespective of from whom – business or labour.

The responses when asked, “Why we need SSP”, included:

1st Focus Group: “Sector Skills plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”; “It provides the opportunity to look at the scarce and critical skills within the chamber and concentrating on that” (group interview, November 21, 2012) (Group F. F., 2012)

2nd Focus Group: “So we can plan properly”; “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained, so there is a lot of alignment.”

“I think the sector skills also gives direction on businesses going forward and Government”;

“It is focusing on specific shortage of skills and not just training for the sake of training”; “It also is a sort of a link between business and government in order to report back on what has been achieved in the form of specific focused training interventions”; “To keep up with the industry as it keeps on changing the requirement of skills from the industry - the technologies keep changing” (group interview, November 30, 2012) (Group S. F., 2012)

4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes

The results of average awareness with regard to factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP have further confirmed through the recent survey commissioned by merSETA to AURCO (Audit; Risk and Control Company), that there is an average state of readiness amongst both Chamber committees and focus groups sessions conducted.

These annual Chamber performance self assessments apply to governance structures of the SETA. They commence with the highest decision making structure of the SETA, the Governing Board, and all subcommittees of the Board including Chamber committees. These assessments are done towards the fulfillment of the National Skills Development Strategy's (NSDS) first objective relating to the need to establish credible

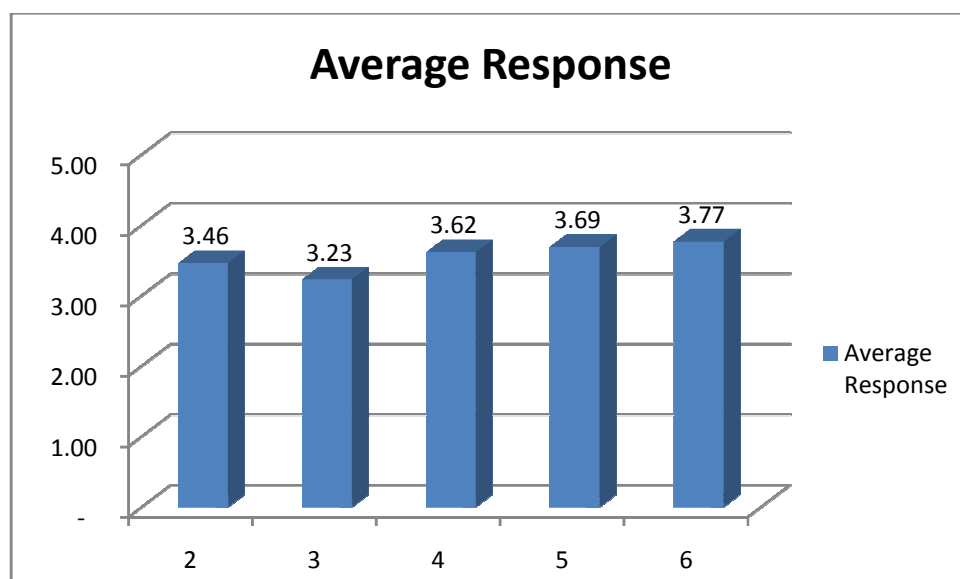
institutional mechanisms for skills planning. In this regard, each governance and operational structure of the SETA is assessed against its terms of reference (ToR) as defined in the SETA Constitution – refer to Table: 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2below confirm the average results when the two Chamber Committees were assessed in September and November 2012 respectively against Chamber Committee responsibilities, which in the main are about the development and implementation of the SSP.

Figure: 4.1 Chamber assessment results of the1st Focus Group

RESPONSIBILITIES

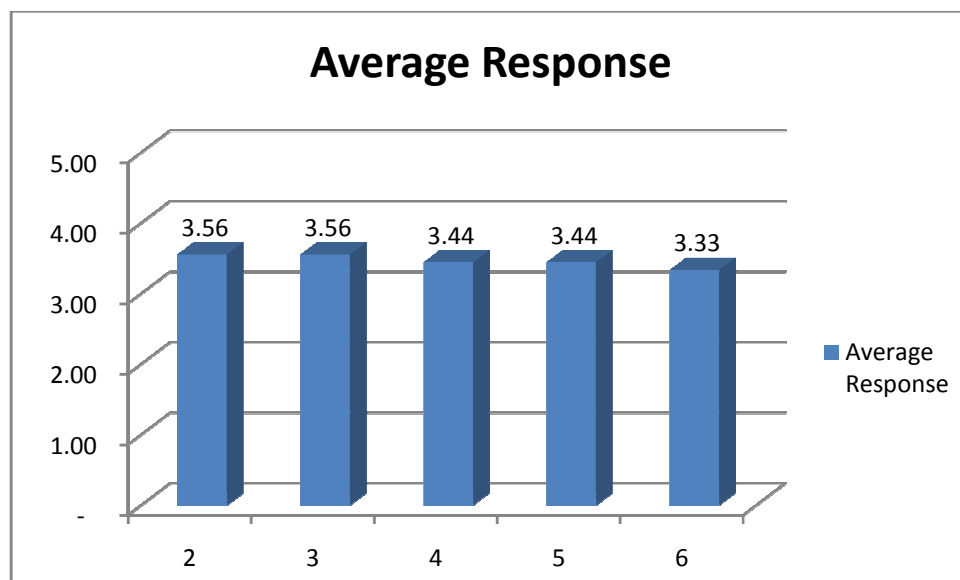
-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURComerSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group(AURCO, 2012)

Figure: 4.2 Chamber assessment results of the 2nd Focus Group
RESPONSIBILITIES

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURCO merSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group,(AURCO, 2012)See Appendix 3 for a full AURCO 2012 Chamber Self Assessment report.

4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

This question in the main sought to establish as widely and in-depth as possible through a research enquiry, whether merSETA Chamber committees understood the SSP process and whether the SSP process has been effective through members sharing their experiences and any lessons learnt.

A mixed bag of findings can be confirmed depicting, among others, the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities and, familiarity with the SSP processing itself. Once again, labour and business perspectives came to the fore as in the previous focus research questions.

The following emerging themes are underpinned by quoted comments made during the group interviews. As earlier stated, the accompanying quoted comments are coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory.

4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity

The quoted comment the 1st Focus Group suggest a need for an industry specific SSP.

“Tyre industry is a much specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

The need for an industry specific SSP is also supported by the 2nd Focus group through the following quoted comments.

The national bargaining forum (NBF) policies refer to the **2nd Focus group** statutory bargaining forum, a body responsible for determining conditions of employment in the Auto sector. The accompanying quoted comment further confirms the need for the SSP that is industry specific.

“The governance and the new processes and all of that, I am saying this is going to come from government. The NBF, the new process policy and this will be done for labour and for employers as well”

The need for an industry specific SSP is further supported through the emphasis made on the direct influence by company human resources, as per the quoted comment received from the 2nd Focus group.

“There I am talking about the roles and responsibilities of shop stewards because even from an employer’s side some employers do not know that shop stewards can take, if you are full time shop stewards, how many days you can take leave or if you are a part time shop steward how many days you can go out of the office. It is little things that I am

talking about and I am saying from an employer's side that needs capacity building as well" (group interview, November 30, 2012).

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content

Emerging from both the group interviews conducted, and supported by the literature reviewed in chapter two, concerns were made with the 'make up' relating and inferring to the content of the SSP which seem to be numbers driven instead of being informed and underpinned by market analysis based on changing needs and preferences of the public and customers.

The following quotes and comments from the 1st Focus group confirm concerns received about the nature of the content of the SSP.

"We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based";

"We continued to develop the skills that we needed ten years ago when we were making 13 inch Tyres we would have been out of business".

The following quotes and comments from the 2nd Focus group further concur with regard to concerns on the current content of the SSP.

"There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork"

"What I sometimes battle with is there is so much data where it is kept. So for example the government has got a data base, labour has got a data base you know and how do you align all of those what is required to get an SSP for your company or your business. There are lots of data and lots of information".

"The SSP has been I would say to some extent - there is overwhelming amount of information"

4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations

Both 1st and 2nd Focus Group raised shortcomings with regard to the method employed for predicting industry skills and priority skills using the SSP. Shortcomings in this regard were also confirmed in chapter two during the literature review.

The following comments received from the 1st Focus group session demonstrate shortfalls in the SSP in trying to predict number of employees and new occupations the industry might need in the future.

“We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

The 2nd Focus group sessions, through the accompanying quotations, further confirms the inherent inability in the SSP to accurately assist the industry to plan and prepare for future skills needs.

“I’m still grappling with the process and, without saying the process is right or wrong, it is important that the SSP plan is not something that is fixed but continues to be updated and move with the development in the industry”.

“I think we are still grappling with the process and some of us are new as representatives”.

4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs

In the 2005 – 2007 Growth Laboratory study was commissioned by merSETA to analyse the WSPs and ATRs submitted by companies in merSETA. Although the main findings found that there has been a general decline in submissions in the period under review, particularly in the Metal, Motor and Plastics chambers due to the changes in format of the WSP templates, of interest to this study is the list of priority scarce and critical skills as listed in the SSPs during the period under review 2005 – 2007, identifying artisans and technicians as a great need in the sector but the information could not be drawn from the WSPs and ATRs. Sector training for all 3 years under review, has been in the occupation of plant and machine operators and assemblers contrary to training of trade artisans and technicians.

Table: 4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)

Occupational Category	Chamber Committee			
	1 st Focus Group		2 nd Focus Group	
	No.	%	No.	%
Legislators, Senior	73	1.38%	871	3.83%

Officials and Managers				
Professionals	194	3.68%	2617	11.49%
Technicians and Associated Professionals	844	15.99%	3256	14.30%
Clerks and Administrative Workers	257	4.87%	1449	6.36%
Sales and Service Workers	206	3.90%	556	2.44%
Agricultural and Fishery Workers	158	2.99%	180	0.79%
Crafts and Related Trades Workers	206	3.90%	2526	11.09%

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	3312	62.75%	9962	43.75%
Labourers and Related Workers	28	0.53%	1353	5.94%
Total	5278	100%	22770	100%

SOURCE: Adapted from merSETA^A(merSETA, Analysis of WSPs & ATRs, 2009, p. 38)

4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports

The nature of training and skills needs in the 1st and 2nd Focus group sectors presented during November 2012 appeared to be to be industry specific and often not informed or in keeping with the merSETA SSPs.

Company training reports in the 1st Focus group are predominantly short, non-technical and technical Skills Programmes training, compared to the training reports in the 2nd Focus group which are characterised by a dominance of non NQF Aligned Automotive Industry Certificate (AMIC) training programmes targeting employees in the hourly rate category in the industry which amounts to 28 332 people. There is also a mixture of NQF aligned skills programmes, full learnerships and apprentice programmes and any other training programmes targeting industry staff in salaried categories.

4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

In responding to the third research question, both focus groups confirmed that the current SSP processes being followed are not effective enough to address the intended objective in guiding the sector and its companies to address industry training needs in keeping with NSDS imperatives, as understood, and the groups earlier confirmed that the “SSP basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan” and “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained” as respectively confirmed in both 1st and 2nd Focus group.

4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP

The following responses were received when focus groups were asked how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP. As previously stated, where possible, alike and related comments are grouped together irrespective of the source, that is, either 1st or 2nd Focus group or both focus groups:

The need for an SSP that is industry specific is also confirmed in the literature review in chapter two. The suggestion for an industry specific SSP is once again supported by the quoted comments.

1st Focus Group

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the sector skills plan. It is not down to the finer detail”

2nd Focus Group

The Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP) is a joint initiative between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Auto sector. It used to be called Motor industry development programme (MIDP). This is an industry specific programme which of late is an integral component of DTI's Industry Policy Action Plan (IPAP), a framework seeking to guide the development of the country's industry policy.

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

Although the following quoted comments by the 2nd Focus group presented in response to the second research question seeking to solicit views on Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, these comments equally cater for the 1st Focus group as well.

4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP

1. Simplify SSP Process

It appears, based on this theme through the accompanying comment made by the 2nd Focus Group, that the SSP process is complex. This view was also confirmed under the theme looking at Chamber states of readiness in grappling with SSP processes. Based on the evidence led, it was confirmed Chamber committees are not ready or fully prepared to fulfill their role in the development and implementation of the SSP as described under Chamber committee terms of reference (ToR).

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

1.1 Focus On Right Stuff

The accompanying quoted comment also confirms the need not to cloud what goes into the SSP.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

1.2 Step By Step Approach

The following quoted comment suggests a simplified SSP process of Chamber committee members being taken through a ‘step by step’ approach.

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

1.3 Avoid Repetitions

“I agree with Doug avoid repetition because in most cases we are repeating things changing it there and there and making unnecessary improvements and claiming that we have improved this instead of making quality sort of things and moving forward”

4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building is identified by both focus groups when asked how the development and the implementation of the SSP can be improved in line with the third research question.

The following quoted comments received confirm the need for ongoing capacity building.

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us (labour)”

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to yourself so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes

Synergetic Process / Team Approach

It appeared, as confirmed by the quoted comments received from focus group interviews, that there is no synergy or team approach when addressing the SSP. There are too many related SSP processes concurrently taking place, often not known by Chamber committees, either at SETA level, or industry or company level.

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...”

“We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”.

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly

Based on the feedback received on how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP, it is evident that funding is a critical component in the successful implementation of the SSP.

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

4.4 Summary of findings

Based on the three research questions underpinning this study in seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the SETA model's SSP processes in addressing industry skills needs to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities in the post 1994 democratic South Africa, the following main results findings are summarised :

4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP

Awareness of the SSP processes but not on the same wavelength

The findings of the research here presented, have shown and confirmed the level of awareness although with some unevenness with regard to the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP, among the two Chambers Committees of the merSETA that participated in the focus group sessions. It is evident that respondents in the focus groups know the purpose being served by the SSP, hence the awareness. It can also be confirmed that focus group members are not on the same wavelength, given their diverse background, despite the common skills development purpose that brought them together. The awareness was further confirmed in the survey results when committee members were self assessed about the performance of the Chamber committees in particular the about the “Responsibilities” of the merSETA Chamber committees. These “Chamber Committee's Responsibilities” were in the

following five areas invariably concerning the development and implementation of the SSP:

- The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines
- The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector
- The Chamber monitors the development and implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector
- The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector
- The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations

The nature of the survey findings given in this regard, confirmed a quantitative average response, which is the reason why a quantitative research methodology is not an appropriate approach for data collection in this regard, due to inherent lack of depth often found in qualitative research approaches in unpacking underpinning factors.

4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

A finding of a mixture of both common and varying ranges of experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP in the quest to implement the skills development, were displayed and demonstrated when the two focus groups were asked to share their experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Both the 1st and the 2nd focus groups saw and confirmed the necessity to embark on the process such as the SSP since it assisted in planning to address industry training needs. However, irrespective of the length of service as a Chamber committee member, the two focus groups interviewed raised concerns about too much data and information to grapple with in the SSP processes so that in the process, everything becomes overwhelming and confusing.

4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

4.4.3. 1A Need for Alignment of the SSP related processes

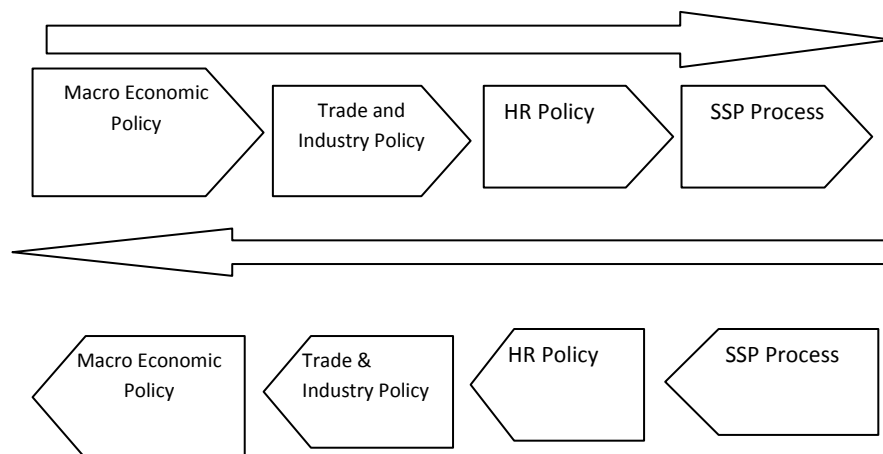
The two focus groups indicated in their recommendations a strong need for amending the format of the SSP in particular the approach, methodology and content - that the SSP should be simplified; be industry focused; specific and driven, compared to the current generic SSPs predominantly perceived to be externally driven, based on the government national imperatives - reference was made to the new 2012 SSP approach being piloted which is industry led.

Above all, a need to link and align the SSP processes to the industry policy - bargaining processes and imperatives; market needs and HR policies was identified as one of the critical factors to be considered in improving the development and implementation of the SSP to be effective in realising and achieving skills development objectives to do with addressing poverty; unemployment and inequalities in the post democratic South Africa.

The comment . . . “We often train not knowing there are vacancies”, is very central to this study. Linked to this comment, it was also reported that the SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there, and it represents Labour as well as Employers, however, not everyone was aware of the initiatives to address some of the critical problems identified under the findings.

Figure 4:3 seeks to demonstrate the need for the alignment raised in the findings.

Figure4:3: Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy



Source: Own compilation based on main findings (2012)

4.4.3.2 Capacity building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building on SSP processes and the NSDS was also identified as a critical component to enable Chamber committee members to be effective in adding value to the skills development processes. As it is, the SSP processes are viewed as complex, containing too much information and data loaded – hence capacity building is necessary to simplify the process to be user friendly so as to encourage and achieve maximum stakeholder participation.

4.4.3.3 SSP structure, content and approach

Two focus groups confirmed the complexities in the process and content matters pertaining to the development and implementation of SSP. This was also confirmed in the literature reviewed Marock et al (2007, p.61) that clear SSP implementation guidelines are needed.

4.4.3.4 Ongoing innovation research and development

It appeared initiatives from the SETA of establishing a sub committee to review and refine SSP processes are unknown by the majority of focus group members. This point was only submitted during the 2nd focus group session.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings of the study concerning the development and implementation of the SSP based on the research engagement with 1st and 2nd focus groups representing two of the merSETA Chamber committees were presented and explained in detail. Main issues emanating from these findings were summarised, the next chapter analyses the main findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and analyse the research findings presented in the preceding Chapter four in an attempt to find meaning in relation to the research questions posited for the purpose of this research study, whether merSETA sectors and companies have benefited and seen gains through the use of sector skills plans (SSPs) approved by the SETA at regular review intervals, in line with the NSDS imperatives striving for the realisation of the skills development objectives as envisaged and articulated in the skills development policy. In the process of the analysis in this chapter, findings will further be refined and categorised into related themes and be subjected to critical analysis in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two. The main objective in this regard is to search for a meaning and understanding of the research findings to unearth new perspectives that will assist in enhancing skills development initiatives towards addressing challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities facing post democratic South Africa.

The approach for data analysis and interpretation in this regard is in keeping with how data was collected; organised and presented in Chapter 4, wherein:

The first level of analysis focuses on the research question one -assess through conducting a group qualitative enquiry what has been the understanding and experiences of Chamber committees in so far as factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are concerned. The second level of analysis and interpretation looks at responses for research question two – analyses and interprets findings presented by Chambers committees based on their experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond. The third level of analysis is based on the research question three – discusses findings on suggestions presented on the way in which the development and

the implementation of the SSP can be improved from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA

The data analysis in this regard will further establish any data relations or patterns and emerging trends while interpretation will provide underlying meaning Neuman (2011, pp.459 – 460).

As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, data analysis in this Chapter is mainly premised on the three main research questions and is also organised in categories on the basis of themes drawn from the literature reviewed in Chapter two. This Chapter will in itself begin to pave the way in providing building blocks for the next chapter on conclusions and recommendations for the study and, further possible areas for future research and considerations.

5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP

This section analyses the responses received, based on the experiences by the Chamber committees with regard to the factors underpinning and necessitating the development and the implementation of the SSP - for the purpose of this section of the study, a distinction between the development and implementation factors is considered, to establish a deeper understanding between the two critical processes within the SSP. However, the study first sought to establish with merSETA participating Chamber committees during the focus group sessions whether members of the Chamber committees are aware of, and understand as participants and benefiteres in the skills development, the purpose of the SSP process.

5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory

As discussed above, given the level of awareness with regard to the purpose and factors leading to the development of Sector Skills Plans, the prevailing unevenness with regard to the understanding among focus group members can be attributed to various factors, which include, among others, exposure and participation in SETA and Chamber activities and the historically divergent views and perspectives between labour

and business within the industrial context of South Africa dating pre 1994 democratic South Africa to date, more than a decade since the dawn of the democratic South Africa.

The Chamber Committee members' profile earlier presented further confirm the labour and business split within merSETA Chamber committee composition given constituencies and occupational position. The split is characterised by occupational positions at work and can also be seen to be confirming that Chamber Committee members are often not on the same wavelength in many aspects of the skills development, including how they relate to the SSP process in general.

Although the business constituency in the Chamber Committees that participated in the focus group seemed very vocal and held the view that a common vision is necessary in understanding what the SSP is all about and how to work together towards attaining a common vision of the broad skills development objectives, the labour constituency was not as vocal in articulating their views in this regard. The labour constituency preferred not to elaborate, but instead to speak through one or two of their members and often suggested they are still learning and grappling with the process and they are aware of the need to keep pace from skills development point of view with the rapid technological changes.

The findings with regard to a labour bystander kind of positioning are also confirmed in the NEDLAC SETA Review report with regard to unions overall participation in SETA processes except where senior officials are involved NEDLAC (2007, pp,20 – 21); Grawitzky (2006, p.26).

A relatively combined average assessment response with regard to the awareness and understanding of the SSP process was confirmed more precisely through the Chamber annual assessment survey results. The survey was based on the self assessment study that was conducted with regard to Chamber committee members' performance against Chamber terms of reference which are all about the development and implementation of the SSP involving business and labour constituencies.

- **State of readiness**

Evidence led under this section can also be related to the Chamber committee state of readiness in relation to various aspects of the skills development trajectory – a point argued very sharp in the participatory literature. It is stated in the participatory literature that to achieve a meaningful and maximum participation from the committee, members should be ready to grapple with tasks presented to them Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 1 – 3) and Kraak (2008, p.15) and Ramphela (2012, p147).

- **Capacity building**

Linked to the state of readiness, capacity building needs identified, further confirm existing knowledge gaps among committee members. Capacities building needs identified are very central in this regard in raising the level of awareness and consciousness among committee members of their diverse backgrounds and how diversity can be used as strength to strive to forge a common vision, which is emphasised in the literature.

It can be concluded under this section that awareness and the state of readiness about factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are critical pillars for the maximum effective participation in the SSP processes. The analysis, based on the data established, identified existing gaps with regard to expectations and how skills development and its key instruments such as SSP processes, are understood. It is the view of this study that these matters warrant a purposefully designed ongoing capacity building and assessments related to interventions geared towards enhancing committee members understanding - to pave the way for building a common vision that is necessary for a meaningful and effective participation in the skills development key activities, including SSP processes being reviewed in this study from Chamber committees' perspective.

5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond

This section presents an analysis of the findings in this study about data provided with regard to experiences to date in the development and the implementation of the SSP

during and beyond the first and the second NSDS terms. The reason to expand there view period for investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development of SSP ,was purely to allow maximum feedback from participating focus group Chamber committee stakeholders. As previously described during Chapter four, a mixed bag of findings depicting, among others the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities, and familiarity with the SSP process in itself, was displayed.

Findings, in this regard, will be categorised into evidence leading with how the SSP is understood from the format and structure; content and the approach.

5.3.1 SSP Format

- Misalignment

Despite the average response confirming the relative understanding of the SSP, participants in the focus group seem to hold the view that the design of the SSP is too complex, and that it should be simplified. Alignment seem to be lacking about training required and what and who should be trained, the case in point in this regard is very evident with the disparities between the training identified in the workplace skills plan (WSP), and plant annual training reports (ATR) often not talking to the SSP or demonstrating any congruence. The misalignment was also evident with Table 4:3on page 58 depicting training often planned and actual training being implemented either at plant or sectoral level.

This anomaly and the misalignment here presented can also be attributed to what seems to be the disjuncture or poor coordination between what training is planned, implemented and the evaluation process necessary to adjust and align SSP development and implementation processes during annual review cycles. Findings further indicate that this trend goes as far as at the plant level where it was reported that HR and training division often do not operate in a synergetic way such that “we often training not knowing there are vacancies” - 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012.

- Training and employment trends

The findings in this regard are best described and confirmed with the often poor communication and misalignment between HR and Training divisions, the poor communication problem is central to the problem the study seeks to address, regarding the failures of the skills development in addressing problems of unemployment through current skills development initiatives. Literature reviewed in this regard, further confirmed that training is often not informed by internal skills development needs or company internal processes but by external factors Kraak (2008, p14) as with the recent 2003 Growth Development Summit (GDS) conference resolutions for training of the unemployed with the aim of finding employment, and the merSETA artisan accelerated training project (AATP) 2012 Tracer studies that reviewed the merSETA AATP. Findings in this regard highlighted that employment after training has been successfully completed, is not guaranteed, that employment is often slow and not immediate, so that even those employed range from fixed to non-fixed and short term contracts, often characterised by asymmetrical forms of employment. It is also not confirmed which sub-sectors seem to be targeting or retaining and absorbing learners after successfully completing training - (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012, pp. 71 - 75).

Suggestions to counter and discourage emerging trends of poor communication and misalignment within the skills development trajectory to do with training and placement are demonstrated in Figure: 4.3 in page 58 – titled “Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio-economic needs” - which calls for alignment across all key structures and institutions to do with policy formulation and implementation in the skills development arena.

Analysis of the evidence presented in this section considers that there is a need to develop synergy between various structures and substructures and components within and outside of the SSP, for the SSP and skills development initiatives to be effective and deliver on what it is intended for – to facilitate skills development that addresses post democratic problems of poverty; unemployment and inequality. The need for the

synergy here suggested, should be monitored and managed accordingly “so that there is a proper plan going forward” (Group interview, November 30, 2012).

5.3.2 SSP Content

- Lack of industry specifics

Evidence led through findings with regard to the training content reported in the merSETA SSP reports is viewed to be national and generic and often not effective and confirmed not to be industry specific with regard to training and skills needs reported in the 1st and 2nd Focus groups, two focus group sessions which are made up of predominantly multinational companies. Company training reports in the 1st focus group often presented during quarterly Chamber committee meetings provide evidence that confirms short, non-technical and technical training programmes as the preferred training in the industry. The nature of the training here referred to is of a skills programme nature and industry specific, contrary to the artisan development training promoted in the merSETA2012 SSP report (merSETA, Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016, 2012).

- Quantitative data problems

The findings led during focus group sessions in this section further raised concerns with regard to too much loaded quantitative data in the content of SSPs - “we tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based” - (1st focus group interview, 21 November 2012) from suspicious data often far from being accurate. This view is further supported in the literature reviewed Kraak (2008, p. 10) where it is argued that quantitative data provided by some of the SETAs could not be verified or validated, resulting in skewed results. Given evidence led with regard to the development and implementation of SSP, it is evident that SSP plans developed based on flawed statistics lacking credibility, are likely to lead to skewed and irregular results, as confirmed during the focus group sessions and through the literature reviewed. It is therefore evident that SSPs developed from such a background are not going to make any effect or impact on the intended purpose.

- **Limitations of National performance indicators and targets**

The concern raised about the lack of industry specifics in SSPs is further evident in Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) and in his review of the NSDS and its implementation instruments where the content of performance indicators and targets are nationally determined so that industry specifics are downplayed particularly on the implementation phase of the SSP Kraak (2008, p. 13)

Analysis of the evidence led in this regard point to the fact that for as long the SSPs fail to have credible inputs for formulating plans, and a tailored implementation strategy with clearly spelled out set industry performance indicators and targets, they are likely to be ineffective in both content and approach or design and implementation. It is also evident that SSPs are likely to fail and come short with review processes, since they are likely to have compromised monitoring and evaluation instruments due to a very weak and poorly designed implementation strategy.

5.3.3 SSP Approach

Findings under this section regarding the approach and the methodology prescribed by the DHET for guiding how the SSP process should be followed further continued to indicate shortcomings in various areas to do with the development and implementation of the SSP including the following accompanying areas.

- **Limitations in predicting priority skills needs in the sector**

Findings from the focus group sessions evidenced concerns with inherent limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, in particular, the most emphasised scarce and critical skills in the SSP approach.

Skills prediction in this regard relies heavily on quantitative and statistical data which often lack integrity, as earlier explained that “the plan is very number based”. It was also raised that due to rapid technological changes it becomes difficult to plan ahead since it is not easy to predict the effects of technology.

Additional evidence led in this regard from most merSETA SSPs reviewed during the first and second NSDS and beyond indicated serious misalignment, particularly with what the priorities are and what sectors and companies are actually training. Evidence in this regard include Table 4:3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006) about misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs.

Further evidence also viewed and interpreted shortcomings and contradictions within the SSPs in the merSETA SSP Report 2010/11 – 2015/16 which promotes and predicts the need for prioritizing artisanal training, which often involve long drawn out training programmes, when the actual training in the sector and from participating companies is training on short training programmes, and often intermediary skill levels characterised as ranging at low levels of NQF between NQF Level two to three, contrary to the predicted high level skills of NQF Level 4 and 5. Evidence led in the 1st Focus group company training report suggests priority training is informed by short term production requirements. Evidence led in this regard confirms an argument here being advanced that contrary to merSETA SSP suggested priority training, most preferred training and emerging trends in the industry is training of short term and lower NQF levels.

The merSETA commissioned a study (merSETA, Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR, 2009) to analyse and assess whether what is predicted and planned in the SSPs is what actually features in the WSPs and ATRs, to the contrary, the majority of the WSPs and ATRs analysed did not indicate any skills priority for the years in which the plans were drawn.

More evidence confirming the inability of the SSP approach as a predicting skills plan, is in the recent 2012 merSETA commissioned tracer study (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012) – findings in the report confirm the argument here being made in that despite the huge intake and success rate of artisans being developed, the majority of these qualified artisans do not automatically on completion of training, get

employed instead remain unemployed, despite calls made for artisan development including in the merSETA 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 SSP as earlier cited.

Literature reviewed in Chapter two , Archer (2007, p. 7) also corroborate limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, both in the free markets and planned economies due to too many and often self regulatory measures in the markets, and the effects of the dominating integrated global economic trajectory.

- Limitations with one size fit all approach in the SSP

Evidence was led in both the 1st and 2nd focus groups suggesting that the two sectors being represented New Tyre Manufacturing and the Auto Manufacturing are very specific and unique from other subsectors of the merSETA which include the Metal engineering, Motor retail and components manufacturers, and the Plastics manufacturing.

Given the national generic approach in the SSPs due to nationally defined SETA performance indicators, which inadvertently led to neglect of sectoral needs and activities, - Kraak (2008, p.16) and Grawitzky (2006, p.29) concerns confirming this state of affairs were raised in the 1st focus group session, 21 November 2012 that “merSETA SSPs do not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills and qualifications that are used often come from other sectors”.

- Lack of supporting industry policy

Findings led during focus group sessions further indicated the SSPs often do not focus on the right stuff such that “we do not achieve anything at the end” – (2nd focus group session, 30 November 2012). Further evidence in this regard indicated a need for the SSP approach to be policy led particularly from the resolutions of the AUTO National Bargaining Forum (NBF) and the Automotive Production Development Plan (APDP).

These findings are further confirmed by the literature reviewed in Chapter two Chang (2009, p83) and Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) argue that any initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably need strategies that are uniquely customised to meet sectoral conditions which should be supported by a particular type of policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others.

- **Lack of monitoring and evaluation guidelines**

Evidence led with regard to the approach of the SSP indicate that the approach is not focused, a point made earlier, although in this context, if there were monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines, focus group members have not made comments that suggest current SSP processes are “not focused”; “We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness” and comments suggesting the process should be simplified. This evidence is also confirmed in the literature reviewed in Chapter two. It is argued in (Marock, C et al , 2007, p. 61) that there is no clarity in the SSP on how to address issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas, as there are no policies and regulations related to SSP processes.

Analysis of the findings in the two focus groups and the literature reviewed could not find evidence in SSPs being able to predict or plan future industry skills requirements despite SSP being understood to be an instrument to assist in predicting and planning skills needs in the industry.

Analysis further confirmed shortcomings with the format and approach in the SSP often rendering the SSP tool to be ineffective in influencing training in the sector and guiding in planning and implementation of training at workplace level through WSPs.

There are suggestions though on how to improve weaknesses within the SSP for it to be effective in carrying its mandate within the skills development trajectory in South Africa. The section addressing the third research question dealing with strategies or

improvements for future consideration will reflect on suggestions presented on how to improve to be more effective.

5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP

It is not all doom and gloom about the SSP process despite evidence presented which lead to an analysis that suggest shortcomings in the format, content and approach in the SSP processes. There are positive elements and hope from the two focus group interviews held that SSP processes can be improved.

The interpretation of evidence led in this regard present some hope in the skills development and its implementation instruments which include the development and implementation of the SSP. Evidence led in this regard, is confirmed (Figure: 4.1 and Figure 4.2) by the average response results in the Chamber performance self assessment report with regard to Chamber terms of reference stipulated on the merSETA Constitution.

Based on the data submitted during the focus group interview sessions under this section and the literature reviewed in Chapter two, areas for improvement are analysed and interpreted under the following categories and concepts.

- **Alignment of SSP processes**
 - Policy consideration matters
- **Funding**
 - Use of resources sparingly
- **SSP structure, content and approach**
 - Monitoring and evaluation tools -current tools monitor and manage the process without evaluation and feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact, and at the same time, identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.
- **Capacity building**
 - State of readiness for preparing participating stakeholders and ensuring maximum participation and taking ownership of the SSP process.
 - Chamber performance self assessment report

- **Ongoing innovation research and development**
 - A need for ongoing innovation, research and development on matters pertaining to the SSP was identified.
 - A sub-committee to review and refine SSP processes

5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes

Analysis based on evidence led under a need identified for alignment of the process highlights a host of factors that need to be considered. However, what is important is that the SSP process is not an end in itself but a means to an end, however, informed by various processes which are never standalones but dependable processes on other factors, discussed and clarified later in this section. The process is very iterative in nature and not organised in a particularly systematic and dogmatic order.

The earlier cited **Figure: 4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic needs** on page 58, attempts to demonstrate and explain in theoretical terms, key features for consideration in the SSP alignment process as presented in Chapter four.

- **Team approach and strengthening of inter-intra SETA related institutional arrangements**

Data led under Alignment of SSP related processes included a need to adopt an inclusive - team approach where at company level and at sectoral level all relevant stakeholders from various diverse businesses, labour, youth sector and communities at large – rural and urban, divisions and departments, and fraternal institutions are roped together. The analysis and interpretation of data collected also suggest the SSP approach has been more top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes – Cloete and Wissink (2002, p.174). This analysis is supported by the following quotations earlier cited under the Chapter on the findings:

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of

how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)” ; “Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...” ; “We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”;

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”;

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

The need for the development of effective SETA institutional arrangements is further emphasised in various SETA review studies including (Marock, C et al , 2008, p. 33).

- Industry Policy

The analysis and interpretation of the evidence led in this regard indicate a need for SSP reports that are focused in nature and informed and underpinned by a clear policy

with specific and deliberate intentions that favour the economic growth and development of the sector. The understanding of the SSP processes by focus group members is that it is a tool that assists in planning for the sectoral and company training needs in support of the industry growth and development strategies and programmes from the bargaining forums, industry policy and broad macro and integrated global economic imperatives.

Based on the evidence led in the previous Chapters, most SSPs were not seen as relevant or useful in guiding in training at all levels, and as such did not appeal to the industry because they lacked clear relevant industry policy pronouncements Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320); Chang (2009, p.83) Hence the misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs earlier reported under the Chapter on the presentation of the findings.

The evidence here being analysed and interpreted is supported by the following quotations:

“Tyre industry is a very specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

The need for the alignment of the SSP processes is supported in the literature reviewed in Chapter two by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 32) and Chang (2009, p.83) where they caution about the ineffectiveness of the “one size fit all SSP” not linked to any industry policy.

5.4.2 Funding

The use of resources was submitted as one of the suggested points for improving the development and implementation of the SSPs. Funding remains an important resource for the success of any developmental project. Funding is necessary for both the research and development of the SSP and also for projects designed in the implementation of the SSP.

The aforementioned interpretation and the analysis here submitted is in relation to the evidence here quoted:

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

Literature reviewed regarding broad SETA review studies and reviews of the NSDS strategies also cautioned about the significance of proper use of funds in a very accountable manner for the credibility and integrity for SETAs to win support and buy in from the public Kraak (2008, p14) Kraak (2008,p.14); Marock et al (2007, pp.19 – 20) and Marock (2008,pp. 18 – 19).

5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach

The interpretation and analysis of evidence led in this section suggest changes in the structure, content and approach of the SSP. Concerns raised are analysed and interpreted to suggest a rethink and a new approach that is Chamber led and simplified for maximum participation by Chamber members.

Apart from previously suggested limitations and how SSP should be improved, the following quotations confirm evidence here being described and explained as some of the new suggested strategies to be considered in taking the SSP process forward to

improve the implementation of the skills development. These new strategies include the following quotes presented during Chapter four:

“We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based”; “We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

Further quotes include:

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

Source: 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012

The analysis and the interpretation of the evidence led by the 2nd focus group suggest a need for monitoring and evaluation tools - current tools only monitor the implementation without evaluating and providing feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact and at the same identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.

- **A rethink in the SSP processes**

The literature reviewed in Chapter two argues for a rethink in the current SSP processes if skills development initiatives are ever to address socio economic challenges characterised by poverty, unemployment and inequality. Calls for the new strategies suggest a need for a wider skills approach which does not solely link or tie all endeavours to address unemployment to enterprise training, underpinned by the industry demand led approach embraced in the SSP processes. These emerging views include models such as 'organisational innovation' Payne (2009) quoted in Archer (2007, p.7 – 17) which suggest in the main, based on international trends, that skills forecasting is subject to unknown margins of error, including the complex, and are not amenable to generalisation of the relationship between technological change and the associated human capital inputs, and as such, skills forecasting is no longer practiced widely internationally; Strategies put emphasis on the "youth employment strategies" DBSA (2011, pp. 1 - 7) where it also suggested that wider skills development approaches are necessary to equip the current 72% of unemployed youth with skills to enter the world of work as the current growth path is not labour - absorbing and the current education system has failed. The argument here being advanced, also support the need for programmes and institutions to create pathways for new labour market entrants into the world of work through the integration of vocational and academic subjects in schools likely to bring the needs of employers and schooling together in a new way and giving renewed impetus to lifelong learning Adam (2012, p.4)

New vocationalism

Evidence led through workplace training reports, portray training trends, depicted from participating companies in the focus group, and which conclude that training is on the decline and conducted on voluntary basis and focusing mostly on short term rather than long term training, further strengthens calls for a wider skills approach which involves integrated vocational and academic subjects in schools which are, in the main, based on the assumption that education hinges primarily on bringing all of the population to minimal levels of literacy because education and training appear to minimize the

adverse consequences of technological change for workers, and workers with such training and education adapt to change better and faster – Archer (2007, p.16)

The call for the new vocationalism is also supported by COSATU and NUMSA - NUMSA (201, p. 16) in the debate advanced against wage subsidies, that young people with or without National Senior certificate should first gain skills prior to entering the labour market.

The argument by COSATU and NUMSA is also informed by the declining enterprise training where job retention is sustained only when there are incentives or subsidies. It is therefore suggested SSPs should expand and begin to incorporate the notion of new vocationalism, that government, public institutions, the private sector and civil society should be leveraging off each other DBSA (2011 p7).

This study notes the views for new vocationalism do not necessarily oppose enterprising based training upon which the current skills development model is premised, but further suggest alternative considerations and strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

5.4.4 Capacity building

The analysis and the interpretation of evidence led with regard to a need for capacity building as a strategy for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP confirms how important it is to ensure participants are on board and understand the kind of inputs required of them make meaningful contributions to the SSP processes. The need for capacity building by stakeholders in itself is a positive indication in support of skills development initiatives and willingness to know about the skills development processes to meaningfully participate and take ownership in skills development activities including SSP processes.

Although labour also supported a need for capacity building, they were however not as certain or upfront in articulating their capacity building needs but wanted to be afforded time to consult on the matter. This simply confirms the low ranking and quality of labour

representation within SETA processes, given the knowledge, experience and authority required for decision making and maximum participation.

The following quotations from the focus groups interviewed confirm the analysis here submitted:

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us - labour”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the APDP. Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to you so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

- Chamber self assessment results

The average response results on Chamber performance assessments against chamber terms of reference for both 1st and 2nd Focus group, suggest the state of readiness for Chambers Committees in grappling with Chamber activities as per the Chamber terms of reference. The results further confirm training intervention based on the scoring rates – refer to both Figures: 4.1 and 4.2 on page 50 and 51 respectively.

The Participatory, governance and SETA review studies in chapter two also confirm the analysis and the interpretation of the evidence suggested for capacity building, in particular the significance of the state of readiness of participating Chamber committee representatives and acknowledgment of poor quality inputs due to a lack of the required level of experience and knowledge Marock et al (2007 p22) and NEDLAC (2007 pp20-21).

5.5 Conclusion

The above analysis of data collected has highlighted several weaknesses in the processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSP from the Chamber committee's perspective and the literature review in chapter two. These weaknesses range from ineffective coordination was resulting from top down SSP processes characterised by poor communication, where various structures and departments within and outside the SETA do not talk to each other; the need for capacity building for meaningful contribution by Chamber committee members in the SSP processes. Although there is a realisation that the labour and business constituencies need to work together in unison, this challenge is not practical as yet. The SSP process from the data collected and analysed, is a very technical research intensive process. However, despite challenges out there in the development and implementation of SSP, what is encouraging is that Chamber committee members are aware of the need for SSP including solutions and possible enablers on how to improve the approach to the development and implementation of the SSP. The most interesting part in this study is the similar themes and views established from the empirical primary data collected and the secondary data from the literature review in chapter two. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings, the institutional arrangements within and outside of merSETA and its Chamber committees, should be prioritised for the realignment and development of the effective skills development institutions, in order to address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides conclusions regarding the findings of the study in respect to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA by Chamber committees for planning and implementing skills development in the sector, as well as providing recommendations aimed at addressing the problem identified by the study and possible future areas for further improvement and research.

The purpose of the study was to conduct an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber committees to assess the effectiveness of the SSPs in responding to industry needs to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities by asking the following research questions:

- What are the factors leading to the development and implementation of SSPs?
- What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the SSP?
- How can the development and implementation of the SSP be improved?

Two separate group interviews were conducted with two of the five Chambers committees. The primary and secondary data analysis on skills development initiatives were respectively supplemented with extensive useful documentary analysis and a literature review on the skills development landscape and merSETA and its Chamber activities covering SSP processes for the period NSDS I; II and beyond.

6.2 Conclusions

The analysis conducted in Chapter five has revealed and confirmed both constraints and possible enablers to be considered in the development and implementation of SSPs. Moving from this premise, the study drew the following conclusions with regard to the results findings of the study.

Based on the evidence led for the period being reviewed, the study noted that from participatory and governance perspective, merSETA Chamber committees have been exposed and actively involved in the SSP processes. Despite changes in the representation in Chamber committee composition, these findings were also confirmed by the average response results for the Chamber performance self assessments against Chamber committee terms of reference confirming merSETA Chamber committees' extent of involvement in the development and implementation of SSPs - (AURCO, 2012). The study further noted that business and labour constituencies despite knowing what purpose the SSP serves, and being committed to work together, both constituencies are not on the same wavelength with how the SSP should unfold. Although the business constituency seems to know what to expect from the SSP process, labour could not be upfront about how the SSP process should unfold. The weakness in this regard is viewed to be one of the major constraints inhibiting the much needed full participation and good governance in Chamber Committees for the maximum effective participation in the skills development processes in order to realise the desired results in the skills development policy as expresses and articulated in the NSDS.

The analysis with regard to the Chamber committees' experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, appeared to suggest the SSP approach has been top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Linked to an analysis of a top down approach, there seems to be misalignment with regard to various SETA structures involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs which suggest that the SSP processes should be streamlined and simplified even though the processes are iterative.

Flowing from the misalignment of various structures involved in the development and implementation of SSPs, it is also noted that although there is training in various SETA approved programmes, however, the training being conducted is informed by companies' immediate production needs with less effect and impact in addressing broad

skills development national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS because of the inherently and invariably existing misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs, often resulting with many of the unemployed learners and workers remaining unemployed after training.

Further trends emerging from the data that was analysed mentioned that there was too much information and data to work with during the development of the SSP so that participants end up being lost in the process. Apart from the overwhelming data to deal with, the quality of the quantitative data and statistics serving as critical input in the development of SSPs, often could not be verified and/or validated, resulting in skewed decisions and results.

On the implementation of the SSPs, data analysed also informed about poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments often monitoring or confirming outputs implemented without evaluating the impact and desired outcomes. These inefficiencies and ineffectiveness were also confirmed in the study with regard to the designed SETA overall performance measurement tool by the DHET. The nationally-defined performance indicators often neglect specific sectoral trends.

Resulting from the poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments being employed, the study noted the existence of gaps in the feedback necessary for continuous improvement in the development and implementation of SSPs and skills development activities in general.

The analysis of data with regard to how the development and implementation of SSPs can be improved, deliberations in this regard were extensively covered during the preceding section in the concluding remarks with regard to the Chamber committee's experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP.

Without repeating what has already been addressed, or deliberating on the recommendations, the need for capacity building was viewed to be necessary for empowering participants through enhancing their knowledge about SSP processes to achieve maximum participation in the skills development processes.

Furthermore, evidence suggest the industry policy to be a significant integral component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans depend on other plans within and outside of the sector if these are to make an impact on the skills development mandate and also address the current misalignment challenges earlier noted.

Linked to the significance of industry policy, there are also emerging trends on how to improve the current SSP approach; in this regard calls are being made for a rethink on strategies for human development given shortcomings on the current strategies and institutions. These calls suggest, among others, a move away from mainly predictions of scarce and critical skills for enterprise development and workplace training, and mention that whilst industry demand led training is necessary to guide vocational training, other strategies should be considered, such as organisational innovation, new vocationalism and the development and facilitation of programmes and institutions to create a pathway aiming at preparing and equipping youth during transition from school to the world of work, either as employees or self employed persons.

This study further noted the emerging calls for consideration of alternative strategies which include reviewed forms of vocational education and training and, ongoing innovation research and development seeking to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In conclusion, it can be argued by the study that, although the current initiatives for skills development are a necessary component for the socio - economic development geared towards human development for addressing problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the post democratic South Africa, a lot still needs to be done in improving the effectiveness of the skills development institutions and its key planning instruments; implementation and evaluation guidelines for continuously reviewing and aligning and adjusting the development and implementation of SSPs to enhance the delivery of skills development.

6.3 Recommendations

In light of the research findings in Chapter four; analysis and interpretation of the findings in Chapter five and conclusions in the current Chapter six, the study begins to provide insight from Chamber committee participants' perspectives into both opportunities and constraints with regard to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA in pursuit of the skills development objectives, as articulated in the NSDS.

The critical challenges emerging from the study relate to the following areas which call for improvements in SETA institutional arrangement:

- The desired state of readiness and common vision among participants in addressing SSP processes;
- the need for capacity building for participants to keep up with various processes pertaining to the development and implementation of SSPs and;
- capacity for effective applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments to ensure continuous feedback in assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise skills development objectives.
- On-going and continuous innovation, research and development programmes in streamlining education and VET related plans to explore emerging trends geared towards the provision of effective education and training to support and enhance skills development initiatives.

These recommendations, based on the findings of the study, are submitted for the consideration by both stakeholders and constituencies involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and in pursuit of the skills development for addressing

problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality central to inhibiting human and socio-economic development.

Given the dynamic nature of various structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs, the study sees inclusivity as a necessary approach to be embraced by all related institutions participating in the skills development processes because there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up but to strive for enhanced and effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Capacity building on SSP processes and NSDS among participating stakeholders and constituencies is necessary for maximum effective and meaningful participation in skills development processes.

Linked to the complex nature of the SSP processes as perceived by participating stakeholders from Chamber committees, and the fact that participating industry stakeholders deployed in SETA structures are from diverse backgrounds and occupy various ranks within their constituencies, the SETA personnel need to be sensitive about capacity building needs by providing the necessary assistance and guidance required for participants to take ownership of the skills development process.

To take ownership of the skills development processes by participating stakeholder constituencies, knowledge and practical applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments is necessary for assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and, for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise the objectives set.

It is also necessary to establish effective monitoring and evaluation instruments for continuous feedback that can assist in simplifying the SSP processes through the provision of guidelines and clarification on what is to be monitored and evaluated which also draws a distinction between outputs and outcomes for all participating stakeholders constituencies to be able to conduct self monitoring and evaluation of various SETA processes from the participant perspective and be able to share their experiences and

findings within their constituencies and at the relevant SETA decision making structures and committees.

As most of the in-puts necessary for the development and implementation of SSPs, including statistics and quantitative data, which is invariably information received from the industry, it is important for participating stakeholders and constituencies to be sensitised about the correctness and the significance of keeping and supplying the office with proper and updated records to achieve the data integrity necessary for effective and legitimate SSP reports.

Currently nationally-defined performance indicators and targets by the DHET to measure SETA performance need to be reconstructed to include a component reflecting industry sectoral specific performance to provide feedback relevant to sectoral needs and activities during the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Alignment of the SSP processes to the industry policy is a significant component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans should first be industry specific, although these are also dependent on other plans within and outside of the sector given the nature of today's global continental, regional and local integrated economies – as in figure 4.3 on page 62.

A need for on-going inclusive and empowering innovation research and development is also recommended for keeping the SSP relevant and effective all the time.

6.4 Future research

Given the purpose of the study and the approach followed in exploring international, continental, regional and local trends in the skills development arena, there are various emerging trends and shortcomings which are identified from time to time, given the dynamic nature of the vocational education training.

This study further recommends to the Chamber committees at merSETA, a research on a results-based monitoring and evaluation instrument that will empower and enable Chamber committees to be able to take charge of the SSP processes through

generating the required relevant constant feedback necessary to align and update their SSPs to remain effective and relevant sector skills planning instruments.

Last but not least, the need for inclusive innovation, research and development in the field of education and training cannot be emphasised more, given the dynamic nature of the skills development trajectory. Emerging trends around the new view on vocationalism necessitate a need to keep on exploring alternative strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives employed in the skills development arena to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities.

REFERENCES

- South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit. (2004). *Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ):*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Adam, A. (2012). *The role of skills development in overcoming social disadvantage*. Bonn: EFA Global Monitoring report.
- Akoojee,S; Gewer,A and McGrath,S. (2005). *Vocational Education and Training in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Archer, S. (2010). *Key Issues in the Assessment of SETA Performance in South Africa's National Skills Development Strategy*. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.
- Archer, S. (2007). *The international literature on skills training* . Cape Town : DPRU, UCT.
- Archers, S. (2010). *SETA Performance* . Cape Town: SULDRU,UCT.
- AURCO. (2012). *merSETA Chamber Self Assessment Against Terms of Reference*. Johannesburg: AURCO.
- Badenhorst, C. (2007). *Research Writing: Breaking the Barriers*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Baker, F. (2008). *The South African Labour Market*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Biggam, J. (2011). *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A step-by-step handbook* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Open University Press.
- Bird, A. (2012). *The articulation challenge*. unpublished .
- Bogdan, B and Bilken,S,K. (2003). *Qualitative Research for Education : An introduction to Theory and Methods.4th ed*. Boston: Allyn &Bacon/Pearson Education Group.
- Boslaugh, S. (2007). *Secondary Data Sources for Public Health*. St Louis: Washington University, .
- Chang, H.-J. (2009). *Industrial Policy : Can We Go Beyond and Unproductive Confrontation?* Seol, South Korea: ABCDE (Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics).
- Cloete, F & Wissink, H . (2002). *Improving Public Policy* . Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Commission, R. o. (2012). *RSA National Development Plan (NDP)*. Pretoria : Government Printers .

- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2011). *Business Research Methods* (11th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- DBSA. (2011). *Youth Employment Strategies for South Africa*. Johannesburg : Development Planning Division DBSA .
- DHET. (2012). *Green Paper*. Pretoria : Government Publishers .
- DHET. (2009). *HRD-SA*. Pretoria : Government Printers .
- DoL, S. A. (2004). Sector Skills Plan - SSP Guide . *SA Department of Labour DoL and Skills Development Planning Unit - SDPLU Sector Skills Plan Guide* . Pretoria , Republic of South Africa : Government Printers .
- Elliot, N & Higgins,A. (2012). *Grounded theory review - Vol. II, Issue 2*. Dublin: Trinity College.
- Gilliam, B. (2005). *Case Study Research Methods* . London: Paston Press .
- Golafshani. (2003, December 4). Understanding Reliability and validity in Qualitative Research . *The qualitative report volume 8 number 4* , pp. 397 -607.
- Government Gazette, N. (2006, August 11). merSETA Constitution. *The merSETA Constitution* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: Government Gazette.
- Grawitzky, R. (2006). *SETAs - a vehicle for the skills revolution*. Cape Town: DPRU - UCT.
- Grooves. (1998). *Cited in Neuma 2011, Social Research Methods* . Boston: Pearson .
- Group, F. F. (2012, November 21). The role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan at merSETA. (T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Group, S. F. (2012 , November 30). The Role Chamber Committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan . (H. M.-T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Hartley, J. (2004). *Case Study Research*. In Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*. London : Sage .
- Henning, van Rensburg and Smit. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Henning,E; Van Rensburg,W and Smit, B. (2004). *Find your way in Qualitative Research* . Pretoria: Van Schaik .
- Karl, M. (2000). *Monitoring & Evaluating Stakeholder Participation in Development Projects* . Sustainable Development (SD) United Nations .

- Kraak, A. (2008). A Critical Review of the National Skills Development Strategy in South Africa . *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* Vol.60,No.1 , 1 - 18.
- Kraak, A. E. (2009). *Sectors & Skills the need for Policy Alignment* . Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Kusek,J and Rist,R . (2004). *Ten Steps to a Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* . Washington: World Bank .
- Labour, R. D. (1998). Skills Development Act, 1998. *Department of Labour Skills Development Act - SDA* . Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, Republic of South Africa: Government Printers.
- Leurner, J. (2010, November 11). A Change in Focus to Stakeholder Engagement as the King III Code is Described as a Future Corporate Governance . *University of Pretoria , Masters Dissertation* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: University of Pretoria.
- Lolwana, P. (2012). *Strenthening the skills development system in the post-school system*. unpublished .
- Lundall, P. (2003). *Sector Education Training Authorities and the Delivery of Training : Preliminary Remarks on the New Skills Dispention in South Africa*. Cape Town : DPRU, University of Cape Town (UCT).
- Lynch, L. (2007). The Adoption and Diffusion of Organisational Innovation : evidence for the US economy. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 2819* .
- Marock, C; Harrison-Train, C; Soobrayan,B; and Gunthorpe,J (2007). *SETA Review* . Cape Town : Singizi Cosulting, DPRU and DfID .
- Marock, C. (2008). *SETA Review* . Cape Town: DPRU, UCT .
- Marshall, C and Rossman,GB . (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research, 2nd ed*. CA: sAGE .
- Mbeki, M. (2009). *Architects of Poverty*. Johannesburg: Picardo Africa.
- merSETA. (2012). *AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study* . Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR*. Johannesburg: merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of WSPs & ATRs*. Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2012). *Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016*. Johannesburg : merSETA .
- Mhone, G. (2000). *Enclavity and Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity in Southern African Economies*. Harare: ILO/SMART.
- Miles and Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative Data* . California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Mills, G. (2012). *Why Africa is Poor* . Pietermaritzburg: Penguin Books .
- NEDLAC. (2007). *SETA Performance and Functioning*. Johannesburg: NEDLAC.

Neuman, W. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

NUMSA. (2012, July). NUMSA News . *NUMSA News No. 2* , p. 5.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Education Research Methods 3rd ed* . Thousand Oaks: CA : Sage .

Payne, J. (2009). Divergent Skills Policy Trajectories in England and Scotland after Leitch,. *Policy Studies* 30, , 473 - 494.

Porter, M. (1980). *Competitive Strategy*. New York: The Free Press.

Pozzoni,B and Kumar, N. (2005). *A Review of the Literature on Participatory Approaches to Local Development for an Evaluation of the Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community - Based and Driven Approach Development Approaches* . Washington, DC : The World Bank Operation Evaluation Department - OED .

Ramphela, M. (2012). *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters* . Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research 2nd Edn*. Oxford: Blackwell.

RSA-DHET. (2012). *Green Paper for Post - School Education and Training*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

RSA-DHET. (2009). *Human Resource Development for South Africa - HRD SA 2010 - 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Sako, S. (2006). *Challenges facing African Regional Economic Communities in Capacity Building*. Harare : The African Capacity Building Foundation Occasional Paper No. 5.

Strauss, A and Carbin,J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. . London : Sage .

Terreblanche, S. (2012). *Lost in Transformation* . Sandton : KMM Review.

Terreblanche,M and Durrheim,K . (2002). *Socail Construction Methods, In M,Terreblanche & K, Durrheim Resaerch in Practice*. Cape Town: Cape Town Union Press .

Twineyo-Kamugisha, E. (2012). *Why Africa Fails*. Paarl: Paarl Media Paarl.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods*. London : SAGE .

Zide, G. (2010). *Higher Education and Training Transformation Process*. Va der Bijl Park: Unpublished inagural lecture at Vaal Unversity of Technology.

APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

A review of the participation of merSETAChamber Committees in the development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP)

Focus Group interview / discussion guide

1. Why you need a Sector Skills Plan (SSP)? (awareness)
 - purpose
 - What are factors underpinning/influencing the development and implementation of the SSP
 - what is the process / methodology to be followed
 - What are targets?
 - Time frames
 - Who is involved?
2. What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan(s) (SSP)? (reflections)
 - is the purpose being achieved
 - is the process / methodology
 - Understood/
 - Doable/workable or not?
3. How can the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) be improved? (recommendations for consideration)
 - Any suggested improvements
 - process / methodology
 - Any prior training needed
 - Any other issues to be considered

**THE ROLE OF CHAMBER COMMITTEES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTOR SKILLS PLAN AT merSETA**

BY

HOSEA MATSUOE MORAPEDI

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, Law and Commerce at the University of Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

February 2013

ABSTRACT

The Skills Development Act of 1998 was introduced to usher in the new skills development trajectory in the post 1994 SA. SETAs, intermediary bodies, were established to oversee processes for the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, an important instrument for industry skills planning through the mobilisation of industry stakeholder sub-sectoral – Chamber committees. These interventions were meant, through SSP processes tailored to respond to industry skills shortages, to contribute in increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, create economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SSPs from the merSETA Chamber Committee perspective. The analysis of the findings points at the existence of complexities and gaps in respect to the planning, implementation and the evaluation of the SSP. The analysis further suggests a need for a revised and a much more industry specific and policy aligned SSP process, with clearly defined outcomes and appropriately designed implementation, monitoring and evaluation tools for maximum and inclusive participation for enhancing ownership, and buy-in into the process by the participating industry stakeholders.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AATP	Accelerated Artisan Training Programme
ATR	Annual Training Report
APDP	Automotive Production and Development Program
AMIC	Automotive Industry Certificate
AU	African Union
AURCO	Audit, Risk and Control Company
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ESSA	Employment Services of South Africa
GDS	Growth Development Summit
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HR	Human Resource
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
IPAP	Industry Policy Action Plan
NBF	National Bargaining Forum
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NOPF	National Occupational Pathways Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate

NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA
MIDP	Motor industry development programme
PUI	Poverty Unemployment and Inequality
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade Occupations
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Council
SDPU	Skills Development Planning Unit
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted for the requirement of the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Hosea Matsue Morapedi

28 February 2013

DEDICATION

I first and foremost dedicate this project to the Almighty for His blessings and giving me the strength for the trials and tribulations gone through; my Ancestors and parents - DiPhuthi for instilling self belief in me from childhood; my family, my wife Nomsa; my children Nonhlanhla, Tsholofelo, Lesedi and Phuthi, for all the love and support I needed most and, to my brother-in-law, Professor Maake, for the unwavering support throughout my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely acknowledge the invaluable support and guidance received from my supervisor, Mr. Tshotse Motswaledi, throughout the research process.

Many thanks to the focus group members for your valuable time and willingness in providing valuable data for the purpose of the research study.

Thanks to you too, my friends at merSETA, Professor Akoojee, Nkrumah, Lulamile and Pinki, for your relentless encouragement and support.

Contents

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	ii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
List of Figures	xi
1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	xi
List of Tables.....	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	3
1.3 Problem Statement.....	5
1.4 Knowledge gap.....	5
1.5 Purpose Statement	6
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Conceptual framework	6
1.8 Structure of the research report.....	10
CHAPTER 2	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Definitions of concepts	13
2.2.2The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).....	13
2.2.3Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process	13
2.2.4 Chamber Committees	15
2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment	16
2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’	18

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas	18
2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness	19
2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa	20
2.8 Conclusion	23
CHAPTER 3	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research methodology	25
3.3 Research design	26
3.4 Sampling	27
3.5 Primary data collection	28
3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview	28
3.6 Secondary data	29
3.7 Data presentation	29
3.8 Data analysis and interpretation	30
3.9 Validity and Reliability	31
3.10 Significance of the Study	31
3.11 Ethical Considerations	32
3.12 Limitations of Study	32
3.13 Conclusion	33
CHAPTER 4	35
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members	37
4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses	38
4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans	39
4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes	40
4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes	41
4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	44
4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity	44

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content	46
4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations	47
4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs	48
4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports.....	50
4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	51
4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP	51
4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP	52
4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes.....	53
4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes	54
4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly.....	55
4.4 Summary of findings	55
4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP	55
4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	56
4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	57
4.5 Conclusion	59
CHAPTER 5	60
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP	61
5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory	61
5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond	63
5.3.1 SSP Format	64
5.3.2 SSP Content.....	66
5.3.3 SSP Approach	67
5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP	71
5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes	72
5.4.2 Funding.....	75
5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach	75
5.4.4 Capacity building.....	78

5.5 Conclusion	80
CHAPTER 6	81
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	81
6.1 Introduction	81
6.2 Conclusions	81
6.3 Recommendations	85
6.4 Future research	87
REFERENCES	89
APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	93

List of Figures

1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	8
4.1 Chamber assessments results of the 1 st Focus Group	42
4.2 Chamber assessments results of the 2 nd Focus Group	43
4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy	58

List of Tables

2.1merSETAConstitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference	16
4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group.....	37
4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group	38
4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)	48

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Lessons drawn from the international arena, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Germany, inform the establishment of intermediary bodies within the broad framework of vocational education and training systems to influence and facilitate how education and skills training is delivered. The delivery of skills development through the intermediary bodies has often been in response to identified industry skills needs so as to improve productivity to stimulate the economy and increase employment opportunities. However, the unemployment sector has continued to grow while the country is still in search of the correct formula to respond to industry skills needs.

Experiences on the continent suggest that, since after gaining political independence in the 1950s and 1960s, African nations have struggled for economic independence and striven to develop a unique set of African solutions to its challenges, which include in the main, challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Education and training initiatives in Africa to prepare youth and adults for the world of work continue to receive less attention. There are more factors that thwart progress towards universal education and training, which include the link between urban and rural divide, race, gender and disability and marginalization in education. The challenges faced by VET systems and the responses to these challenges, include the history of VET on the continent and in the region.

The continent has experienced too much global interference and different socio-economic development models, including forms of international development assistance Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, pp. 105 – 108). However, the influence and impact of socio-economic development programmes have not always been negative, it exposed the continent to the international socio-economic development models but, many of

these programmes are still foreign and based on Western economic principles and Western notions for solving Africa's social problems and, the broad effects of the integrated global economy.

Although the situation has now changed, with Africa realising the need for regional economic cooperation and integration with the formation of new institutions such as the NEPAD, AU, SADC for Africa to economically assert itself in the global village Mhone (2000, pp.23 – 24) ;Sako (2006, pp. 19 – 20); Mbeki (2009, pp. 151 – 154); Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, 83 – 90); Mills (2012, pp. 174 – 175) diverse views and development approaches still persist as to what appropriate socio-economic strategies should be followed. Africa's vocational education and skills training efforts unfortunately amount to a lacklustre performance of regional cooperation and integration schemes thus far.

Similar challenges of persisting unemployment in the Euro zone and America are still being experienced on the continent and southern Africa, including South Africa, despite initiatives in education and skills development within the realm of vocational education and training systems.

These challenges broadly result from the dictates of a free market global economy, the historical legacy of colonialism and subsequent socio-economic policies adopted in the post-colonial phase. Most Southern Africa countries (Mauritius; Swaziland; Lesotho; Botswana; Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi and South Africa) have in common is colonial systems of vocational education and training that they inherited, with strong reliance and preference on white expatriate skills for both the formal labour market for skills, and formal provision of intermediate skills- depending on the level of economic activity Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005,p.1) .

In the southern Africa, most of the vocational education and training initiatives to address the supply and demand in the labour market have been badly neglected, despite the VET having a potential of being an important policy nexus – located between economic and educational policy, between the state and the market, and between concerns with poverty and growth Akoojee, et al (2005, p. 2)

With the dawning of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the era marked the welcoming of South Africa into the global economy. Being a global economic player, South African adopted an export led economic growth path to compete with other global players already in the global league. In pursuit of Porters' notion of competitiveness Porter (1980, pp.215 – 221), South Africa depended on this stimulating both its supply and demand side factors when it was experiencing from the demand side a low economic activity characterised by the declining mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the inward looking economic strategy of the pre – 1994, whilst on the flip side experiencing poverty, high unemployment rates at over 25%, and inequalities with Africans being the poorest and most affected with limited and no access to economic opportunities and basic services.

South Africa logically had to prioritise both its supply and demand side measures. This study primarily looks at both the supply and demand side measures involving the South African Government initiatives post 1994 in the provision of skills development, using the SETA model as a vehicle for its skills development trajectory.

The vocational education and training initiatives experiences in South Africa via the SETA model since the advent of democracy, post 1994, can be described as both a slow and complex process with neither immediate nor sustainable and impactful results in addressing the country's skills needs and the main challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

1.2 Background to the Study

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority is one of the 23 SETAs established through the Skills Development Act no. 96 of 1998 to facilitate and guide skills development through the development and the implementation of sector skills plan in response to industry skills needs.

MerSETA facilitates skills development in the following sub sectors:

- Metal and engineering.

- Auto manufacturing.
- Motor retail and component manufacturing.
- Tyre manufacturing and
- Plastics industries.

All the five sub-sectors of merSETA comprise approximately 44000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 600 000. The total annual levy income is approximately 600 million rand.

merSETA, like all other SETAs, plays a central role in making sure that the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is fulfilled.

merSETA does not collect levies, but instead receives collected levies from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Seventy percent of the levies are disbursed as grants and 10% is kept for administration.

merSETA does not train but instead it facilitates the process of training by paying grants, registering moderators and assessors, identifying scarce skills, accrediting training providers, monitoring the quality of training and implementing projects to close the skills gap.

This research study, in light of the background here provided, seeks to assess the impact of merSETA through its Chamber Committees in developing and implementing the Sector Skills Plan in response to industry skills needs based on priority skills and/ or scarce and critical jobs identified for improving production and creating employment opportunities.

More than a decade since the inception of SETAs, there are still widespread concerns about the efficacy of the SETA institutions in growing the implementation of a skills development policy to address unemployment challenges in the country.

1.3 Problem Statement

The problem this study seeks to investigate and assess is the role of Chamber committees at merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan process, invariably a 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System', a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority jobs in the industry) in order to contribute to increasing productivity in the economy, and in the process, to address unemployment through creating employment opportunities.

At the heart of the study, is the unemployment that continues unabated, despite SETA efforts in implementing skills development initiatives through the Sector Skills Plan within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy I; II and beyond, which is meant to address industry skills needs in the country to curb unemployment.

The key question is, has the Sector Skills Plan process been effective in responding to industry skills demands and serving as a catalyst to curb unemployment?

1.4 Knowledge gap

The knowledge gap exist in this regard, in that the earlier work of SETA review studies, including, Marock, Harrison-Train, Soobrayan and Gunthorpe (2007); NEDLAC (2007); Kraak (2008) Archer (2010), never investigated the extent of the participation by SETA stakeholder committees responsible for identifying and determining industry current skills trends and predicting skills needs for socio- economic needs in post 1994 democratic South Africa(Government Gazette, 2006). This study, therefore, finds it necessary to consider empowering and capacitating participating stakeholders in Chamber committees for effective citizenry participatory processes and governance Karl (2000); Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 2-3; 39-47) and Ramphela (2012, pp.60-64) and to understand Chamber Committees in their role of leading the development and implementation of the SSP process.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the Sector Skills Plan used by SETAs and to explore the best approaches in response to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The study seeks to investigate with merSETA Chamber Committees factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP), establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the SSP, analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

1.6 Research Questions

The primary research aim is to broadly deliberate on the following research questions, which according to the guidance of Marshall and Rossman (1995, p.26) state that the qualitative research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study. This suggests that the questions and objectives of the study need to make provision for flexibility in qualitative research:

1. What are the factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP?
2. What are the trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP?
3. What are the strategies for future consideration?

1.7 Conceptual framework

In order to understand and achieve the broad research aims in this regard, the following conceptual framework (demonstrated in Figure 1 below), by the Department of Labour and GTZ, will be used as a point of reference in this study to demonstrate and enhance understanding of the supply and demand for industry skills and the central role fulfilled by Sector Education and Training Authorities, in particular the Chamber Committees (stakeholder bodies) responsible for making inputs through identifying industry skills needs.

Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.18 – 22) suggest that research should construct a conceptual framework to help “decide which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analysed – at least at the outset.”

Conceptual Framework for the Development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan in the Demand Driven Occupational Learning

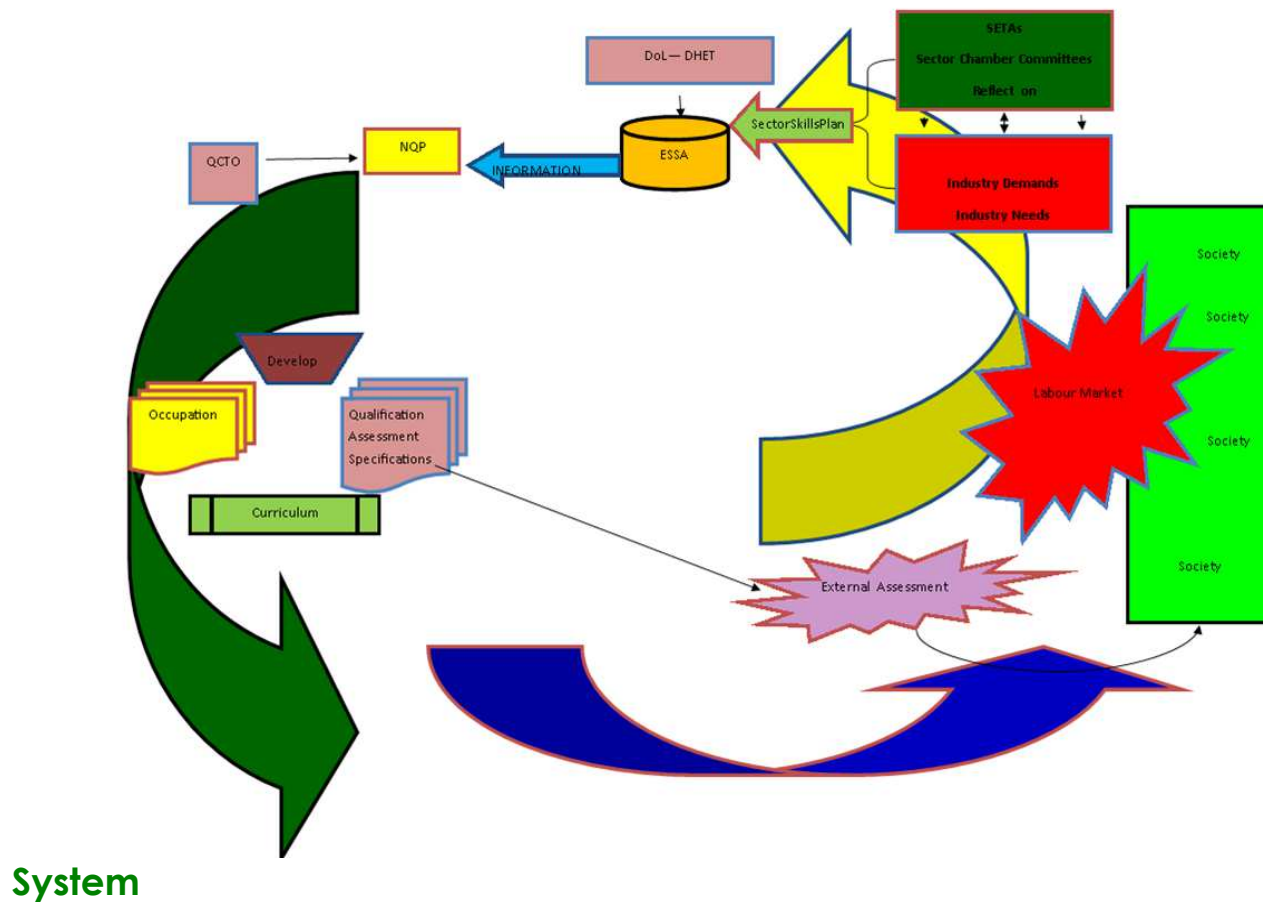


Figure 1:1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System - source Department of Labour (DoL) & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ): 2004. (South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The joint DoL (and now DHET) and GTZ model for the supply and demand of the industry skills, seeks to demonstrate the process flow of skills development approach in SA.

SETAs in this regard play an important institutional role in consulting with the industry and other industry related bodies in developing sector skills plans. merSETA through its Chamber committees consults with all relevant industry bodies to develop sector skills plans informing the skills needs within its predominantly manufacturing sub sectors under the merSETA scope, which include metal engineering, motor retail and automotive components manufacturers, plastics and related products manufacturers, new tyre and auto assemblers and manufacturers.

Once the sector skills plan is developed and approved, the next phase is implementation. Institutions and government departments involved in the implementation include the following: The drawing up of the National scarce and critical skills list by the DoL, DHET and Department of Home Affairs. The list reflecting skills needs across twenty three SETAs in the country is then published on Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) a sub-division within the Department of Labour.

The National skills list is used in the main as an information source to update and advise on occupational skills needed in the country, for the recruitment of employees by business, and for training purposes by relevant bodies and institutions, for publishing national occupational pathways, quality councils for trade occupations for developing relevant occupational qualifications, and curricula needed by the industry for an investment in productivity, through skills development, to help the country to address the current poverty, unemployment and inequalities existing in the labour market and society in general.

1.8 Structure of the research report

This research report is structured into six chapters, namely: introduction to the study; literature review; research methodology; presentation of findings; analysis and interpretation of data, and conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

In Chapter one, background to the study is explained, including the problem statement, research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

In Chapter two, a wide-ranging literature review is undertaken. This include SETA review studies; participatory and governance literature; policy formulation, implementation and evaluation to provide in this regard, a theoretical understanding of the past, current and future opportunities and constraints in the South African skills development trajectory.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

In Chapter three, the research methodology followed during which data gathering is explained, including interview techniques as a research method, the research sample which includes composition and participants in the study and the mechanisms used to ensure data credibility.

Chapter Four: Presentation of findings

Chapter four presents data extracted from focus group interviews held with representatives of the Chamber committees. The data is categorised in terms of the three main research questions attached to this report as Appendix 1 and themes which emerged the focus groups interviews.

Chapter Five: Analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter five builds on chapter four and provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the study on how the development and the implementation of the sector skills plan is viewed from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter six follows from the analysis in chapter five. Conclusions are drawn about the findings of the study linked to the research topic. The critical issues that require attention are identified and recommendations are submitted with a view to enhance the effectiveness in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans by Chamber Committees.

Areas for further research

Areas for further research are identified as a measure to deepen the understanding and advancement of the emerging trends in the new vocationalism skills development trajectory.

In conclusion, the introduction to and background of the study were explained. The contextual issues underpinning the study and fundamental questions that research seeks to address were highlighted and conclusions reached.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to focus on the literature relating to the skills development trajectory in South Africa to gain insight with regard to approaches followed and trends identified, for this study to benefit from the existing body of knowledge and be able to identify blind alleys and stimulate new ideas – Neuman (2011, p. 111) In pursuit of the existing body of knowledge in the skills development arena, the literature here reviewed has been widely, but selectively, chosen to provide balanced views, seeking to shed light on the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

The literature reviewed range from Government's DoL and DHET guides and documentations relating to the definition; description and application of Skills development using the SSP processes; literature on the review of SETA performance in pursuit of skills development aims and objectives, including strategies and approaches being developed and implemented to address unemployment, using SSPs as a tool and a means to the end; literature in policy development; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess and investigate what underpins trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and possibly determine considerations for future strategies; citizenry participatory processes and governance literature which this study is of the view is necessary, because the skills development policy is driven by both public and private institutions, including the Government which is responsible for the creation of the enabling environment – hence the necessity of the citizenry participatory processes and governance literature in the current initiatives being considered towards transforming the education and training system in the country which includes the DHET Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training in SA for consideration for future strategies.

2.2 Definitions of concepts

2.2.1 Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs)

SETAs intermediary bodies were established in 2000 to usher in a new skills development dispensation in the post 1994 democratic South Africa. SETAs are a special type of state owned enterprises (SOEs), established through various pieces of legislation including in the main, the amended Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 (SDLA). SETAs by their nature seek to redress occupational skills gaps and skills shortages in various key industrial sectors of the South African economy Baker (2008, p. 220); (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, p. 61).

2.2.2 The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

The NSDS is built on the Skills Development Act, of 1998 as amended. The strategy is meant to advance the process of a skills development policy in South Africa by identifying the priorities for skills development and providing mechanism for measuring SETA performance and monitoring progress (Lundall, 2003, p. 4) ; Kraak (2008, p. 10). It also charts the way forward for the DoL, and now the DHET, since November 2009, SETAs and other key supporting institutions in the skills development arena. The strategy is reviewed on a five year cycle on the basis of previous performances against national targets set.

This research looks at the role of the manufacturing, engineering and related merSETA during and beyond the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) one (I) and two (II) spanning 2000 to 2010/11 and now NSDS III which has just commenced in 2011.

2.2.3 Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process

This study defines the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) based on the Department of Labour (DoL) and Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) SSP Guide, given the periods being reviewed, that is, National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) I and II spanning the better part of 2000 to 2010/11, and beyond.

The SSP process can be best understood and described within the context of **Figure 1** 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the DoL & GTZ:(South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) as the name suggest, is a skills planning tool informed by various processes including workplace skills plan (WSP); annual training reports (ATR) - Marock et al (2007, p.61) This is a framework that seeks to inform and provide guidance about skills trends and priorities for improving the performance of the sector, and those working in it, through skills development.

The framework details industry current skills, training trends and future training needs, often referred to as 'scarce and critical skills' or skills in demand by various sectors, based on the analysis and the review of the current and past sector performance.

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) further serves to analyse current, and determine future skills prospects, and to formulate strategies to address industry future skills and training needs for sectoral economic growth and Skills Development Policy national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS within the Skills Development Act, 1998, as amended (Labour, 1998).

The Sector Skills Plan process based on the views articulated in the DoL's SSP guidelines (DoL, 2004,p. 15) is described as a necessary and valuable strategic tool and research process report. Each SETA, through its structures, as a performance indicator, is expected to develop a SSP report every five years in line with the NSDS and, annually update the plan. Apart from using the information in the SSP to meet NSDS priorities, including SETA operational planning and mobilisations of training funds, the information is also used by the DHET to write the National Scarce Skills List, which is published annually, representing a consolidated national snapshot of skills shortages.

The Department of Labour (DoL) and the Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) Sector Skills Plan guide DoL (2004, p.8) serves to provide technical assistance to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and committees responsible for the development of Sector Skills Plans. In this case, this is merSETA and its five sectors

namely, Metal and engineering; Auto manufacturing; Motor retail and component manufacturing; Tyre manufacturing and Plastics manufacturing sector.

2.2.4 Chamber Committees

Per the merSETA Constitution, DoL Government Gazette number 29113, (Government Gazette, 2006) Sector or Chamber committees are committees comprising equal representatives members nominated and recommended from organised business, and Trade Unions falling within the scope of the SETA. At merSETA there are five sub-sectors overseen by these operational and strategic governance structures called Chamber Committees.

The Chamber committees or sector committees are Constitutional sub-committees of the merSETA Governing Board. They fulfil both governance and operational roles within their respective sub-sectors. The research study in this regard, intends to look at the composition of Chamber Committees, how the selection of the participating stakeholders is made and what underpins and guide the nomination process for representation in order to assess the extent and quality of stakeholders and their state of readiness for participating in the process leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP - Karl (2000, pp1-6) and Kusek and Rist (2004,p.1).

Table 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committee terms of reference

Chamber Committee terms of reference (ToR)
• Develop sub sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines of the merSETA. • Identify education and training needs in the sector. • Monitor the development implementation of apprenticeships, learnerships, skills programmes, ABET as well as all other training in the sub-sector. • Make inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector. • Liaise with relevant bargaining councils, forums, professional associations and specialised sub sector providers. • Reviewing the activities of the Regional Committees and reporting to these committees on sub sectoral needs, scarce skills and other appropriate matters.

Source: The merSETA Constitution - Government Gazette, 11 August 2006 (Government Gazette, 2006),

Based on the literature reviewed, the following emerging trends begin to form themes on which this research should be premised.

2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment

The SETA review studies by NEDLAC (2007, pp. 43 – 44) ; Marock et al (2007 p.61); Marock (2008 , pp. 25 – 26) Archer (2007 pp. 15 – 16) and Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25 – 44) and Lynch (2007), despite in their findings arguing that SETA's Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process is a complex one, further argue that it is often not an appropriate intervention for intermediary agents like SETAs for determining and forecasting industry skills training needs.

SETA review studies here cites point to limitations which include the separation of education from training; the fact that supply and demand of labour matters is market driven and the process is even more complex, that both free markets and planned economies often fail to predict accurately, due to too much and often contradictory self-regulatory measures in the market and the effects of the current integrated global economic trajectory.

Literature reviewed in this regard suggest alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', but include models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy - Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25-44). These alternative models are said to be basic to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources; employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and to harness them to improved performance.

According to Archer (2010), the current trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP, existing and continuously revised regulations provide very limited guidance about the requirements for SSP and, as such, the alleged relationship and the interconnectedness with WSPs; economic growth skills planning strategies and the national skills development strategy NSDS is blurred and without evidence or footprints.

Archer (2010) further suggest that the purpose and factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP are still vague and a fallacy.

2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’

Kraak (2009) and Chang (2009), in their literature argue that, for policy considerations including policy formulation; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact, initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably will require development strategies that are uniquely customised to meet specific sectoral conditions. The assertion here being made by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320) and Chang (2009), is that the industrial policy does not mean any policy that affects the industry but a very particular type of policy that affects industries’ – an assertion that policies are commonly known as ‘selective industrial policy’ or ‘targeting’ – ‘namely a policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others, against market signals, usually to enhance efficiency and promote productivity growth’ Chang (2009, p.83).

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas

Linked to preceding paragraphs, Marock et al (2007, p.61) and Marock (2008, pp.25 – 26) argue that it might be differing points of emphasis for policy consideration between the broad skills development policy objectives expressed in the NSDS I and II (and possibly NSDS III), which focuses on issues of redress and equity, and the SSP, which emphasises the need for sectoral economic growth.

Often industry priorities including education and training matters are seen to be invariably based on employer profit motives and the need to yield more on investment Marock (2008). South Africa’s skills development model, based on SETA model principles of ‘Demand driven occupational learning system’ as in figure 1, is inherently constrained and likely to fail to address issues of equity transformative agendas since the model adopted reduces and subjects national socio–political-economic imperatives as articulated in NSDS 1 and II, to the discretion of the companies and the industries that are by and large free market driven Marock (2008).

2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness

According to Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5) notion of state of readiness, the merSETA Chamber committee's state of readiness from a participatory perspective in grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address the challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, is viewed as a necessary area for consideration for the assessment of the SETA performance for the state of readiness by SETA participating stakeholders. The State of readiness further brings to the fore the citizenry participatory process and governance issues as in – Archer (2010, p. 28; 34; 48); Karl (2000, pp. 1-6); and Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5); Leumer (2010); Lynch (2007); Pozzoni and Kumar (p.23); (DHET, HRD-SA, 2009, p. 23) and Ramphele (2012, pp. 147 – 148; 175).

Local initiatives to skills development using SETAs as a vehicle, accentuate the view that the Skills Development Act has placed the responsibility for skills development squarely with organised labour and business. The stakeholders in development agencies (SETAs) are not just participants but beneficiaries since they benefit from both outputs and outcomes. Local industry skills facilitating bodies compared to their counterparts internationally are more than just advisory skills development intermediary bodies since they are also beneficiaries Karl (2000, pp. 1-6).

According to Ramphele (2012), issues of good governance and accountability are very critical in the review of the functioning and effectiveness of stakeholders. In this regard, merSETA Sector – Chamber Committees members do not nominate nor appoint themselves to serve on these committees, members are often accountable to their constituencies such that holding the balance between economic and social goals and between committee members from diverse backgrounds and their new merSETA communal goals becomes a key consideration for factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP).

The question to be asked in this regard is whether SETAs, including the Chamber Committees, are ready, on the basis of their mandate, technical capabilities and representational considerations, are Chamber committees able to see and participate beyond immediate SETA quantitative targets and outputs set by the DHET, in line with training funding allocated and disbursed by the SETA ?.

Findings from the afore literature in this regard particularly SETA review studies by Marock (2008) and Kraak (2008) , portray a picture of local industry skills facilitating bodies - SETAs , in this case Chamber Committees to be lacking sufficient capacity and ability to be critical or see beyond. SETA review literature here cited further point to lack of effective indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate outcomes and impacts of their interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, in determining factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP); trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and establish strategies for future consideration. It is also reported that the SETA activities require the degree of knowledge and experience; labour representatives do not have NEDLAC (2007, pp. 20 – 21) and Grawitzky (2006, p.28).

2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa

Literature reviewed in this regard, including the following initiatives DHET's Green paper for post-school education and training - (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, pp. 34-36;61-70); Lowana (2012); Bird (2012) Kraak (2008, p.13) - Zide's Higher Education and Training transformation process argued in Zide's 2010 Professorial Public inaugural address at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Zide (2010); the new Ministry of National Economic Planning's (Commission, 2012) national development plan socio economic plan and, suggestions for the rethink of the current skills development initiatives to include forms of new vocationalism, which argue that technical and vocational education is more effective when focused on skills closely linked to market demand

Adam (2012, p. 4), these cited initiatives are underpinned by the ongoing poverty and inequalities resulting from unemployment and the inability of the majority of citizens to fend for themselves, economically and socially. The prevailing situation continues to mar progress achieved since democracy - thus there are ongoing attempts to address shortcomings within the current skills development initiatives.

Emerging trends in the literature reviewed, suggests South Africa has a lot to consider in getting its skills development strategies right to close the existing gaps and shortcomings in the pre- and post- education phases despite almost two decades of the post democratic era.

The recent September 2012 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report for 2012/2013 ranking South Africa number 140 out of 144 countries on the quality of education system indicator, confirms this research proposal that, despite South Africa arguably being on the right course in preparing the country for the competitive world of work according to Porter's notion of 'competitiveness' Porter (1980, pp 215 – 221) there is a need for more exploratory research to recommend strategies for future consideration towards building a clear vision for South Africa's education and related fields in the pre- and post- education phase.

The emerging trends in this regard re-emphasise why South Africa needs to consider a holistic and coordinated approach to its human resources development strategies for its social and economic challenges, to make a meaningful and impactful contributions to crush poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Following from the emerging trends in the literature reviewed, the following suggestions are noted:

The limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, calls for a relook on the purpose and underlying assumptions to the SSP and, propose alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', including models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy.

Alternative models said to be crucial to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources include employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and harness them to improved performance.

A shift from a narrow scarce and critical skills central in the Sector Skills Plan process, is necessary for the effective SSP.

The limitations with 'one size fit all approach and the all-encompassing policy', suggest a need for alignment between industrial and skills development policies is critical. Industrial policy should precede and inform skills development policy and its regulatory measures.

Generic Sector Skills Plans should be avoided and instead be more attuned to the specifics of each sector and their varied sub sectors

Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of a social equity transformative agenda, suggest that the formulation of clear implementation guidelines and performance indicators and targets is vital for an effective strategy.

The mechanisms and /or predetermined frameworks for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and impacts of interventions should be clearly stated from the beginning.

SETA state of readiness based on the literature reviewed is necessary from a participatory perspective for effective grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, and in this regard, the SETA mandate in executing the transformation agenda through the skills development trajectory.

Ongoing focused research and capacity building engagements to bolster economic and social consciousness of the key informants and participants is necessary to enhance the state of readiness and the performance of stakeholders towards the attainment of clearly spelt out economic and social objectives.

The performance of SETA structures, through its stakeholders, should include the ability to align the development and implementation of SSP in line with Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy within the country's development agenda.

Ongoing attempts to review pre- and post- school education and training in South Africa is another necessary intervention and SETAs need to consider holistic and coordinated approaches which do not leave everything to government alone, and be proactive through self-initiatives led by communities and individuals working together to address social and economic challenges which contribute to challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Individual governmental departmental initiatives are necessary to contribute to the ongoing transformational agenda, but should not be an end in themselves, instead they should begin a collaborative and partnership team work effort, informed by a commonly understood and striven for vision.

2.8 Conclusion

The emerging trends from the literature reviewed, identify and confirm shortcomings with regard to the current South Africa's VET intervention that use in the main, the SSP

as a guiding tool to respond to industry skills demand needs in striving to holistically make South Africa's economy competitive, a preferred destination for established and aspiring – emerging investors, and in the process, grow and create more employment opportunities, and in so doing, address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality (PUI).

Based on the shortcomings identified in South Africa's skills development initiatives in the literature reviewed, this research seeks to identify possible alternative models and strategies that can be explored and researched in the quest to address shortcomings inhibiting efforts geared towards the realisation of a viable economy to create more economic and social opportunities in attracting investors and addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality. These models include wider and all-encompassing approaches, which go beyond the current strategy that looks only at industry skills development needs.

The relevance of the literature reviewed in this regard, is that it begins to provide background knowledge and information which forms a paradigm that enables this research to strive to expand and see beyond the current skills development initiatives and begin to explore models that go beyond current models of industry led skills development processes, however, it is the view of this research study that these models are still a matter for further research and consideration.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to present and explain the research methodology followed by the study with regard to the research approach, research design, and population sampling procedure, data collection, data presentation, analysis and the means of validation.

3.2 Research methodology

The study investigated the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA to address socio – economic challenges resulting from unemployment, poverty and inequality and to identify challenges. The study intended to establish challenges and best practices, if any, for future considerations in the development and implementation of SSP and, submits its recommendations to the stakeholders in the vocational education and training fraternity.

The research was based on the qualitative research approach. The reason for choosing the qualitative method is mainly due to the nature of the study and as a means to respond to the research questions. According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004, 2, p.12) research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, researchers bring with them background knowledge which they use to interpret what they see. The background knowledge “tells us what exists, how to understand it, and – most concretely – how to study it”. In the social sciences, such background knowledge’s are called paradigms’ Terreblanche and Durkheim (2002, p.3).

The research took place within the interpretative paradigm and was premised from the presupposition that the current SETAs’ Sector Skills Plan (SSP) approach that is

industry demand driven, inherently has shortcomings that has often failed to deliver on the intended objectives. The interpretative paradigm guided the researcher to understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it – Neuman (2011, p.91).

The focus in the research is about understanding what is going on from the position of participants, in this case, merSETA Chamber Committee stakeholders, who according to the merSETA Constitution – Government Gazette (Government Gazette, 2006), are tasked with the responsibility of developing and implementing Sector Skills Plan, a process central to the mandate of the SETAs for identifying industry skills needs through the demand led national skills development strategy. In this regard, the Chamber Committee stakeholders represent the real world out there which is independent of the researcher's knowledge.

3.3 Research design

The study was a predominantly qualitative research seeking to understand from the perspective of merSETA participating Chamber Committees stakeholders, what are their experiences in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan by interacting rather than predicting what will happen from the position of an outsider. In this paradigm, the stakeholders' subjective experiences are considered to be real and are taken seriously Neuman (2011, p. 107).

The definition of qualitative research that fits best with the researchers ontology and epistemology is that of Creswell (1998, p. 15) who states that qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.'

The proposed research design of a qualitative approach in this regard is further supported by - Patton (2002), Bogdan and Bilken (2003) and

Staruss and Carbin (1998) in their submission that the social world can only be understood if the natural social context is taken into consideration – in this case, the natural context is South Africa in the post 1994 era in trying to implement a skills development policy to address its economic and social challenges which have resulted in high unemployment due to skills shortages.

3.4 Sampling

Given the overall aims and objectives of the study, that is, investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA, and according to Creswell in his notion of “purposeful sampling” and “key informants”, Creswell (2007, p118). Chamber committees of the merSETA became the most appropriate organisational structure and people to form a sample from which the researcher gathered data and information required to address the research questions. The appropriateness of Chamber committees at merSETA to be used as informants is further confirmed by their strategic role, as defined by the merSETA Constitution explained in Chapter two (2) Table 2.1merSETA Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

In line with Neuman, the primary purpose of sampling is to “collect specific information” Neuman (2011, p219) to enhance what the researcher seeks to investigate which in this regard was about the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan.

Two Chamber committees of the merSETA’s population of five Chambers Committees participated in the semi structured focus group interviews. Based on Table 4.1 and 4.2, in page forty nine (49) and fifty (50), the composition Focus groups and sample is balanced to provide fair balanced views from both business and labour perspectives to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings from the study, and this arrangement, according to Neuman, provides a good sampling frame which is necessary for good sampling Neuman (2011, p.225).

3.5 Primary data collection

3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview

The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi structured focus group interviews. The choice of the semi structured focus group interview as a data collection instrument was primarily based on the need to create a research enquiry and a dialogue with Chamber committee members to understand their thoughts, views and expectations in the SETA work, particularly in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan. According to Neuman, focus groups are a special qualitative research technique with the advantage of a natural setting, allowing participants in a relaxed mode, to express their opinions Neuman (2011, p. 142) a very critical element for the success of this study with regard to the data required and gathered through the small groups of participants interacting freely Neuman (2011, p. 414). In this study, the first and the second focus groups comprised of fourteen (14) and nine (9) participants respectively.

Other forms of primary data collection within the broad qualitative discipline, included follow up telephonic interviews from participants in the focus groups for more clarity on the information and data collected during the focus group sessions, although these follow up telephonic interviews sessions were on a small scale, they proved to be useful in providing more clarity on the data already collected.

The primary data was also supplemented by the documentary analysis of the minutes of Chamber meetings and Chamber Committees files; Chamber performance assessment reports and training reports. According to Robson, the advantages of document analysis is that documents are unobtrusive and can be used without imposing on participants; they can be checked and re-checked for reliability - Robson (2002, p.358).

According to Grooves (1998, p.273), the quantitative research data gathering instruments like survey questionnaires is only considered in cases where it is

necessary to determine 'preferences, opinions; past or present behaviour' based among others, on committee members' years of service in the Sector – Chamber committee - new or long serving committee members. This was only used to supply supplementary information that was statistical in nature, from AURCOR Chamber performance self assessments (AURCO, 2012).

3.6 Secondary data

The secondary data included both the reports received from focus group members and desktop research; merSETA annual general meeting (AGM) and Chamber committees files involving, SSP reports compiled during NSDS I;II and III, for the period translating into 2002 to 2012 were used as additional secondary data over and above the literature reviewed in Chapter two of the study.

According to Boslaugh, the advantage of using secondary data is the breadth of data available, Boslaugh (2007, p.4) secondary data helps to make primary data collection more specific since with the help of secondary data, we are able to make out where the gaps and deficiencies are, and what additional information needs to be collected.

3.7 Data presentation

In line with Neuman's recommendations, data collected was structured for presentation purpose in accordance with the research questions drawn to guide study discussions so as to proceed in a logical step-by-step manner - Neuman (2011, p. 491).

In this study, data was summarised and presented in various forms, mainly in a narrative form due to the qualitative research method employed in the study. Other forms of data presentation included tabulation and diagrammatic bar charts to complement and condense a large mass of data to bring out the distinct patterns in data in an attractive form that enables comparison to be made easily among classes of data collected.

As data presentation begins to shape data analysis, other techniques used in the study to present data are themes and sub themes, either informed by the literature review or by emerging trends from data collection.

3. 8 Data analysis and interpretation

Data collected from the two semi-structured focus group interviews, was refined and analysing firstly, in accordance with the three research questions pursued in the study and secondly, according to themes and sub-themes drawn when the researcher was reviewing and analysing interviewing notes and minutes for identifying emerging patterns themes.

Data were also categorised and analysed based on the themes drawn and identified from the literature reviewed for matching similar patterns and new emerging patterns from the focus group interviews.

The approach followed by the researcher has also been consistent and guided by the literature reviewed in the area of data analysis so as to enhance the credibility of the study and avoid any unwittingly tendencies that might lead to some biased findings and misleading conclusions and in the process, which might compromise the study.

According to Neuman, Neuman (2011, p. 343) data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data collected. In this study, data were collected, summarised and refined into categories related to themes in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two, and important to the research questions being studied Boslaugh, (2007, p13).

The data was analysed using, among others, Glaser and Strauss 'grounded theory cited in Elliot and Higgins, that data analysis and verification is comparative analysis involving case study techniques Hartley (2004) and Yin (2003) that seeks to discover theory from data through the general method that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experience, in order to understand the emerging trends with regard to the responses to the research questions –Elliot and Higgins (2012,p.2) .

3.9 Validity and Reliability

The approach followed by the researcher for analysing data collected, consciously sought to avoid and eliminate any possibilities of inconsistencies that might lead to some bias and skewed results and, in the process, compromise the validity and the reliability of the study results.

Various instruments were used in the study to collect data, which included, semi structured focus group interviews, follow up telephonic interviews, documentary analysis and literature reviewed, assisted in comparing data collected to ascertain the reliability and validity of data collected and the elimination of inconsistencies and in the process, enhance the validity and the reliability of the study findings and conclusion.

The strategy followed by the researcher in using and employing various instruments to collect data, including a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods often referred to as triangulation, is supported by Patton (2001) and Maxwell (1998) cited in Golafshani (2003, p. 603) where it is argued that the approach has a potential to strengthen the study by combining data collection methods.

3.10 Significance of the Study

The business intention of this research study is to contribute to the on-going debate seeking to assess the efficacy of SETAs and related institutions in using the current skills development initiatives as a critical catalyst in alleviating post 1994 South Africa's problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Based on the DoL (and subsequently DHET), merSETA has been rated as one of the high performing SETAs, through delivering in the development of the SSP. The study is hoping to share lessons learnt in merSETA Chamber committees and makes recommendations to merSETA and its related Chamber Committees not participating in the study, and further recommendations to the SETA and vocational education training fraternity in South Africa, SADC, the continent of Africa and the international training institutions.

Based on the problem statement of this research and the literature reviewed, there is still a need for more research to explore alternative approaches and strategies for future consideration for effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands, but to look at human resource development in totality to address poverty, unemployment and inequality locally and internationally. The significance of this research study is embedded in seeking to make a contribution in efforts to explore effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands to address South Africa's post 1994 socio economic needs.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Neuman, conducting a research study and reporting its results can create controversy and raise contentious ethical issues, so that it is necessary to protect research subjects to maintain integrity while doing research Neuman (2011, p. 490).

The researcher endeavoured to observe all ethical considerations during and beyond the research process by relating to study participants with respect and dignity, assuring participants the information shared whilst doing the research, during the group interviews and beyond, will be kept confidential and the anonymity of the study subjects will be kept as such by using symbols instead of real names - Neuman (2011, p. 138 – 142).

The researcher further assured participants that the study was conducted purely for academic purposes and not for publicity or commercial gain, that both the integrity and reputation of the merSETA and WITS University School of Public Development and Management would be maintained and respected during and beyond the study.

3.12 Limitations of Study

Given the limited resources and the magnitude of the study, inherently there were limitations to the study and potential weaknesses in the sense that the study sampling was reduced and excluded data collection evidence within broad SETA institutional

structures, and data from the other twenty SETAs, and related fraternal institutions within the skills development sector.

Due to non-availability and geographical spread of Chamber committees and focus group members in this study, the researcher was compelled to target two Chamber committees available at the time to participate in the focus group sessions. Despite these challenges, the volume and quality of data collected was sufficient for the study to be conclusive in its findings, given SETA's generic approach in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

As stated in Chapter one, this study sought to supplement the existing knowledge gap resulting from the earlier work of SETA review studies by (Marock, C et al , 2007) and the NEDLAC (2007) which excluded significant data and information from SETA stakeholders committees responsible for the development and implementation of SSPs.

Despite the researcher in this study being the employee of the merSETA, and participating focus group members being levy paying members of the merSETA, the researcher cautioned participating focus group members upfront, that there might be a “conflict of interest” given participants’ relations with merSETA. That the study findings and conclusions arrived at, might be viewed to be biased in an attempt to support and maintain current and future relations with both the participating focus group Chamber committees and merSETA. However, it is necessary for the credibility of the study to be “professional and responsible” in approaching the study and members are at liberty not to participate if not comfortable - Neuman (522 – 524).

3.13 Conclusion

This Chapter attempted to describe and explain the research methodology followed to collect, present and analyse the data in a manner required to respond to the research questions seeking to provide clarity on the study research problem. The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi-structured focus group interviews. As a strategy, triangulation was considered thereby allowing findings to be compared and then corroborated for validation and reliability. The two focus group

sessions were held in November 2012 during Chamber committee meetings, two Chamber committees participated in the study. Conclusive findings were arrived at, based on data collected and analysed to provide clarity and insight with regard to the challenges and possible solutions in improving the processes employed by Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The next Chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the problem this study is investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP, the performance of SETAs, in this regard, how merSETA Chamber Committees develop and implement the Sector Skills Plan, a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority occupations in the industry) meant to contribute to increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, creating economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country.

The purpose of the study is therefore, to investigate the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan to assess the effectiveness of SSP tool against the intended objective(s), that is, is the SSP the way it is being developed and implemented effectively responding to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and creating opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality. The study seeks to explore best approaches to address challenges in the SSP processes by conducting an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber Committees based on their role and their experiences in grappling with factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP; to establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the Saputo analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The data collected from the two chamber committees which participated in the semi-structured focus group sessions and document analysis is presented and explained. In this regard, with the involvement of SETAs in particular Chamber Committees in the skills development, an analogy can be made with the participatory literature reviewed in Chapter two where citizens (Chamber Committees) are urged to become more involved

in a participatory democracy in which they play an active role in the reconceptualization, and the reconstruction and development of their country Ramphela (2012, p. 175)

The following responses received are categorised into various themes which emerged during group interviews in both focus group sessions represented by the two Chamber committees participating in the study.

The following themes drawn from the study, supported by the accompanying quoted comments coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory, cited in Neuman (2011, p.157) and Creswell (2007, p.42) where key points are categorised and coded based on extracts from the group interview texts and verbatim notes developed during the process of research. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts* in order to make them more workable, as in Thompson, cited in Neuman (2011, p.425)

This chapter starts by describing the profile of the respondents who are, in the main, Chamber committee members. A profile of Chamber Committee members is necessary to provide background information to give more insight into the composition and accompanying perspectives within Chamber Committee structures beyond just the description of organised business and trade unions in the sector.

In keeping with the principles of confidentiality and privacy, the identities of respondents and/or participating Chamber Committees were protected by using code names or referring to the focus groups as, 1st Focus Group and 2nd Focus Group, as shown in Table 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below.

4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members

Table 4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
HRD Manager	Engineering Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	National Senior Certificate – NSC
HR Training & Development Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	Admin. Diploma
HR Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HR Manager	Post Graduate	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Human Resource Director	HR Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Artisan
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Diploma	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

Table 4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
Training & Development Manager	Education Post Graduate Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Coordinator	Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Manager	Mechanical Engineer Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Training Manager	Artisan	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
SDF	HR Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HRD Manager	Post Graduate	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses

Similar sets of semi-structured focus group questions were used and applied in both separately arranged focus group sessions held on different dates, one on Wednesday, 21 November 2012 and the second focus group held on Friday, 30 November 2012. Refer to Appendix 1 on page ninety three (93).

The focus group sessions were held during the normal Chamber committee meeting schedule. Chairpersons of both Chamber Committees were very generous and accommodating in allowing and agreeing to put two hours each aside to convene focus group sessions for the purpose of the study. Of significance to this study, is that both these Chamber committees formed a quorum, confirming the legitimacy in representation and ability for both the Chamber and the focus groups for the purpose of the study to make decisions. According to Neuman and Creswell, the two focus group sessions can also be confirmed to be representative samples for a population of all five Chambers at merSETA Creswell (2007, p.125) and Neuman (2011, p 219).

Minutes of the focus group sessions were electronically recorded by the professional Administration Support Services, contracted to record minutes of the Chamber committee meetings at merSETA, most important for the research is that minutes were in verbatim format to make it possible to categorise and code, re-package and re-allocate responses, according to the research questions and themes drawn during the group interviews and from the literature reviewed in chapter two (2).

The following emerging themes supported by the quoted comments made during the group interviews are underpinned by the responses received during evidence led in response to the research questions presented before focus group members.

4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans

SETA are required to develop and implement Sector Skills Plans in line with SETA performance indicators set out by the DHET within the skills development discourse in post 1994 South Africa.

Under factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, in line with one of the objectives of this study in describing the understanding and experiences of Chamber Committees of merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan, the following findings can be confirmed:

4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes

The theme about the significance of awareness and state of readiness of Chamber committee members about their responsibilities at merSETA within committees on which they serve, emerged from the literature review in Chapter two and merSETA Chamber committee annual self assessments by Audit, Risk and Control Company (AUCOR) –Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2 and during the two focus group sessions conducted separately for the purpose of this study.

In both separate focus group sessions held with the merSETA Chamber committees, the need and requirement by the DoL (and now DHET) to develop and implement Sector Skills plans was confirmed. Although the two Chambers sampled in this study were able to some extent to demonstrate awareness of the purpose of the Sector Skills Plan as required in the National Skills Development Strategy for the implementation of Skills Development Policy, there has been some unevenness and elements of uncertainty among the focus group with regard to the purpose and what constitute the Sector Skills Plan. In both focus group sessions responses indicated some doubt, demonstrated by comments such as . . . “Can I try” to some certainty like . . . “Sector Skills Plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”.

In further unpacking findings under this theme, it can be confirmed that in both focus group sessions, the business constituency in Chamber committees are more aware of the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP as compared to labour constituency, where in both focus group sessions only two members mainly appeared to be spokespersons, and were the ones talking and others demonstrating affirmation of responses made.

It can be confirmed that there is a relatively sufficient awareness among Chamber Committee members of the need and factors leading to the development and

implementation of the SSP, given the responses received irrespective of from whom – business or labour.

The responses when asked, “Why we need SSP”, included:

1st Focus Group: “Sector Skills plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”; “It provides the opportunity to look at the scarce and critical skills within the chamber and concentrating on that” (group interview, November 21, 2012) (Group F. F., 2012)

2nd Focus Group: “So we can plan properly”; “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained, so there is a lot of alignment.”

“I think the sector skills also gives direction on businesses going forward and Government”;

“It is focusing on specific shortage of skills and not just training for the sake of training”; “It also is a sort of a link between business and government in order to report back on what has been achieved in the form of specific focused training interventions”; “To keep up with the industry as it keeps on changing the requirement of skills from the industry - the technologies keep changing” (group interview, November 30, 2012) (Group S. F., 2012)

4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes

The results of average awareness with regard to factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP have further confirmed through the recent survey commissioned by merSETA to AURCO (Audit; Risk and Control Company), that there is an average state of readiness amongst both Chamber committees and focus groups sessions conducted.

These annual Chamber performance self assessments apply to governance structures of the SETA. They commence with the highest decision making structure of the SETA, the Governing Board, and all subcommittees of the Board including Chamber committees. These assessments are done towards the fulfillment of the National Skills Development Strategy's (NSDS) first objective relating to the need to establish credible

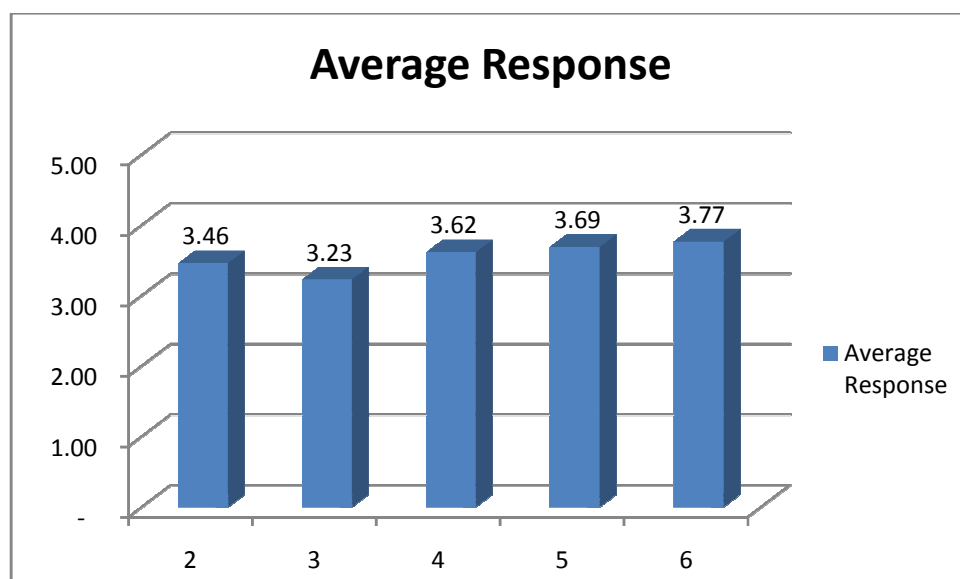
institutional mechanisms for skills planning. In this regard, each governance and operational structure of the SETA is assessed against its terms of reference (ToR) as defined in the SETA Constitution – refer to Table: 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2below confirm the average results when the two Chamber Committees were assessed in September and November 2012 respectively against Chamber Committee responsibilities, which in the main are about the development and implementation of the SSP.

Figure: 4.1 Chamber assessment results of the1st Focus Group

RESPONSIBILITIES

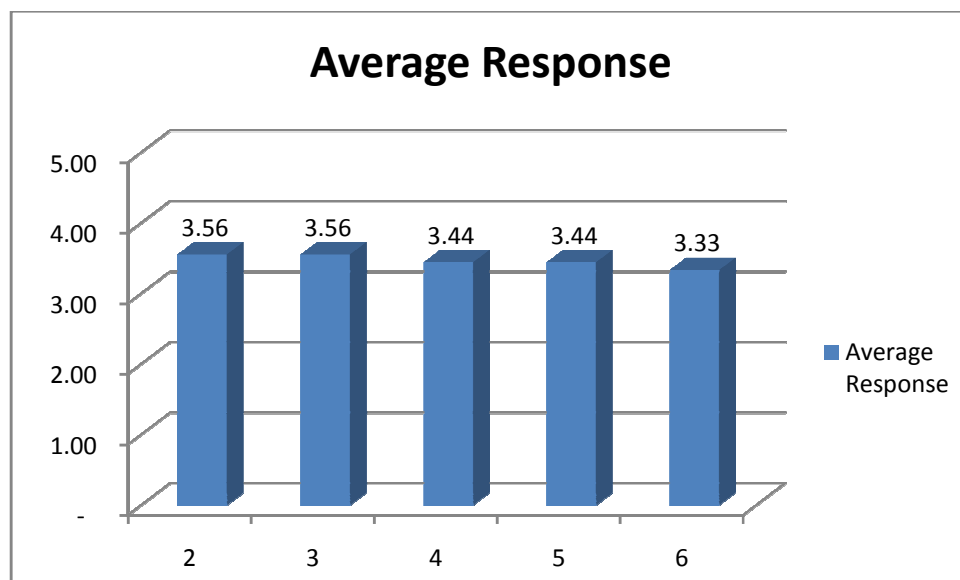
-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURCmerSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group(AURCO, 2012)

Figure: 4.2 Chamber assessment results of the 2nd Focus Group
RESPONSIBILITIES

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURCO merSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group,(AURCO, 2012)See Appendix 3 for a full AURCO 2012 Chamber Self Assessment report.

4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

This question in the main sought to establish as widely and in-depth as possible through a research enquiry, whether merSETA Chamber committees understood the SSP process and whether the SSP process has been effective through members sharing their experiences and any lessons learnt.

A mixed bag of findings can be confirmed depicting, among others, the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities and, familiarity with the SSP processing itself. Once again, labour and business perspectives came to the fore as in the previous focus research questions.

The following emerging themes are underpinned by quoted comments made during the group interviews. As earlier stated, the accompanying quoted comments are coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory.

4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity

The quoted comment the 1st Focus Group suggest a need for an industry specific SSP.

“Tyre industry is a much specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

The need for an industry specific SSP is also supported by the 2nd Focus group through the following quoted comments.

The national bargaining forum (NBF) policies refer to the **2nd Focus group** statutory bargaining forum, a body responsible for determining conditions of employment in the Auto sector. The accompanying quoted comment further confirms the need for the SSP that is industry specific.

“The governance and the new processes and all of that, I am saying this is going to come from government. The NBF, the new process policy and this will be done for labour and for employers as well”

The need for an industry specific SSP is further supported through the emphasis made on the direct influence by company human resources, as per the quoted comment received from the 2nd Focus group.

“There I am talking about the roles and responsibilities of shop stewards because even from an employer’s side some employers do not know that shop stewards can take, if you are full time shop stewards, how many days you can take leave or if you are a part time shop steward how many days you can go out of the office. It is little things that I am

talking about and I am saying from an employer's side that needs capacity building as well" (group interview, November 30, 2012).

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content

Emerging from both the group interviews conducted, and supported by the literature reviewed in chapter two, concerns were made with the 'make up' relating and inferring to the content of the SSP which seem to be numbers driven instead of being informed and underpinned by market analysis based on changing needs and preferences of the public and customers.

The following quotes and comments from the 1st Focus group confirm concerns received about the nature of the content of the SSP.

"We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based";

"We continued to develop the skills that we needed ten years ago when we were making 13 inch Tyres we would have been out of business".

The following quotes and comments from the 2nd Focus group further concur with regard to concerns on the current content of the SSP.

"There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork"

"What I sometimes battle with is there is so much data where it is kept. So for example the government has got a data base, labour has got a data base you know and how do you align all of those what is required to get an SSP for your company or your business. There are lots of data and lots of information".

"The SSP has been I would say to some extent - there is overwhelming amount of information"

4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations

Both 1st and 2nd Focus Group raised shortcomings with regard to the method employed for predicting industry skills and priority skills using the SSP. Shortcomings in this regard were also confirmed in chapter two during the literature review.

The following comments received from the 1st Focus group session demonstrate shortfalls in the SSP in trying to predict number of employees and new occupations the industry might need in the future.

“We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

The 2nd Focus group sessions, through the accompanying quotations, further confirms the inherent inability in the SSP to accurately assist the industry to plan and prepare for future skills needs.

“I’m still grappling with the process and, without saying the process is right or wrong, it is important that the SSP plan is not something that is fixed but continues to be updated and move with the development in the industry”.

“I think we are still grappling with the process and some of us are new as representatives”.

4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs

In the 2005 – 2007 Growth Laboratory study was commissioned by merSETA to analyse the WSPs and ATRs submitted by companies in merSETA. Although the main findings found that there has been a general decline in submissions in the period under review, particularly in the Metal, Motor and Plastics chambers due to the changes in format of the WSP templates, of interest to this study is the list of priority scarce and critical skills as listed in the SSPs during the period under review 2005 – 2007, identifying artisans and technicians as a great need in the sector but the information could not be drawn from the WSPs and ATRs. Sector training for all 3 years under review, has been in the occupation of plant and machine operators and assemblers contrary to training of trade artisans and technicians.

Table: 4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)

Occupational Category	Chamber Committee			
	1 st Focus Group		2 nd Focus Group	
	No.	%	No.	%
Legislators, Senior	73	1.38%	871	3.83%

Officials and Managers				
Professionals	194	3.68%	2617	11.49%
Technicians and Associated Professionals	844	15.99%	3256	14.30%
Clerks and Administrative Workers	257	4.87%	1449	6.36%
Sales and Service Workers	206	3.90%	556	2.44%
Agricultural and Fishery Workers	158	2.99%	180	0.79%
Crafts and Related Trades Workers	206	3.90%	2526	11.09%

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	3312	62.75%	9962	43.75%
Labourers and Related Workers	28	0.53%	1353	5.94%
Total	5278	100%	22770	100%

SOURCE: Adapted from merSETA^A(merSETA, Analysis of WSPs & ATRs, 2009, p. 38)

4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports

The nature of training and skills needs in the 1st and 2nd Focus group sectors presented during November 2012 appeared to be to be industry specific and often not informed or in keeping with the merSETA SSPs.

Company training reports in the 1st Focus group are predominantly short, non-technical and technical Skills Programmes training, compared to the training reports in the 2nd Focus group which are characterised by a dominance of non NQF Aligned Automotive Industry Certificate (AMIC) training programmes targeting employees in the hourly rate category in the industry which amounts to 28 332 people. There is also a mixture of NQF aligned skills programmes, full learnerships and apprentice programmes and any other training programmes targeting industry staff in salaried categories.

4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

In responding to the third research question, both focus groups confirmed that the current SSP processes being followed are not effective enough to address the intended objective in guiding the sector and its companies to address industry training needs in keeping with NSDS imperatives, as understood, and the groups earlier confirmed that the “SSP basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan” and “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained” as respectively confirmed in both 1st and 2nd Focus group.

4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP

The following responses were received when focus groups were asked how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP. As previously stated, where possible, alike and related comments are grouped together irrespective of the source, that is, either 1st or 2nd Focus group or both focus groups:

The need for an SSP that is industry specific is also confirmed in the literature review in chapter two. The suggestion for an industry specific SSP is once again supported by the quoted comments.

1st Focus Group

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the sector skills plan. It is not down to the finer detail”

2nd Focus Group

The Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP) is a joint initiative between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Auto sector. It used to be called Motor industry development programme (MIDP). This is an industry specific programme which of late is an integral component of DTI's Industry Policy Action Plan (IPAP), a framework seeking to guide the development of the country's industry policy.

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

Although the following quoted comments by the 2nd Focus group presented in response to the second research question seeking to solicit views on Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, these comments equally cater for the 1st Focus group as well.

4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP

1. Simplify SSP Process

It appears, based on this theme through the accompanying comment made by the 2nd Focus Group, that the SSP process is complex. This view was also confirmed under the theme looking at Chamber states of readiness in grappling with SSP processes. Based on the evidence led, it was confirmed Chamber committees are not ready or fully prepared to fulfill their role in the development and implementation of the SSP as described under Chamber committee terms of reference (ToR).

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

1.1 Focus On Right Stuff

The accompanying quoted comment also confirms the need not to cloud what goes into the SSP.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

1.2 Step By Step Approach

The following quoted comment suggests a simplified SSP process of Chamber committee members being taken through a ‘step by step’ approach.

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

1.3 Avoid Repetitions

“I agree with Doug avoid repetition because in most cases we are repeating things changing it there and there and making unnecessary improvements and claiming that we have improved this instead of making quality sort of things and moving forward”

4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building is identified by both focus groups when asked how the development and the implementation of the SSP can be improved in line with the third research question.

The following quoted comments received confirm the need for ongoing capacity building.

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us (labour)”

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to yourself so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes

Synergetic Process / Team Approach

It appeared, as confirmed by the quoted comments received from focus group interviews, that there is no synergy or team approach when addressing the SSP. There are too many related SSP processes concurrently taking place, often not known by Chamber committees, either at SETA level, or industry or company level.

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...”

“We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”.

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly

Based on the feedback received on how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP, it is evident that funding is a critical component in the successful implementation of the SSP.

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

4.4 Summary of findings

Based on the three research questions underpinning this study in seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the SETA model's SSP processes in addressing industry skills needs to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities in the post 1994 democratic South Africa, the following main results findings are summarised :

4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP

Awareness of the SSP processes but not on the same wavelength

The findings of the research here presented, have shown and confirmed the level of awareness although with some unevenness with regard to the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP, among the two Chambers Committees of the merSETA that participated in the focus group sessions. It is evident that respondents in the focus groups know the purpose being served by the SSP, hence the awareness. It can also be confirmed that focus group members are not on the same wavelength, given their diverse background, despite the common skills development purpose that brought them together. The awareness was further confirmed in the survey results when committee members were self assessed about the performance of the Chamber committees in particular the about the “Responsibilities” of the merSETA Chamber committees. These “Chamber Committee's Responsibilities” were in the

following five areas invariably concerning the development and implementation of the SSP:

- The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines
- The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector
- The Chamber monitors the development and implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector
- The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector
- The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations

The nature of the survey findings given in this regard, confirmed a quantitative average response, which is the reason why a quantitative research methodology is not an appropriate approach for data collection in this regard, due to inherent lack of depth often found in qualitative research approaches in unpacking underpinning factors.

4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

A finding of a mixture of both common and varying ranges of experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP in the quest to implement the skills development, were displayed and demonstrated when the two focus groups were asked to share their experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Both the 1st and the 2nd focus groups saw and confirmed the necessity to embark on the process such as the SSP since it assisted in planning to address industry training needs. However, irrespective of the length of service as a Chamber committee member, the two focus groups interviewed raised concerns about too much data and information to grapple with in the SSP processes so that in the process, everything becomes overwhelming and confusing.

4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

4.4.3. 1A Need for Alignment of the SSP related processes

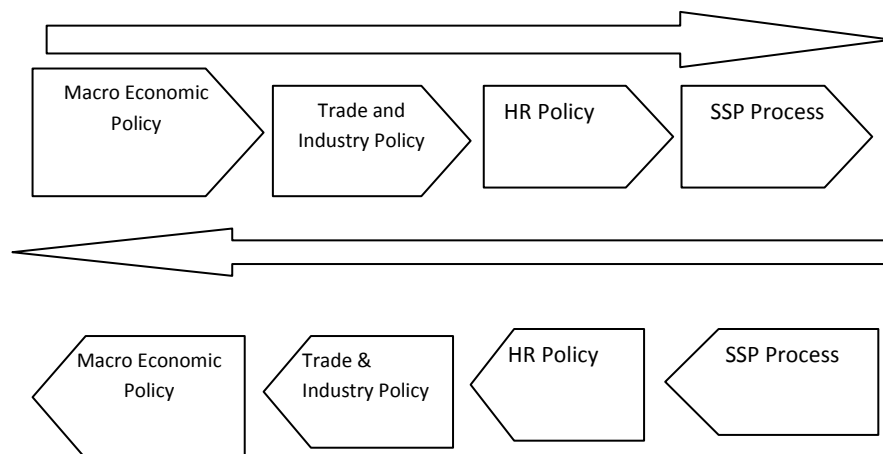
The two focus groups indicated in their recommendations a strong need for amending the format of the SSP in particular the approach, methodology and content - that the SSP should be simplified; be industry focused; specific and driven, compared to the current generic SSPs predominantly perceived to be externally driven, based on the government national imperatives - reference was made to the new 2012 SSP approach being piloted which is industry led.

Above all, a need to link and align the SSP processes to the industry policy - bargaining processes and imperatives; market needs and HR policies was identified as one of the critical factors to be considered in improving the development and implementation of the SSP to be effective in realising and achieving skills development objectives to do with addressing poverty; unemployment and inequalities in the post democratic South Africa.

The comment . . . “We often train not knowing there are vacancies”, is very central to this study. Linked to this comment, it was also reported that the SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there, and it represents Labour as well as Employers, however, not everyone was aware of the initiatives to address some of the critical problems identified under the findings.

Figure 4:3 seeks to demonstrate the need for the alignment raised in the findings.

Figure4:3: Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy



Source: Own compilation based on main findings (2012)

4.4.3.2 Capacity building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building on SSP processes and the NSDS was also identified as a critical component to enable Chamber committee members to be effective in adding value to the skills development processes. As it is, the SSP processes are viewed as complex, containing too much information and data loaded – hence capacity building is necessary to simplify the process to be user friendly so as to encourage and achieve maximum stakeholder participation.

4.4.3.3 SSP structure, content and approach

Two focus groups confirmed the complexities in the process and content matters pertaining to the development and implementation of SSP. This was also confirmed in the literature reviewed Marock et al (2007, p.61) that clear SSP implementation guidelines are needed.

4.4.3.4 Ongoing innovation research and development

It appeared initiatives from the SETA of establishing a sub committee to review and refine SSP processes are unknown by the majority of focus group members. This point was only submitted during the 2nd focus group session.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings of the study concerning the development and implementation of the SSP based on the research engagement with 1st and 2nd focus groups representing two of the merSETA Chamber committees were presented and explained in detail. Main issues emanating from these findings were summarised, the next chapter analyses the main findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and analyse the research findings presented in the preceding Chapter four in an attempt to find meaning in relation to the research questions posited for the purpose of this research study, whether merSETA sectors and companies have benefited and seen gains through the use of sector skills plans (SSPs) approved by the SETA at regular review intervals, in line with the NSDS imperatives striving for the realisation of the skills development objectives as envisaged and articulated in the skills development policy. In the process of the analysis in this chapter, findings will further be refined and categorised into related themes and be subjected to critical analysis in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two. The main objective in this regard is to search for a meaning and understanding of the research findings to unearth new perspectives that will assist in enhancing skills development initiatives towards addressing challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities facing post democratic South Africa.

The approach for data analysis and interpretation in this regard is in keeping with how data was collected; organised and presented in Chapter 4, wherein:

The first level of analysis focuses on the research question one -assess through conducting a group qualitative enquiry what has been the understanding and experiences of Chamber committees in so far as factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are concerned. The second level of analysis and interpretation looks at responses for research question two – analyses and interprets findings presented by Chambers committees based on their experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond. The third level of analysis is based on the research question three – discusses findings on suggestions presented on the way in which the development and

the implementation of the SSP can be improved from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA

The data analysis in this regard will further establish any data relations or patterns and emerging trends while interpretation will provide underlying meaning Neuman (2011, pp.459 – 460).

As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, data analysis in this Chapter is mainly premised on the three main research questions and is also organised in categories on the basis of themes drawn from the literature reviewed in Chapter two. This Chapter will in itself begin to pave the way in providing building blocks for the next chapter on conclusions and recommendations for the study and, further possible areas for future research and considerations.

5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP

This section analyses the responses received, based on the experiences by the Chamber committees with regard to the factors underpinning and necessitating the development and the implementation of the SSP - for the purpose of this section of the study, a distinction between the development and implementation factors is considered, to establish a deeper understanding between the two critical processes within the SSP. However, the study first sought to establish with merSETA participating Chamber committees during the focus group sessions whether members of the Chamber committees are aware of, and understand as participants and benefiteres in the skills development, the purpose of the SSP process.

5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory

As discussed above, given the level of awareness with regard to the purpose and factors leading to the development of Sector Skills Plans, the prevailing unevenness with regard to the understanding among focus group members can be attributed to various factors, which include, among others, exposure and participation in SETA and Chamber activities and the historically divergent views and perspectives between labour

and business within the industrial context of South Africa dating pre 1994 democratic South Africa to date, more than a decade since the dawn of the democratic South Africa.

The Chamber Committee members' profile earlier presented further confirm the labour and business split within merSETA Chamber committee composition given constituencies and occupational position. The split is characterised by occupational positions at work and can also be seen to be confirming that Chamber Committee members are often not on the same wavelength in many aspects of the skills development, including how they relate to the SSP process in general.

Although the business constituency in the Chamber Committees that participated in the focus group seemed very vocal and held the view that a common vision is necessary in understanding what the SSP is all about and how to work together towards attaining a common vision of the broad skills development objectives, the labour constituency was not as vocal in articulating their views in this regard. The labour constituency preferred not to elaborate, but instead to speak through one or two of their members and often suggested they are still learning and grappling with the process and they are aware of the need to keep pace from skills development point of view with the rapid technological changes.

The findings with regard to a labour bystander kind of positioning are also confirmed in the NEDLAC SETA Review report with regard to unions overall participation in SETA processes except where senior officials are involved NEDLAC (2007, pp,20 – 21); Grawitzky (2006, p.26).

A relatively combined average assessment response with regard to the awareness and understanding of the SSP process was confirmed more precisely through the Chamber annual assessment survey results. The survey was based on the self assessment study that was conducted with regard to Chamber committee members' performance against Chamber terms of reference which are all about the development and implementation of the SSP involving business and labour constituencies.

- **State of readiness**

Evidence led under this section can also be related to the Chamber committee state of readiness in relation to various aspects of the skills development trajectory – a point argued very sharp in the participatory literature. It is stated in the participatory literature that to achieve a meaningful and maximum participation from the committee, members should be ready to grapple with tasks presented to them Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 1 – 3) and Kraak (2008, p.15) and Ramphela (2012, p147).

- **Capacity building**

Linked to the state of readiness, capacity building needs identified, further confirm existing knowledge gaps among committee members. Capacities building needs identified are very central in this regard in raising the level of awareness and consciousness among committee members of their diverse backgrounds and how diversity can be used as strength to strive to forge a common vision, which is emphasised in the literature.

It can be concluded under this section that awareness and the state of readiness about factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are critical pillars for the maximum effective participation in the SSP processes. The analysis, based on the data established, identified existing gaps with regard to expectations and how skills development and its key instruments such as SSP processes, are understood. It is the view of this study that these matters warrant a purposefully designed ongoing capacity building and assessments related to interventions geared towards enhancing committee members understanding - to pave the way for building a common vision that is necessary for a meaningful and effective participation in the skills development key activities, including SSP processes being reviewed in this study from Chamber committees' perspective.

5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond

This section presents an analysis of the findings in this study about data provided with regard to experiences to date in the development and the implementation of the SSP

during and beyond the first and the second NSDS terms. The reason to expand there view period for investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development of SSP ,was purely to allow maximum feedback from participating focus group Chamber committee stakeholders. As previously described during Chapter four, a mixed bag of findings depicting, among others the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities, and familiarity with the SSP process in itself, was displayed.

Findings, in this regard, will be categorised into evidence leading with how the SSP is understood from the format and structure; content and the approach.

5.3.1 SSP Format

- Misalignment

Despite the average response confirming the relative understanding of the SSP, participants in the focus group seem to hold the view that the design of the SSP is too complex, and that it should be simplified. Alignment seem to be lacking about training required and what and who should be trained, the case in point in this regard is very evident with the disparities between the training identified in the workplace skills plan (WSP), and plant annual training reports (ATR) often not talking to the SSP or demonstrating any congruence. The misalignment was also evident with Table 4:3on page 58 depicting training often planned and actual training being implemented either at plant or sectoral level.

This anomaly and the misalignment here presented can also be attributed to what seems to be the disjuncture or poor coordination between what training is planned, implemented and the evaluation process necessary to adjust and align SSP development and implementation processes during annual review cycles. Findings further indicate that this trend goes as far as at the plant level where it was reported that HR and training division often do not operate in a synergetic way such that “we often training not knowing there are vacancies” - 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012.

- Training and employment trends

The findings in this regard are best described and confirmed with the often poor communication and misalignment between HR and Training divisions, the poor communication problem is central to the problem the study seeks to address, regarding the failures of the skills development in addressing problems of unemployment through current skills development initiatives. Literature reviewed in this regard, further confirmed that training is often not informed by internal skills development needs or company internal processes but by external factors Kraak (2008, p14) as with the recent 2003 Growth Development Summit (GDS) conference resolutions for training of the unemployed with the aim of finding employment, and the merSETA artisan accelerated training project (AATP) 2012 Tracer studies that reviewed the merSETA AATP. Findings in this regard highlighted that employment after training has been successfully completed, is not guaranteed, that employment is often slow and not immediate, so that even those employed range from fixed to non-fixed and short term contracts, often characterised by asymmetrical forms of employment. It is also not confirmed which sub-sectors seem to be targeting or retaining and absorbing learners after successfully completing training - (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012, pp. 71 - 75).

Suggestions to counter and discourage emerging trends of poor communication and misalignment within the skills development trajectory to do with training and placement are demonstrated in Figure: 4.3 in page 58 – titled “Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio-economic needs” - which calls for alignment across all key structures and institutions to do with policy formulation and implementation in the skills development arena.

Analysis of the evidence presented in this section considers that there is a need to develop synergy between various structures and substructures and components within and outside of the SSP, for the SSP and skills development initiatives to be effective and deliver on what it is intended for – to facilitate skills development that addresses post democratic problems of poverty; unemployment and inequality. The need for the

synergy here suggested, should be monitored and managed accordingly “so that there is a proper plan going forward” (Group interview, November 30, 2012).

5.3.2 SSP Content

- Lack of industry specifics

Evidence led through findings with regard to the training content reported in the merSETA SSP reports is viewed to be national and generic and often not effective and confirmed not to be industry specific with regard to training and skills needs reported in the 1st and 2nd Focus groups, two focus group sessions which are made up of predominantly multinational companies. Company training reports in the 1st focus group often presented during quarterly Chamber committee meetings provide evidence that confirms short, non-technical and technical training programmes as the preferred training in the industry. The nature of the training here referred to is of a skills programme nature and industry specific, contrary to the artisan development training promoted in the merSETA2012 SSP report (merSETA, Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016, 2012).

- Quantitative data problems

The findings led during focus group sessions in this section further raised concerns with regard to too much loaded quantitative data in the content of SSPs - “we tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based” - (1st focus group interview, 21 November 2012) from suspicious data often far from being accurate. This view is further supported in the literature reviewed Kraak (2008, p. 10) where it is argued that quantitative data provided by some of the SETAs could not be verified or validated, resulting in skewed results. Given evidence led with regard to the development and implementation of SSP, it is evident that SSP plans developed based on flawed statistics lacking credibility, are likely to lead to skewed and irregular results, as confirmed during the focus group sessions and through the literature reviewed. It is therefore evident that SSPs developed from such a background are not going to make any effect or impact on the intended purpose.

- **Limitations of National performance indicators and targets**

The concern raised about the lack of industry specifics in SSPs is further evident in Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) and in his review of the NSDS and its implementation instruments where the content of performance indicators and targets are nationally determined so that industry specifics are downplayed particularly on the implementation phase of the SSP Kraak (2008, p. 13)

Analysis of the evidence led in this regard point to the fact that for as long the SSPs fail to have credible inputs for formulating plans, and a tailored implementation strategy with clearly spelled out set industry performance indicators and targets, they are likely to be ineffective in both content and approach or design and implementation. It is also evident that SSPs are likely to fail and come short with review processes, since they are likely to have compromised monitoring and evaluation instruments due to a very weak and poorly designed implementation strategy.

5.3.3 SSP Approach

Findings under this section regarding the approach and the methodology prescribed by the DHET for guiding how the SSP process should be followed further continued to indicate shortcomings in various areas to do with the development and implementation of the SSP including the following accompanying areas.

- **Limitations in predicting priority skills needs in the sector**

Findings from the focus group sessions evidenced concerns with inherent limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, in particular, the most emphasised scarce and critical skills in the SSP approach.

Skills prediction in this regard relies heavily on quantitative and statistical data which often lack integrity, as earlier explained that “the plan is very number based”. It was also raised that due to rapid technological changes it becomes difficult to plan ahead since it is not easy to predict the effects of technology.

Additional evidence led in this regard from most merSETA SSPs reviewed during the first and second NSDS and beyond indicated serious misalignment, particularly with what the priorities are and what sectors and companies are actually training. Evidence in this regard include Table 4:3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006) about misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs.

Further evidence also viewed and interpreted shortcomings and contradictions within the SSPs in the merSETA SSP Report 2010/11 – 2015/16 which promotes and predicts the need for prioritizing artisanal training, which often involve long drawn out training programmes, when the actual training in the sector and from participating companies is training on short training programmes, and often intermediary skill levels characterised as ranging at low levels of NQF between NQF Level two to three, contrary to the predicted high level skills of NQF Level 4 and 5. Evidence led in the 1st Focus group company training report suggests priority training is informed by short term production requirements. Evidence led in this regard confirms an argument here being advanced that contrary to merSETA SSP suggested priority training, most preferred training and emerging trends in the industry is training of short term and lower NQF levels.

The merSETA commissioned a study (merSETA, Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR, 2009) to analyse and assess whether what is predicted and planned in the SSPs is what actually features in the WSPs and ATRs, to the contrary, the majority of the WSPs and ATRs analysed did not indicate any skills priority for the years in which the plans were drawn.

More evidence confirming the inability of the SSP approach as a predicting skills plan, is in the recent 2012 merSETA commissioned tracer study (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012) – findings in the report confirm the argument here being made in that despite the huge intake and success rate of artisans being developed, the majority of these qualified artisans do not automatically on completion of training, get

employed instead remain unemployed, despite calls made for artisan development including in the merSETA 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 SSP as earlier cited.

Literature reviewed in Chapter two , Archer (2007, p. 7) also corroborate limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, both in the free markets and planned economies due to too many and often self regulatory measures in the markets, and the effects of the dominating integrated global economic trajectory.

- Limitations with one size fit all approach in the SSP

Evidence was led in both the 1st and 2nd focus groups suggesting that the two sectors being represented New Tyre Manufacturing and the Auto Manufacturing are very specific and unique from other subsectors of the merSETA which include the Metal engineering, Motor retail and components manufacturers, and the Plastics manufacturing.

Given the national generic approach in the SSPs due to nationally defined SETA performance indicators, which inadvertently led to neglect of sectoral needs and activities, - Kraak (2008, p.16) and Grawitzky (2006, p.29) concerns confirming this state of affairs were raised in the 1st focus group session, 21 November 2012 that “merSETA SSPs do not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills and qualifications that are used often come from other sectors”.

- Lack of supporting industry policy

Findings led during focus group sessions further indicated the SSPs often do not focus on the right stuff such that “we do not achieve anything at the end” – (2nd focus group session, 30 November 2012). Further evidence in this regard indicated a need for the SSP approach to be policy led particularly from the resolutions of the AUTO National Bargaining Forum (NBF) and the Automotive Production Development Plan (APDP).

These findings are further confirmed by the literature reviewed in Chapter two Chang (2009, p83) and Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) argue that any initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably need strategies that are uniquely customised to meet sectoral conditions which should be supported by a particular type of policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others.

- **Lack of monitoring and evaluation guidelines**

Evidence led with regard to the approach of the SSP indicate that the approach is not focused, a point made earlier, although in this context, if there were monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines, focus group members have not made comments that suggest current SSP processes are “not focused”; “We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness” and comments suggesting the process should be simplified. This evidence is also confirmed in the literature reviewed in Chapter two. It is argued in (Marock, C et al , 2007, p. 61) that there is no clarity in the SSP on how to address issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas, as there are no policies and regulations related to SSP processes.

Analysis of the findings in the two focus groups and the literature reviewed could not find evidence in SSPs being able to predict or plan future industry skills requirements despite SSP being understood to be an instrument to assist in predicting and planning skills needs in the industry.

Analysis further confirmed shortcomings with the format and approach in the SSP often rendering the SSP tool to be ineffective in influencing training in the sector and guiding in planning and implementation of training at workplace level through WSPs.

There are suggestions though on how to improve weaknesses within the SSP for it to be effective in carrying its mandate within the skills development trajectory in South Africa. The section addressing the third research question dealing with strategies or

improvements for future consideration will reflect on suggestions presented on how to improve to be more effective.

5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP

It is not all doom and gloom about the SSP process despite evidence presented which lead to an analysis that suggest shortcomings in the format, content and approach in the SSP processes. There are positive elements and hope from the two focus group interviews held that SSP processes can be improved.

The interpretation of evidence led in this regard present some hope in the skills development and its implementation instruments which include the development and implementation of the SSP. Evidence led in this regard, is confirmed (Figure: 4.1 and Figure 4.2) by the average response results in the Chamber performance self assessment report with regard to Chamber terms of reference stipulated on the merSETA Constitution.

Based on the data submitted during the focus group interview sessions under this section and the literature reviewed in Chapter two, areas for improvement are analysed and interpreted under the following categories and concepts.

- **Alignment of SSP processes**
 - Policy consideration matters
- **Funding**
 - Use of resources sparingly
- **SSP structure, content and approach**
 - Monitoring and evaluation tools -current tools monitor and manage the process without evaluation and feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact, and at the same time, identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.
- **Capacity building**
 - State of readiness for preparing participating stakeholders and ensuring maximum participation and taking ownership of the SSP process.
 - Chamber performance self assessment report

- **Ongoing innovation research and development**
 - A need for ongoing innovation, research and development on matters pertaining to the SSP was identified.
 - A sub-committee to review and refine SSP processes

5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes

Analysis based on evidence led under a need identified for alignment of the process highlights a host of factors that need to be considered. However, what is important is that the SSP process is not an end in itself but a means to an end, however, informed by various processes which are never standalones but dependable processes on other factors, discussed and clarified later in this section. The process is very iterative in nature and not organised in a particularly systematic and dogmatic order.

The earlier cited **Figure: 4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic needs** on page 58, attempts to demonstrate and explain in theoretical terms, key features for consideration in the SSP alignment process as presented in Chapter four.

- **Team approach and strengthening of inter-intra SETA related institutional arrangements**

Data led under Alignment of SSP related processes included a need to adopt an inclusive - team approach where at company level and at sectoral level all relevant stakeholders from various diverse businesses, labour, youth sector and communities at large – rural and urban, divisions and departments, and fraternal institutions are roped together. The analysis and interpretation of data collected also suggest the SSP approach has been more top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes – Cloete and Wissink (2002, p.174). This analysis is supported by the following quotations earlier cited under the Chapter on the findings:

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of

how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)” ; “Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...” ; “We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”;

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”;

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

The need for the development of effective SETA institutional arrangements is further emphasised in various SETA review studies including (Marock, C et al , 2008, p. 33).

- Industry Policy

The analysis and interpretation of the evidence led in this regard indicate a need for SSP reports that are focused in nature and informed and underpinned by a clear policy

with specific and deliberate intentions that favour the economic growth and development of the sector. The understanding of the SSP processes by focus group members is that it is a tool that assists in planning for the sectoral and company training needs in support of the industry growth and development strategies and programmes from the bargaining forums, industry policy and broad macro and integrated global economic imperatives.

Based on the evidence led in the previous Chapters, most SSPs were not seen as relevant or useful in guiding in training at all levels, and as such did not appeal to the industry because they lacked clear relevant industry policy pronouncements Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320); Chang (2009, p.83) Hence the misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs earlier reported under the Chapter on the presentation of the findings.

The evidence here being analysed and interpreted is supported by the following quotations:

“Tyre industry is a very specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

The need for the alignment of the SSP processes is supported in the literature reviewed in Chapter two by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 32) and Chang (2009, p.83) where they caution about the ineffectiveness of the “one size fit all SSP” not linked to any industry policy.

5.4.2 Funding

The use of resources was submitted as one of the suggested points for improving the development and implementation of the SSPs. Funding remains an important resource for the success of any developmental project. Funding is necessary for both the research and development of the SSP and also for projects designed in the implementation of the SSP.

The aforementioned interpretation and the analysis here submitted is in relation to the evidence here quoted:

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

Literature reviewed regarding broad SETA review studies and reviews of the NSDS strategies also cautioned about the significance of proper use of funds in a very accountable manner for the credibility and integrity for SETAs to win support and buy in from the public Kraak (2008, p14) Kraak (2008,p.14); Marock et al (2007, pp.19 – 20) and Marock (2008,pp. 18 – 19).

5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach

The interpretation and analysis of evidence led in this section suggest changes in the structure, content and approach of the SSP. Concerns raised are analysed and interpreted to suggest a rethink and a new approach that is Chamber led and simplified for maximum participation by Chamber members.

Apart from previously suggested limitations and how SSP should be improved, the following quotations confirm evidence here being described and explained as some of the new suggested strategies to be considered in taking the SSP process forward to

improve the implementation of the skills development. These new strategies include the following quotes presented during Chapter four:

“We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based”; “We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

Further quotes include:

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

Source: 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012

The analysis and the interpretation of the evidence led by the 2nd focus group suggest a need for monitoring and evaluation tools - current tools only monitor the implementation without evaluating and providing feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact and at the same identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.

- **A rethink in the SSP processes**

The literature reviewed in Chapter two argues for a rethink in the current SSP processes if skills development initiatives are ever to address socio economic challenges characterised by poverty, unemployment and inequality. Calls for the new strategies suggest a need for a wider skills approach which does not solely link or tie all endeavours to address unemployment to enterprise training, underpinned by the industry demand led approach embraced in the SSP processes. These emerging views include models such as 'organisational innovation' Payne (2009) quoted in Archer (2007, p.7 – 17) which suggest in the main, based on international trends, that skills forecasting is subject to unknown margins of error, including the complex, and are not amenable to generalisation of the relationship between technological change and the associated human capital inputs, and as such, skills forecasting is no longer practiced widely internationally; Strategies put emphasis on the "youth employment strategies" DBSA (2011, pp. 1 - 7) where it also suggested that wider skills development approaches are necessary to equip the current 72% of unemployment youth with skills to enter the world of work as the current growth path is not labour - absorbing and the current education system has failed. The argument here being advanced, also support the need for programmes and institutions to create pathways for new labour market entrants into the world of work through the integration of vocational and academic subjects in schools likely to bring the needs of employers and schooling together in a new way and giving renewed impetus to lifelong learning Adam (2012, p.4)

New vocationalism

Evidence led through workplace training reports, portray training trends, depicted from participating companies in the focus group, and which conclude that training is on the decline and conducted on voluntary basis and focusing mostly on short term rather than long term training, further strengthens calls for a wider skills approach which involves integrated vocational and academic subjects in schools which are, in the main, based on the assumption that education hinges primarily on bringing all of the population to minimal levels of literacy because education and training appear to minimize the

adverse consequences of technological change for workers, and workers with such training and education adapt to change better and faster – Archer (2007, p.16)

The call for the new vocationalism is also supported by COSATU and NUMSA - NUMSA (201, p. 16) in the debate advanced against wage subsidies, that young people with or without National Senior certificate should first gain skills prior to entering the labour market.

The argument by COSATU and NUMSA is also informed by the declining enterprise training where job retention is sustained only when there are incentives or subsidies. It is therefore suggested SSPs should expand and begin to incorporate the notion of new vocationalism, that government, public institutions, the private sector and civil society should be leveraging off each other DBSA (2011 p7).

This study notes the views for new vocationalism do not necessarily oppose enterprising based training upon which the current skills development model is premised, but further suggest alternative considerations and strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

5.4.4 Capacity building

The analysis and the interpretation of evidence led with regard to a need for capacity building as a strategy for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP confirms how important it is to ensure participants are on board and understand the kind of inputs required of them make meaningful contributions to the SSP processes. The need for capacity building by stakeholders in itself is a positive indication in support of skills development initiatives and willingness to know about the skills development processes to meaningfully participate and take ownership in skills development activities including SSP processes.

Although labour also supported a need for capacity building, they were however not as certain or upfront in articulating their capacity building needs but wanted to be afforded time to consult on the matter. This simply confirms the low ranking and quality of labour

representation within SETA processes, given the knowledge, experience and authority required for decision making and maximum participation.

The following quotations from the focus groups interviewed confirm the analysis here submitted:

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us - labour”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the APDP. Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to you so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

- Chamber self assessment results

The average response results on Chamber performance assessments against chamber terms of reference for both 1st and 2nd Focus group, suggest the state of readiness for Chambers Committees in grappling with Chamber activities as per the Chamber terms of reference. The results further confirm training intervention based on the scoring rates – refer to both Figures: 4.1 and 4.2 on page 50 and 51 respectively.

The Participatory, governance and SETA review studies in chapter two also confirm the analysis and the interpretation of the evidence suggested for capacity building, in particular the significance of the state of readiness of participating Chamber committee representatives and acknowledgment of poor quality inputs due to a lack of the required level of experience and knowledge Marock et al (2007 p22) and NEDLAC (2007 pp20-21).

5.5 Conclusion

The above analysis of data collected has highlighted several weaknesses in the processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSP from the Chamber committee's perspective and the literature review in chapter two. These weaknesses range from ineffective coordination was resulting from top down SSP processes characterised by poor communication, where various structures and departments within and outside the SETA do not talk to each other; the need for capacity building for meaningful contribution by Chamber committee members in the SSP processes. Although there is a realisation that the labour and business constituencies need to work together in unison, this challenge is not practical as yet. The SSP process from the data collected and analysed, is a very technical research intensive process. However, despite challenges out there in the development and implementation of SSP, what is encouraging is that Chamber committee members are aware of the need for SSP including solutions and possible enablers on how to improve the approach to the development and implementation of the SSP. The most interesting part in this study is the similar themes and views established from the empirical primary data collected and the secondary data from the literature review in chapter two. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings, the institutional arrangements within and outside of merSETA and its Chamber committees, should be prioritised for the realignment and development of the effective skills development institutions, in order to address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides conclusions regarding the findings of the study in respect to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA by Chamber committees for planning and implementing skills development in the sector, as well as providing recommendations aimed at addressing the problem identified by the study and possible future areas for further improvement and research.

The purpose of the study was to conduct an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber committees to assess the effectiveness of the SSPs in responding to industry needs to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities by asking the following research questions:

- What are the factors leading to the development and implementation of SSPs?
- What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the SSP?
- How can the development and implementation of the SSP be improved?

Two separate group interviews were conducted with two of the five Chambers committees. The primary and secondary data analysis on skills development initiatives were respectively supplemented with extensive useful documentary analysis and a literature review on the skills development landscape and merSETA and its Chamber activities covering SSP processes for the period NSDS I; II and beyond.

6.2 Conclusions

The analysis conducted in Chapter five has revealed and confirmed both constraints and possible enablers to be considered in the development and implementation of SSPs. Moving from this premise, the study drew the following conclusions with regard to the results findings of the study.

Based on the evidence led for the period being reviewed, the study noted that from participatory and governance perspective, merSETA Chamber committees have been exposed and actively involved in the SSP processes. Despite changes in the representation in Chamber committee composition, these findings were also confirmed by the average response results for the Chamber performance self assessments against Chamber committee terms of reference confirming merSETA Chamber committees' extent of involvement in the development and implementation of SSPs - (AURCO, 2012). The study further noted that business and labour constituencies despite knowing what purpose the SSP serves, and being committed to work together, both constituencies are not on the same wavelength with how the SSP should unfold. Although the business constituency seems to know what to expect from the SSP process, labour could not be upfront about how the SSP process should unfold. The weakness in this regard is viewed to be one of the major constraints inhibiting the much needed full participation and good governance in Chamber Committees for the maximum effective participation in the skills development processes in order to realise the desired results in the skills development policy as expresses and articulated in the NSDS.

The analysis with regard to the Chamber committees' experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, appeared to suggest the SSP approach has been top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Linked to an analysis of a top down approach, there seems to be misalignment with regard to various SETA structures involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs which suggest that the SSP processes should be streamlined and simplified even though the processes are iterative.

Flowing from the misalignment of various structures involved in the development and implementation of SSPs, it is also noted that although there is training in various SETA approved programmes, however, the training being conducted is informed by companies' immediate production needs with less effect and impact in addressing broad

skills development national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS because of the inherently and invariably existing misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs, often resulting with many of the unemployed learners and workers remaining unemployed after training.

Further trends emerging from the data that was analysed mentioned that there was too much information and data to work with during the development of the SSP so that participants end up being lost in the process. Apart from the overwhelming data to deal with, the quality of the quantitative data and statistics serving as critical input in the development of SSPs, often could not be verified and/or validated, resulting in skewed decisions and results.

On the implementation of the SSPs, data analysed also informed about poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments often monitoring or confirming outputs implemented without evaluating the impact and desired outcomes. These inefficiencies and ineffectiveness were also confirmed in the study with regard to the designed SETA overall performance measurement tool by the DHET. The nationally-defined performance indicators often neglect specific sectoral trends.

Resulting from the poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments being employed, the study noted the existence of gaps in the feedback necessary for continuous improvement in the development and implementation of SSPs and skills development activities in general.

The analysis of data with regard to how the development and implementation of SSPs can be improved, deliberations in this regard were extensively covered during the preceding section in the concluding remarks with regard to the Chamber committee's experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP.

Without repeating what has already been addressed, or deliberating on the recommendations, the need for capacity building was viewed to be necessary for empowering participants through enhancing their knowledge about SSP processes to achieve maximum participation in the skills development processes.

Furthermore, evidence suggest the industry policy to be a significant integral component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans depend on other plans within and outside of the sector if these are to make an impact on the skills development mandate and also address the current misalignment challenges earlier noted.

Linked to the significance of industry policy, there are also emerging trends on how to improve the current SSP approach; in this regard calls are being made for a rethink on strategies for human development given shortcomings on the current strategies and institutions. These calls suggest, among others, a move away from mainly predictions of scarce and critical skills for enterprise development and workplace training, and mention that whilst industry demand led training is necessary to guide vocational training, other strategies should be considered, such as organisational innovation, new vocationalism and the development and facilitation of programmes and institutions to create a pathway aiming at preparing and equipping youth during transition from school to the world of work, either as employees or self employed persons.

This study further noted the emerging calls for consideration of alternative strategies which include reviewed forms of vocational education and training and, ongoing innovation research and development seeking to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In conclusion, it can be argued by the study that, although the current initiatives for skills development are a necessary component for the socio - economic development geared towards human development for addressing problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the post democratic South Africa, a lot still needs to be done in improving the effectiveness of the skills development institutions and its key planning instruments; implementation and evaluation guidelines for continuously reviewing and aligning and adjusting the development and implementation of SSPs to enhance the delivery of skills development.

6.3 Recommendations

In light of the research findings in Chapter four; analysis and interpretation of the findings in Chapter five and conclusions in the current Chapter six, the study begins to provide insight from Chamber committee participants' perspectives into both opportunities and constraints with regard to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA in pursuit of the skills development objectives, as articulated in the NSDS.

The critical challenges emerging from the study relate to the following areas which call for improvements in SETA institutional arrangement:

- The desired state of readiness and common vision among participants in addressing SSP processes;
- the need for capacity building for participants to keep up with various processes pertaining to the development and implementation of SSPs and;
- capacity for effective applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments to ensure continuous feedback in assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise skills development objectives.
- On-going and continuous innovation, research and development programmes in streamlining education and VET related plans to explore emerging trends geared towards the provision of effective education and training to support and enhance skills development initiatives.

These recommendations, based on the findings of the study, are submitted for the consideration by both stakeholders and constituencies involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and in pursuit of the skills development for addressing

problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality central to inhibiting human and socio-economic development.

Given the dynamic nature of various structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs, the study sees inclusivity as a necessary approach to be embraced by all related institutions participating in the skills development processes because there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up but to strive for enhanced and effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Capacity building on SSP processes and NSDS among participating stakeholders and constituencies is necessary for maximum effective and meaningful participation in skills development processes.

Linked to the complex nature of the SSP processes as perceived by participating stakeholders from Chamber committees, and the fact that participating industry stakeholders deployed in SETA structures are from diverse backgrounds and occupy various ranks within their constituencies, the SETA personnel need to be sensitive about capacity building needs by providing the necessary assistance and guidance required for participants to take ownership of the skills development process.

To take ownership of the skills development processes by participating stakeholder constituencies, knowledge and practical applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments is necessary for assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and, for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise the objectives set.

It is also necessary to establish effective monitoring and evaluation instruments for continuous feedback that can assist in simplifying the SSP processes through the provision of guidelines and clarification on what is to be monitored and evaluated which also draws a distinction between outputs and outcomes for all participating stakeholders constituencies to be able to conduct self monitoring and evaluation of various SETA processes from the participant perspective and be able to share their experiences and

findings within their constituencies and at the relevant SETA decision making structures and committees.

As most of the in-puts necessary for the development and implementation of SSPs, including statistics and quantitative data, which is invariably information received from the industry, it is important for participating stakeholders and constituencies to be sensitised about the correctness and the significance of keeping and supplying the office with proper and updated records to achieve the data integrity necessary for effective and legitimate SSP reports.

Currently nationally-defined performance indicators and targets by the DHET to measure SETA performance need to be reconstructed to include a component reflecting industry sectoral specific performance to provide feedback relevant to sectoral needs and activities during the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Alignment of the SSP processes to the industry policy is a significant component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans should first be industry specific, although these are also dependent on other plans within and outside of the sector given the nature of today's global continental, regional and local integrated economies – as in figure 4.3 on page 62.

A need for on-going inclusive and empowering innovation research and development is also recommended for keeping the SSP relevant and effective all the time.

6.4 Future research

Given the purpose of the study and the approach followed in exploring international, continental, regional and local trends in the skills development arena, there are various emerging trends and shortcomings which are identified from time to time, given the dynamic nature of the vocational education training.

This study further recommends to the Chamber committees at merSETA, a research on a results-based monitoring and evaluation instrument that will empower and enable Chamber committees to be able to take charge of the SSP processes through

generating the required relevant constant feedback necessary to align and update their SSPs to remain effective and relevant sector skills planning instruments.

Last but not least, the need for inclusive innovation, research and development in the field of education and training cannot be emphasised more, given the dynamic nature of the skills development trajectory. Emerging trends around the new view on vocationalism necessitate a need to keep on exploring alternative strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives employed in the skills development arena to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities.

REFERENCES

- South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit. (2004). *Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ):*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Adam, A. (2012). *The role of skills development in overcoming social disadvantage*. Bonn: EFA Global Monitoring report.
- Akoojee,S; Gewer,A and McGrath,S. (2005). *Vocational Education and Training in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Archer, S. (2010). *Key Issues in the Assessment of SETA Performance in South Africa's National Skills Development Strategy*. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.
- Archer, S. (2007). *The international literature on skills training* . Cape Town : DPRU, UCT.
- Archers, S. (2010). *SETA Performance* . Cape Town: SULDRU,UCT.
- AURCO. (2012). *merSETA Chamber Self Assessment Against Terms of Reference*. Johannesburg: AURCO.
- Badenhorst, C. (2007). *Research Writing: Breaking the Barriers*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Baker, F. (2008). *The South African Labour Market*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Biggam, J. (2011). *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A step-by-step handbook* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Open University Press.
- Bird, A. (2012). *The articulation challenge*. unpublished .
- Bogdan, B and Bilken,S,K. (2003). *Qualitative Research for Education : An introduction to Theory and Methods.4th ed*. Boston: Allyn &Bacon/Pearson Education Group.
- Boslaugh, S. (2007). *Secondary Data Sources for Public Health*. St Louis: Washington University, .
- Chang, H.-J. (2009). *Industrial Policy : Can We Go Beyond and Unproductive Confrontation?* Seoul, South Korea: ABCDE (Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics).
- Cloete, F & Wissink, H . (2002). *Improving Public Policy* . Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Commission, R. o. (2012). *RSA National Development Plan (NDP)*. Pretoria : Government Printers .

- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2011). *Business Research Methods* (11th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- DBSA. (2011). *Youth Employment Strategies for South Africa*. Johannesburg : Development Planning Division DBSA .
- DHET. (2012). *Green Paper*. Pretoria : Government Publishers .
- DHET. (2009). *HRD-SA*. Pretoria : Government Printers .
- DoL, S. A. (2004). Sector Skills Plan - SSP Guide . *SA Department of Labour DoL and Skills Development Planning Unit - SDPLU Sector Skills Plan Guide* . Pretoria , Republic of South Africa : Government Printers .
- Elliot, N & Higgins,A. (2012). *Grounded theory review - Vol. II, Issue 2*. Dublin: Trinity College.
- Gilliam, B. (2005). *Case Study Research Methods* . London: Paston Press .
- Golafshani. (2003, December 4). Understanding Reliability and validity in Qualitative Research . *The qualitative report volume 8 number 4* , pp. 397 -607.
- Government Gazette, N. (2006, August 11). merSETA Constitution. *The merSETA Constitution* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: Government Gazette.
- Grawitzky, R. (2006). *SETAs - a vehicle for the skills revolution*. Cape Town: DPRU - UCT.
- Grooves. (1998). *Cited in Neuma 2011, Social Research Methods* . Boston: Pearson .
- Group, F. F. (2012, November 21). The role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan at merSETA. (T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Group, S. F. (2012 , November 30). The Role Chamber Committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan . (H. M.-T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Hartley, J. (2004). *Case Study Research*. In Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*. London : Sage .
- Henning, van Rensburg and Smit. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Henning,E; Van Rensburg,W and Smit, B. (2004). *Find your way in Qualitative Research* . Pretoria: Van Schaik .
- Karl, M. (2000). *Monitoring & Evaluating Stakeholder Participation in Development Projects* . Sustainable Development (SD) United Nations .

- Kraak, A. (2008). A Critical Review of the National Skills Development Strategy in South Africa . *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* Vol.60,No.1 , 1 - 18.
- Kraak, A. E. (2009). *Sectors & Skills the need for Policy Alignment* . Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Kusek,J and Rist,R . (2004). *Ten Steps to a Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* . Washington: World Bank .
- Labour, R. D. (1998). Skills Development Act, 1998. *Department of Labour Skills Development Act - SDA* . Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, Republic of South Africa: Government Printers.
- Leurner, J. (2010, November 11). A Change in Focus to Stakeholder Engagement as the King III Code is Described as a Future Corporate Governance . *University of Pretoria , Masters Dissertation* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: University of Pretoria.
- Lolwana, P. (2012). *Strenthening the skills development system in the post-school system*. unpublished .
- Lundall, P. (2003). *Sector Education Training Authorities and the Delivery of Training : Preliminary Remarks on the New Skills Dispention in South Africa*. Cape Town : DPRU, University of Cape Town (UCT).
- Lynch, L. (2007). The Adoption and Diffusion of Organisational Innovation : evidence for the US economy. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 2819* .
- Marock, C; Harrison-Train, C; Soobrayan,B; and Gunthorpe,J (2007). *SETA Review* . Cape Town : Singizi Cosulting, DPRU and DfID .
- Marock, C. (2008). *SETA Review* . Cape Town: DPRU, UCT .
- Marshall, C and Rossman,GB . (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research, 2nd ed*. CA: sAGE .
- Mbeki, M. (2009). *Architects of Poverty*. Johannesburg: Picardo Africa.
- merSETA. (2012). *AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study* . Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR*. Johannesburg: merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of WSPs & ATRs*. Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2012). *Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016*. Johannesburg : merSETA .
- Mhone, G. (2000). *Enclavity and Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity in Southern African Economies*. Harare: ILO/SMART.
- Miles and Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative Data* . California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Mills, G. (2012). *Why Africa is Poor* . Pietermaritzburg: Penguin Books .
- NEDLAC. (2007). *SETA Performance and Functioning*. Johannesburg: NEDLAC.

Neuman, W. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

NUMSA. (2012, July). NUMSA News . *NUMSA News No. 2* , p. 5.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Education Research Methods 3rd ed* . Thousand Oaks: CA : Sage .

Payne, J. (2009). Divergent Skills Policy Trajectories in England and Scotland after Leitch,. *Policy Studies* 30, , 473 - 494.

Porter, M. (1980). *Competitive Strategy*. New York: The Free Press.

Pozzoni,B and Kumar, N. (2005). *A Review of the Literature on Participatory Approaches to Local Development for an Evaluation of the Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community - Based and Driven Approach Development Approaches* . Washington, DC : The World Bank Operation Evaluation Department - OED .

Ramphela, M. (2012). *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters* . Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research 2nd Edn*. Oxford: Blackwell.

RSA-DHET. (2012). *Green Paper for Post - School Education and Training*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

RSA-DHET. (2009). *Human Resource Development for South Africa - HRD SA 2010 - 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Sako, S. (2006). *Challenges facing African Regional Economic Communities in Capacity Building*. Harare : The African Capacity Building Foundation Occasional Paper No. 5.

Strauss, A and Carbin,J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. . London : Sage .

Terreblanche, S. (2012). *Lost in Transformation* . Sandton : KMM Review.

Terreblanche,M and Durrheim,K . (2002). *Socail Construction Methods, In M,Terreblanche & K, Durrheim Resaerch in Practice*. Cape Town: Cape Town Union Press .

Twineyo-Kamugisha, E. (2012). *Why Africa Fails*. Paarl: Paarl Media Paarl.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods*. London : SAGE .

Zide, G. (2010). *Higher Education and Training Transformation Process*. Va der Bijl Park: Unpublished inagural lecture at Vaal Unversity of Technology.

APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

A review of the participation of merSETA Chamber Committees in the development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP)

Focus Group interview / discussion guide

1. Why you need a Sector Skills Plan (SSP)? (awareness)
 - purpose
 - What are factors underpinning/influencing the development and implementation of the SSP
 - what is the process / methodology to be followed
 - What are targets?
 - Time frames
 - Who is involved?
2. What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan(s) (SSP)? (reflections)
 - is the purpose being achieved
 - is the process / methodology
 - Understood/
 - Doable/workable or not?
3. How can the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) be improved? (recommendations for consideration)
 - Any suggested improvements
 - process / methodology
 - Any prior training needed
 - Any other issues to be considered

**THE ROLE OF CHAMBER COMMITTEES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTOR SKILLS PLAN AT merSETA**

BY

HOSEA MATSUOE MORAPEDI

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, Law and Commerce at the University of Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

February 2013

ABSTRACT

The Skills Development Act of 1998 was introduced to usher in the new skills development trajectory in the post 1994 SA. SETAs, intermediary bodies, were established to oversee processes for the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, an important instrument for industry skills planning through the mobilisation of industry stakeholder sub-sectoral – Chamber committees. These interventions were meant, through SSP processes tailored to respond to industry skills shortages, to contribute in increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, create economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of SSPs from the merSETA Chamber Committee perspective. The analysis of the findings points at the existence of complexities and gaps in respect to the planning, implementation and the evaluation of the SSP. The analysis further suggests a need for a revised and a much more industry specific and policy aligned SSP process, with clearly defined outcomes and appropriately designed implementation, monitoring and evaluation tools for maximum and inclusive participation for enhancing ownership, and buy-in into the process by the participating industry stakeholders.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AATP	Accelerated Artisan Training Programme
ATR	Annual Training Report
APDP	Automotive Production and Development Program
AMIC	Automotive Industry Certificate
AU	African Union
AURCO	Audit, Risk and Control Company
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ESSA	Employment Services of South Africa
GDS	Growth Development Summit
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HR	Human Resource
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
IPAP	Industry Policy Action Plan
NBF	National Bargaining Forum
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NOPF	National Occupational Pathways Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate

NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA
MIDP	Motor industry development programme
PUI	Poverty Unemployment and Inequality
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade Occupations
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern Africa Development Council
SDPU	Skills Development Planning Unit
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
ToR	Terms of Reference
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VUT	Vaal University of Technology
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted for the requirement of the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Public and Development Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Hosea Matsue Morapedi

28 February 2013

DEDICATION

I first and foremost dedicate this project to the Almighty for His blessings and giving me the strength for the trials and tribulations gone through; my Ancestors and parents - DiPhuthi for instilling self belief in me from childhood; my family, my wife Nomsa; my children Nonhlanhla, Tsholofelo, Lesedi and Phuthi, for all the love and support I needed most and, to my brother-in-law, Professor Maake, for the unwavering support throughout my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely acknowledge the invaluable support and guidance received from my supervisor, Mr. Tshotse Motswaledi, throughout the research process.

Many thanks to the focus group members for your valuable time and willingness in providing valuable data for the purpose of the research study.

Thanks to you too, my friends at merSETA, Professor Akoojee, Nkrumah, Lulamile and Pinki, for your relentless encouragement and support.

Contents

ABSTRACT.....	i
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	ii
DECLARATION	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
List of Figures	xi
1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	xi
List of Tables.....	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	3
1.3 Problem Statement.....	5
1.4 Knowledge gap.....	5
1.5 Purpose Statement	6
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Conceptual framework	6
1.8 Structure of the research report.....	10
CHAPTER 2	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Definitions of concepts	13
2.2.2The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).....	13
2.2.3Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process	13
2.2.4 Chamber Committees	15
2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment	16
2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’	18

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas	18
2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness	19
2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa	20
2.8 Conclusion	23
CHAPTER 3	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Research methodology	25
3.3 Research design	26
3.4 Sampling	27
3.5 Primary data collection	28
3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview	28
3.6 Secondary data	29
3.7 Data presentation	29
3.8 Data analysis and interpretation	30
3.9 Validity and Reliability	31
3.10 Significance of the Study	31
3.11 Ethical Considerations	32
3.12 Limitations of Study	32
3.13 Conclusion	33
CHAPTER 4	35
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members	37
4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses	38
4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans	39
4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes	40
4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes	41
4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	44
4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity	44

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content	46
4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations	47
4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs	48
4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports.....	50
4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	51
4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP	51
4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP	52
4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes.....	53
4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes	54
4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly.....	55
4.4 Summary of findings	55
4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP	55
4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs	56
4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?	57
4.5 Conclusion	59
CHAPTER 5	60
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP	61
5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory	61
5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond	63
5.3.1 SSP Format	64
5.3.2 SSP Content.....	66
5.3.3 SSP Approach	67
5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP	71
5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes	72
5.4.2 Funding.....	75
5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach	75
5.4.4 Capacity building.....	78

5.5 Conclusion.....	80
CHAPTER 6	81
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	81
6.1 Introduction	81
6.2 Conclusions	81
6.3 Recommendations	85
6.4 Future research	87
REFERENCES	89
APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	93

List of Figures

1.1.1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System	8
4.1 Chamber assessments results of the 1 st Focus Group	42
4.2 Chamber assessments results of the 2 nd Focus Group	43
4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy	58

List of Tables

2.1merSETAConstitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference	16
4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group.....	37
4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group	38
4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)	48

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Lessons drawn from the international arena, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Germany, inform the establishment of intermediary bodies within the broad framework of vocational education and training systems to influence and facilitate how education and skills training is delivered. The delivery of skills development through the intermediary bodies has often been in response to identified industry skills needs so as to improve productivity to stimulate the economy and increase employment opportunities. However, the unemployment sector has continued to grow while the country is still in search of the correct formula to respond to industry skills needs.

Experiences on the continent suggest that, since after gaining political independence in the 1950s and 1960s, African nations have struggled for economic independence and strived to develop a unique set of African solutions to its challenges, which include in the main, challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Education and training initiatives in Africa to prepare youth and adults for the world of work continue to receive less attention. There are more factors that thwart progress towards universal education and training, which include the link between urban and rural divide, race, gender and disability and marginalization in education. The challenges faced by VET systems and the responses to these challenges, include the history of VET on the continent and in the region.

The continent has experienced too much global interference and different socio-economic development models, including forms of international development assistance Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, pp. 105 – 108). However, the influence and impact of socio-economic development programmes have not always been negative, it exposed the continent to the international socio-economic development models but, many of

these programmes are still foreign and based on Western economic principles and Western notions for solving Africa's social problems and, the broad effects of the integrated global economy.

Although the situation has now changed, with Africa realising the need for regional economic cooperation and integration with the formation of new institutions such as the NEPAD, AU, SADC for Africa to economically assert itself in the global village Mhone (2000, pp.23 – 24) ;Sako (2006, pp. 19 – 20); Mbeki (2009, pp. 151 – 154); Twinyeko-Kamugisha (2012, 83 – 90); Mills (2012, pp. 174 – 175) diverse views and development approaches still persist as to what appropriate socio-economic strategies should be followed. Africa's vocational education and skills training efforts unfortunately amount to a lacklustre performance of regional cooperation and integration schemes thus far.

Similar challenges of persisting unemployment in the Euro zone and America are still being experienced on the continent and southern Africa, including South Africa, despite initiatives in education and skills development within the realm of vocational education and training systems.

These challenges broadly result from the dictates of a free market global economy, the historical legacy of colonialism and subsequent socio-economic policies adopted in the post-colonial phase. Most Southern Africa countries (Mauritius; Swaziland; Lesotho; Botswana; Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi and South Africa) have in common is colonial systems of vocational education and training that they inherited, with strong reliance and preference on white expatriate skills for both the formal labour market for skills, and formal provision of intermediate skills- depending on the level of economic activity Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005,p.1) .

In the southern Africa, most of the vocational education and training initiatives to address the supply and demand in the labour market have been badly neglected, despite the VET having a potential of being an important policy nexus – located between economic and educational policy, between the state and the market, and between concerns with poverty and growth Akoojee, et al (2005, p. 2)

With the dawning of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the era marked the welcoming of South Africa into the global economy. Being a global economic player, South African adopted an export led economic growth path to compete with other global players already in the global league. In pursuit of Porters' notion of competitiveness Porter (1980, pp.215 – 221), South Africa depended on this stimulating both its supply and demand side factors when it was experiencing from the demand side a low economic activity characterised by the declining mining, manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the inward looking economic strategy of the pre – 1994, whilst on the flip side experiencing poverty, high unemployment rates at over 25%, and inequalities with Africans being the poorest and most affected with limited and no access to economic opportunities and basic services.

South Africa logically had to prioritise both its supply and demand side measures. This study primarily looks at both the supply and demand side measures involving the South African Government initiatives post 1994 in the provision of skills development, using the SETA model as a vehicle for its skills development trajectory.

The vocational education and training initiatives experiences in South Africa via the SETA model since the advent of democracy, post 1994, can be described as both a slow and complex process with neither immediate nor sustainable and impactful results in addressing the country's skills needs and the main challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

1.2 Background to the Study

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority is one of the 23 SETAs established through the Skills Development Act no. 96 of 1998 to facilitate and guide skills development through the development and the implementation of sector skills plan in response to industry skills needs.

MerSETA facilitates skills development in the following sub sectors:

- Metal and engineering.

- Auto manufacturing.
- Motor retail and component manufacturing.
- Tyre manufacturing and
- Plastics industries.

All the five sub-sectors of merSETA comprise approximately 44000 companies, with a workforce of approximately 600 000. The total annual levy income is approximately 600 million rand.

merSETA, like all other SETAs, plays a central role in making sure that the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) is fulfilled.

merSETA does not collect levies, but instead receives collected levies from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Seventy percent of the levies are disbursed as grants and 10% is kept for administration.

merSETA does not train but instead it facilitates the process of training by paying grants, registering moderators and assessors, identifying scarce skills, accrediting training providers, monitoring the quality of training and implementing projects to close the skills gap.

This research study, in light of the background here provided, seeks to assess the impact of merSETA through its Chamber Committees in developing and implementing the Sector Skills Plan in response to industry skills needs based on priority skills and/ or scarce and critical jobs identified for improving production and creating employment opportunities.

More than a decade since the inception of SETAs, there are still widespread concerns about the efficacy of the SETA institutions in growing the implementation of a skills development policy to address unemployment challenges in the country.

1.3 Problem Statement

The problem this study seeks to investigate and assess is the role of Chamber committees at merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan process, invariably a 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System', a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority jobs in the industry) in order to contribute to increasing productivity in the economy, and in the process, to address unemployment through creating employment opportunities.

At the heart of the study, is the unemployment that continues unabated, despite SETA efforts in implementing skills development initiatives through the Sector Skills Plan within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy I; II and beyond, which is meant to address industry skills needs in the country to curb unemployment.

The key question is, has the Sector Skills Plan process been effective in responding to industry skills demands and serving as a catalyst to curb unemployment?

1.4 Knowledge gap

The knowledge gap exist in this regard, in that the earlier work of SETA review studies, including, Marock, Harrison-Train, Soobrayan and Gunthorpe (2007); NEDLAC (2007); Kraak (2008) Archer (2010), never investigated the extent of the participation by SETA stakeholder committees responsible for identifying and determining industry current skills trends and predicting skills needs for socio- economic needs in post 1994 democratic South Africa(Government Gazette, 2006). This study, therefore, finds it necessary to consider empowering and capacitating participating stakeholders in Chamber committees for effective citizenry participatory processes and governance Karl (2000); Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 2-3; 39-47) and Ramphele (2012, pp.60-64) and to understand Chamber Committees in their role of leading the development and implementation of the SSP process.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the Sector Skills Plan used by SETAs and to explore the best approaches in response to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The study seeks to investigate with merSETA Chamber Committees factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP), establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the SSP, analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

1.6 Research Questions

The primary research aim is to broadly deliberate on the following research questions, which according to the guidance of Marshall and Rossman (1995, p.26) state that the qualitative research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study. This suggests that the questions and objectives of the study need to make provision for flexibility in qualitative research:

1. What are the factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP?
2. What are the trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP?
3. What are the strategies for future consideration?

1.7 Conceptual framework

In order to understand and achieve the broad research aims in this regard, the following conceptual framework (demonstrated in Figure 1 below), by the Department of Labour and GTZ , will be used as a point of reference in this study to demonstrate and enhance understanding of the supply and demand for industry skills and the central role fulfilled by Sector Education and Training Authorities, in particular the Chamber Committees (stakeholder bodies) responsible for making inputs through identifying industry skills needs.

Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.18 – 22) suggest that research should construct a conceptual framework to help “decide which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analysed – at least at the outset.”

Conceptual Framework for the Development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan in the Demand Driven Occupational Learning

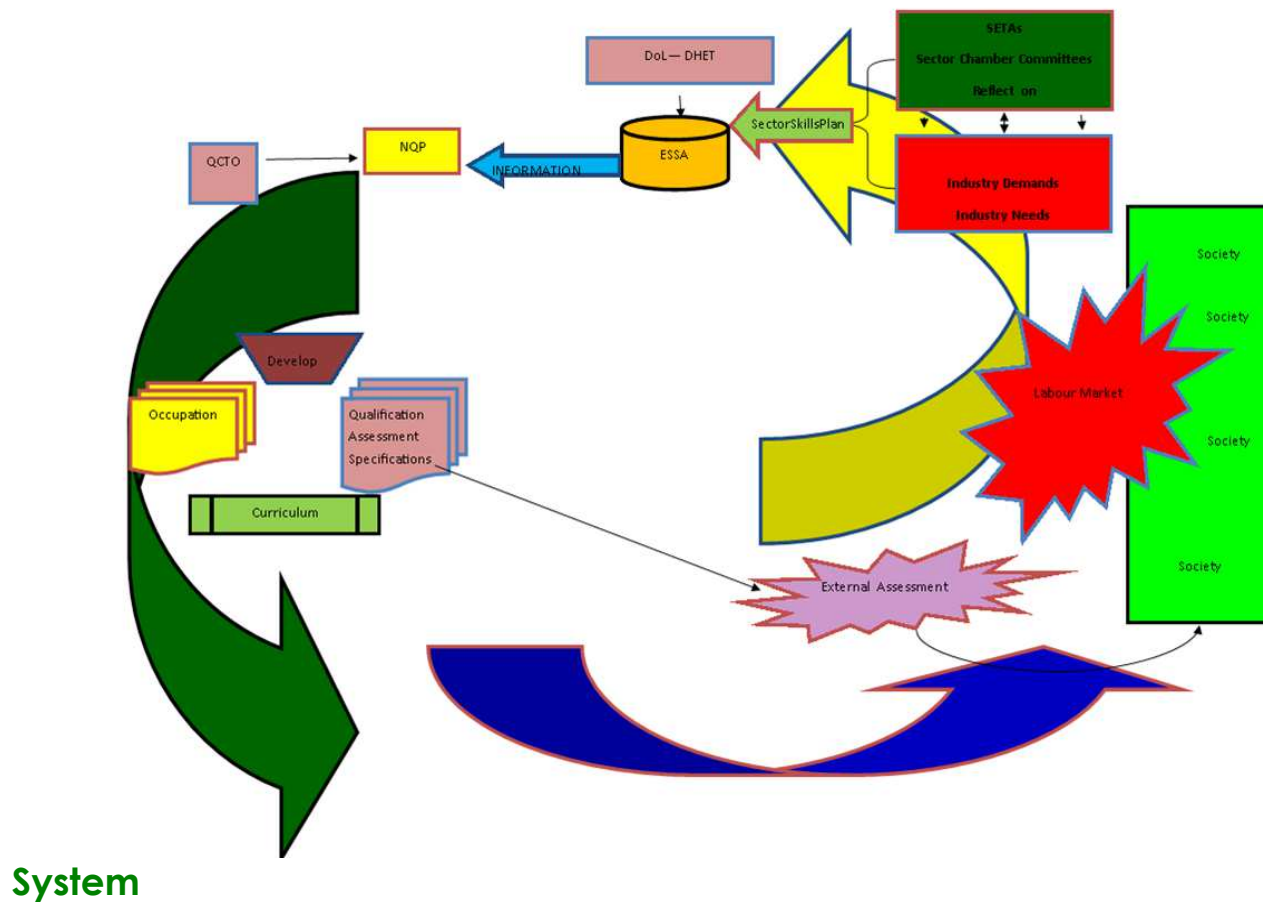


Figure 1:1 Demand Driven Occupational Learning System - source Department of Labour (DoL) & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ): 2004. (South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The joint DoL (and now DHET) and GTZ model for the supply and demand of the industry skills, seeks to demonstrate the process flow of skills development approach in SA.

SETAs in this regard play an important institutional role in consulting with the industry and other industry related bodies in developing sector skills plans. merSETA through its Chamber committees consults with all relevant industry bodies to develop sector skills plans informing the skills needs within its predominantly manufacturing sub sectors under the merSETA scope, which include metal engineering, motor retail and automotive components manufacturers, plastics and related products manufacturers, new tyre and auto assemblers and manufacturers.

Once the sector skills plan is developed and approved, the next phase is implementation. Institutions and government departments involved in the implementation include the following: The drawing up of the National scarce and critical skills list by the DoL, DHET and Department of Home Affairs. The list reflecting skills needs across twenty three SETAs in the country is then published on Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) a sub-division within the Department of Labour.

The National skills list is used in the main as an information source to update and advise on occupational skills needed in the country, for the recruitment of employees by business, and for training purposes by relevant bodies and institutions, for publishing national occupational pathways, quality councils for trade occupations for developing relevant occupational qualifications, and curricula needed by the industry for an investment in productivity, through skills development, to help the country to address the current poverty, unemployment and inequalities existing in the labour market and society in general.

1.8 Structure of the research report

This research report is structured into six chapters, namely: introduction to the study; literature review; research methodology; presentation of findings; analysis and interpretation of data, and conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter One: Introduction to the study

In Chapter one, background to the study is explained, including the problem statement, research questions and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

In Chapter two, a wide-ranging literature review is undertaken. This include SETA review studies; participatory and governance literature; policy formulation, implementation and evaluation to provide in this regard, a theoretical understanding of the past, current and future opportunities and constraints in the South African skills development trajectory.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

In Chapter three, the research methodology followed during which data gathering is explained, including interview techniques as a research method, the research sample which includes composition and participants in the study and the mechanisms used to ensure data credibility.

Chapter Four: Presentation of findings

Chapter four presents data extracted from focus group interviews held with representatives of the Chamber committees. The data is categorised in terms of the three main research questions attached to this report as Appendix 1 and themes which emerged the focus groups interviews.

Chapter Five: Analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter five builds on chapter four and provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the study on how the development and the implementation of the sector skills plan is viewed from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter six follows from the analysis in chapter five. Conclusions are drawn about the findings of the study linked to the research topic. The critical issues that require attention are identified and recommendations are submitted with a view to enhance the effectiveness in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans by Chamber Committees.

Areas for further research

Areas for further research are identified as a measure to deepen the understanding and advancement of the emerging trends in the new vocationalism skills development trajectory.

In conclusion, the introduction to and background of the study were explained. The contextual issues underpinning the study and fundamental questions that research seeks to address were highlighted and conclusions reached.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to focus on the literature relating to the skills development trajectory in South Africa to gain insight with regard to approaches followed and trends identified, for this study to benefit from the existing body of knowledge and be able to identify blind alleys and stimulate new ideas – Neuman (2011, p. 111) In pursuit of the existing body of knowledge in the skills development arena, the literature here reviewed has been widely, but selectively, chosen to provide balanced views, seeking to shed light on the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

The literature reviewed range from Government's DoL and DHET guides and documentations relating to the definition; description and application of Skills development using the SSP processes; literature on the review of SETA performance in pursuit of skills development aims and objectives, including strategies and approaches being developed and implemented to address unemployment, using SSPs as a tool and a means to the end; literature in policy development; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess and investigate what underpins trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and possibly determine considerations for future strategies; citizenry participatory processes and governance literature which this study is of the view is necessary, because the skills development policy is driven by both public and private institutions, including the Government which is responsible for the creation of the enabling environment – hence the necessity of the citizenry participatory processes and governance literature in the current initiatives being considered towards transforming the education and training system in the country which includes the DHET Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training in SA for consideration for future strategies.

2.2 Definitions of concepts

2.2.1 Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs)

SETAs intermediary bodies were established in 2000 to usher in a new skills development dispensation in the post 1994 democratic South Africa. SETAs are a special type of state owned enterprises (SOEs), established through various pieces of legislation including in the main, the amended Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 and Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 (SDLA). SETAs by their nature seek to redress occupational skills gaps and skills shortages in various key industrial sectors of the South African economy Baker (2008, p. 220); (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, p. 61).

2.2.2 The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

The NSDS is built on the Skills Development Act, of 1998 as amended. The strategy is meant to advance the process of a skills development policy in South Africa by identifying the priorities for skills development and providing mechanism for measuring SETA performance and monitoring progress (Lundall, 2003, p. 4) ; Kraak (2008, p. 10). It also charts the way forward for the DoL, and now the DHET, since November 2009, SETAs and other key supporting institutions in the skills development arena. The strategy is reviewed on a five year cycle on the basis of previous performances against national targets set.

This research looks at the role of the manufacturing, engineering and related merSETA during and beyond the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) one (I) and two (II) spanning 2000 to 2010/11 and now NSDS III which has just commenced in 2011.

2.2.3 Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process

This study defines the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) based on the Department of Labour (DoL) and Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) SSP Guide, given the periods being reviewed, that is, National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) I and II spanning the better part of 2000 to 2010/11, and beyond.

The SSP process can be best understood and described within the context of **Figure 1** 'Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the DoL & GTZ:(South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, 2004)

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) as the name suggest, is a skills planning tool informed by various processes including workplace skills plan (WSP); annual training reports (ATR) - Marock et al (2007, p.61) This is a framework that seeks to inform and provide guidance about skills trends and priorities for improving the performance of the sector, and those working in it, through skills development.

The framework details industry current skills, training trends and future training needs, often referred to as 'scarce and critical skills' or skills in demand by various sectors, based on the analysis and the review of the current and past sector performance.

The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) further serves to analyse current, and determine future skills prospects, and to formulate strategies to address industry future skills and training needs for sectoral economic growth and Skills Development Policy national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS within the Skills Development Act, 1998, as amended (Labour, 1998).

The Sector Skills Plan process based on the views articulated in the DoL's SSP guidelines (DoL, 2004,p. 15) is described as a necessary and valuable strategic tool and research process report. Each SETA, through its structures, as a performance indicator, is expected to develop a SSP report every five years in line with the NSDS and, annually update the plan. Apart from using the information in the SSP to meet NSDS priorities, including SETA operational planning and mobilisations of training funds, the information is also used by the DHET to write the National Scarce Skills List, which is published annually, representing a consolidated national snapshot of skills shortages.

The Department of Labour (DoL) and the Skills Development Planning Unit (SDPU) Sector Skills Plan guide DoL (2004, p.8) serves to provide technical assistance to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and committees responsible for the development of Sector Skills Plans. In this case, this is merSETA and its five sectors

namely, Metal and engineering; Auto manufacturing; Motor retail and component manufacturing; Tyre manufacturing and Plastics manufacturing sector.

2.2.4 Chamber Committees

Per the merSETA Constitution, DoL Government Gazette number 29113, (Government Gazette, 2006) Sector or Chamber committees are committees comprising equal representatives members nominated and recommended from organised business, and Trade Unions falling within the scope of the SETA. At merSETA there are five sub-sectors overseen by these operational and strategic governance structures called Chamber Committees.

The Chamber committees or sector committees are Constitutional sub-committees of the merSETA Governing Board. They fulfil both governance and operational roles within their respective sub-sectors. The research study in this regard, intends to look at the composition of Chamber Committees, how the selection of the participating stakeholders is made and what underpins and guide the nomination process for representation in order to assess the extent and quality of stakeholders and their state of readiness for participating in the process leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP - Karl (2000, pp1-6) and Kusek and Rist (2004,p.1).

Table 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committee terms of reference

Chamber Committee terms of reference (ToR)
• Develop sub sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines of the merSETA. • Identify education and training needs in the sector. • Monitor the development implementation of apprenticeships, learnerships, skills programmes, ABET as well as all other training in the sub-sector. • Make inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector. • Liaise with relevant bargaining councils, forums, professional associations and specialised sub sector providers. • Reviewing the activities of the Regional Committees and reporting to these committees on sub sectoral needs, scarce skills and other appropriate matters.

Source: The merSETA Constitution - Government Gazette, 11 August 2006 (Government Gazette, 2006),

Based on the literature reviewed, the following emerging trends begin to form themes on which this research should be premised.

2.3 Limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment

The SETA review studies by NEDLAC (2007, pp. 43 – 44) ; Marock et al (2007 p.61); Marock (2008 , pp. 25 – 26) Archer (2007 pp. 15 – 16) and Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25 – 44) and Lynch (2007), despite in their findings arguing that SETA's Sector Skills Plan (SSP) process is a complex one, further argue that it is often not an appropriate intervention for intermediary agents like SETAs for determining and forecasting industry skills training needs.

SETA review studies here cites point to limitations which include the separation of education from training; the fact that supply and demand of labour matters is market driven and the process is even more complex, that both free markets and planned economies often fail to predict accurately, due to too much and often contradictory self-regulatory measures in the market and the effects of the current integrated global economic trajectory.

Literature reviewed in this regard suggest alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', but include models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy - Payne (2009, p.489) cited in Archer (2010, pp. 3;25-44). These alternative models are said to be basic to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources; employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and to harness them to improved performance.

According to Archer (2010), the current trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP, existing and continuously revised regulations provide very limited guidance about the requirements for SSP and, as such, the alleged relationship and the interconnectedness with WSPs; economic growth skills planning strategies and the national skills development strategy NSDS is blurred and without evidence or footprints.

Archer (2010) further suggest that the purpose and factors leading to the development and the implementation of the SSP are still vague and a fallacy.

2.4 Limitations with ‘one size fit all approach and an all-encompassing policy’

Kraak (2009) and Chang (2009), in their literature argue that, for policy considerations including policy formulation; implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact, initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably will require development strategies that are uniquely customised to meet specific sectoral conditions. The assertion here being made by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320) and Chang (2009), is that the industrial policy does not mean any policy that affects the industry but a very particular type of policy that affects industries’ – an assertion that policies are commonly known as ‘selective industrial policy’ or ‘targeting’ – ‘namely a policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others, against market signals, usually to enhance efficiency and promote productivity growth’ Chang (2009, p.83).

2.5 Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas

Linked to preceding paragraphs, Marock et al (2007, p.61) and Marock (2008, pp.25 – 26) argue that it might be differing points of emphasis for policy consideration between the broad skills development policy objectives expressed in the NSDS I and II (and possibly NSDS III), which focuses on issues of redress and equity, and the SSP, which emphasises the need for sectoral economic growth.

Often industry priorities including education and training matters are seen to be invariably based on employer profit motives and the need to yield more on investment Marock (2008). South Africa’s skills development model, based on SETA model principles of ‘Demand driven occupational learning system’ as in figure 1, is inherently constrained and likely to fail to address issues of equity transformative agendas since the model adopted reduces and subjects national socio–political-economic imperatives as articulated in NSDS 1 and II, to the discretion of the companies and the industries that are by and large free market driven Marock (2008).

2.6 Chamber Committee state of readiness

According to Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5) notion of state of readiness, the merSETA Chamber committee's state of readiness from a participatory perspective in grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address the challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, is viewed as a necessary area for consideration for the assessment of the SETA performance for the state of readiness by SETA participating stakeholders. The State of readiness further brings to the fore the citizenry participatory process and governance issues as in – Archer (2010, p. 28; 34; 48); Karl (2000, pp. 1-6); and Kusek and Rist (2004 pp. 1-5); Leumer (2010); Lynch (2007); Pozzoni and Kumar (p.23); (DHET, HRD-SA, 2009, p. 23) and Ramphele (2012, pp. 147 – 148; 175).

Local initiatives to skills development using SETAs as a vehicle, accentuate the view that the Skills Development Act has placed the responsibility for skills development squarely with organised labour and business. The stakeholders in development agencies (SETAs) are not just participants but beneficiaries since they benefit from both outputs and outcomes. Local industry skills facilitating bodies compared to their counterparts internationally are more than just advisory skills development intermediary bodies since they are also beneficiaries Karl (2000, pp. 1-6).

According to Ramphele (2012), issues of good governance and accountability are very critical in the review of the functioning and effectiveness of stakeholders. In this regard, merSETA Sector – Chamber Committees members do not nominate nor appoint themselves to serve on these committees, members are often accountable to their constituencies such that holding the balance between economic and social goals and between committee members from diverse backgrounds and their new merSETA communal goals becomes a key consideration for factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP).

The question to be asked in this regard is whether SETAs, including the Chamber Committees, are ready, on the basis of their mandate, technical capabilities and representational considerations, are Chamber committees able to see and participate beyond immediate SETA quantitative targets and outputs set by the DHET, in line with training funding allocated and disbursed by the SETA ?.

Findings from the afore literature in this regard particularly SETA review studies by Marock (2008) and Kraak (2008) , portray a picture of local industry skills facilitating bodies - SETAs , in this case Chamber Committees to be lacking sufficient capacity and ability to be critical or see beyond. SETA review literature here cited further point to lack of effective indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate outcomes and impacts of their interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, in determining factors leading to the development and the implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP); trends in the development and the implementation of the SSP and establish strategies for future consideration. It is also reported that the SETA activities require the degree of knowledge and experience; labour representatives do not have NEDLAC (2007, pp. 20 – 21) and Grawitzky (2006, p.28).

2.7 Ongoing attempts to review pre and post school education and training in South Africa

Literature reviewed in this regard, including the following initiatives DHET's Green paper for post-school education and training - (DHET, Green Paper, 2012, pp. 34-36;61-70); Lowana (2012); Bird (2012) Kraak (2008, p.13) - Zide's Higher Education and Training transformation process argued in Zide's 2010 Professorial Public inaugural address at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Zide (2010); the new Ministry of National Economic Planning's (Commission, 2012) national development plan socio economic plan and, suggestions for the rethink of the current skills development initiatives to include forms of new vocationalism, which argue that technical and vocational education is more effective when focused on skills closely linked to market demand

Adam (2012, p. 4), these cited initiatives are underpinned by the ongoing poverty and inequalities resulting from unemployment and the inability of the majority of citizens to fend for themselves, economically and socially. The prevailing situation continues to mar progress achieved since democracy - thus there are ongoing attempts to address shortcomings within the current skills development initiatives.

Emerging trends in the literature reviewed, suggests South Africa has a lot to consider in getting its skills development strategies right to close the existing gaps and shortcomings in the pre- and post- education phases despite almost two decades of the post democratic era.

The recent September 2012 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report for 2012/2013 ranking South Africa number 140 out of 144 countries on the quality of education system indicator, confirms this research proposal that, despite South Africa arguably being on the right course in preparing the country for the competitive world of work according to Porter's notion of 'competitiveness' Porter (1980, pp 215 – 221) there is a need for more exploratory research to recommend strategies for future consideration towards building a clear vision for South Africa's education and related fields in the pre- and post- education phase.

The emerging trends in this regard re-emphasise why South Africa needs to consider a holistic and coordinated approach to its human resources development strategies for its social and economic challenges, to make a meaningful and impactful contributions to crush poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Following from the emerging trends in the literature reviewed, the following suggestions are noted:

The limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, calls for a relook on the purpose and underlying assumptions to the SSP and, propose alternative approaches in line with the notion of 'a need for a wider skills approach not necessarily linked to industry demands', including models such as 'organisational innovation' which suggest that skills training should encompass job design, work organization and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy.

Alternative models said to be crucial to the ability of organizations and sectors to mobilize their human resources include employee voice; to improve a firm's use of knowledge; shared rewards and team work; work design; the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows and harness them to improved performance.

A shift from a narrow scarce and critical skills central in the Sector Skills Plan process, is necessary for the effective SSP.

The limitations with 'one size fit all approach and the all-encompassing policy', suggest a need for alignment between industrial and skills development policies is critical. Industrial policy should precede and inform skills development policy and its regulatory measures.

Generic Sector Skills Plans should be avoided and instead be more attuned to the specifics of each sector and their varied sub sectors

Issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of a social equity transformative agenda, suggest that the formulation of clear implementation guidelines and performance indicators and targets is vital for an effective strategy.

The mechanisms and /or predetermined frameworks for monitoring and evaluating outcomes and impacts of interventions should be clearly stated from the beginning.

SETA state of readiness based on the literature reviewed is necessary from a participatory perspective for effective grappling with operational and strategic activities, which include the management/monitoring and evaluation of interventions to address challenges of growing the economy and addressing unemployment, and in this regard, the SETA mandate in executing the transformation agenda through the skills development trajectory.

Ongoing focused research and capacity building engagements to bolster economic and social consciousness of the key informants and participants is necessary to enhance the state of readiness and the performance of stakeholders towards the attainment of clearly spelt out economic and social objectives.

The performance of SETA structures, through its stakeholders, should include the ability to align the development and implementation of SSP in line with Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy within the country's development agenda.

Ongoing attempts to review pre- and post- school education and training in South Africa is another necessary intervention and SETAs need to consider holistic and coordinated approaches which do not leave everything to government alone, and be proactive through self-initiatives led by communities and individuals working together to address social and economic challenges which contribute to challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Individual governmental departmental initiatives are necessary to contribute to the ongoing transformational agenda, but should not be an end in themselves, instead they should begin a collaborative and partnership team work effort, informed by a commonly understood and striven for vision.

2.8 Conclusion

The emerging trends from the literature reviewed, identify and confirm shortcomings with regard to the current South Africa's VET intervention that use in the main, the SSP

as a guiding tool to respond to industry skills demand needs in striving to holistically make South Africa's economy competitive, a preferred destination for established and aspiring – emerging investors, and in the process, grow and create more employment opportunities, and in so doing, address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality (PUI).

Based on the shortcomings identified in South Africa's skills development initiatives in the literature reviewed, this research seeks to identify possible alternative models and strategies that can be explored and researched in the quest to address shortcomings inhibiting efforts geared towards the realisation of a viable economy to create more economic and social opportunities in attracting investors and addressing poverty, unemployment and inequality. These models include wider and all-encompassing approaches, which go beyond the current strategy that looks only at industry skills development needs.

The relevance of the literature reviewed in this regard, is that it begins to provide background knowledge and information which forms a paradigm that enables this research to strive to expand and see beyond the current skills development initiatives and begin to explore models that go beyond current models of industry led skills development processes, however, it is the view of this research study that these models are still a matter for further research and consideration.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to present and explain the research methodology followed by the study with regard to the research approach, research design, and population sampling procedure, data collection, data presentation, analysis and the means of validation.

3.2 Research methodology

The study investigated the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA to address socio – economic challenges resulting from unemployment, poverty and inequality and to identify challenges. The study intended to establish challenges and best practices, if any, for future considerations in the development and implementation of SSP and, submits its recommendations to the stakeholders in the vocational education and training fraternity.

The research was based on the qualitative research approach. The reason for choosing the qualitative method is mainly due to the nature of the study and as a means to respond to the research questions. According to Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004, 2, p.12) research cannot be conducted in a theoretical vacuum, researchers bring with them background knowledge which they use to interpret what they see. The background knowledge “tells us what exists, how to understand it, and – most concretely – how to study it”. In the social sciences, such background knowledge’s are called paradigms’ Terreblanche and Durkheim (2002, p.3).

The research took place within the interpretative paradigm and was premised from the presupposition that the current SETAs’ Sector Skills Plan (SSP) approach that is

industry demand driven, inherently has shortcomings that has often failed to deliver on the intended objectives. The interpretative paradigm guided the researcher to understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it – Neuman (2011, p.91).

The focus in the research is about understanding what is going on from the position of participants, in this case, merSETA Chamber Committee stakeholders, who according to the merSETA Constitution – Government Gazette (Government Gazette, 2006), are tasked with the responsibility of developing and implementing Sector Skills Plan, a process central to the mandate of the SETAs for identifying industry skills needs through the demand led national skills development strategy. In this regard, the Chamber Committee stakeholders represent the real world out there which is independent of the researcher's knowledge.

3.3 Research design

The study was a predominantly qualitative research seeking to understand from the perspective of merSETA participating Chamber Committees stakeholders, what are their experiences in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan by interacting rather than predicting what will happen from the position of an outsider. In this paradigm, the stakeholders' subjective experiences are considered to be real and are taken seriously Neuman (2011, p. 107).

The definition of qualitative research that fits best with the researchers ontology and epistemology is that of Creswell (1998, p. 15) who states that qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.'

The proposed research design of a qualitative approach in this regard is further supported by - Patton (2002), Bogdan and Bilken (2003) and

Staruss and Carbin (1998) in their submission that the social world can only be understood if the natural social context is taken into consideration – in this case, the natural context is South Africa in the post 1994 era in trying to implement a skills development policy to address its economic and social challenges which have resulted in high unemployment due to skills shortages.

3.4 Sampling

Given the overall aims and objectives of the study, that is, investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) at merSETA, and according to Creswell in his notion of “purposeful sampling” and “key informants”, Creswell (2007, p118). Chamber committees of the merSETA became the most appropriate organisational structure and people to form a sample from which the researcher gathered data and information required to address the research questions. The appropriateness of Chamber committees at merSETA to be used as informants is further confirmed by their strategic role, as defined by the merSETA Constitution explained in Chapter two (2) Table 2.1merSETA Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

In line with Neuman, the primary purpose of sampling is to “collect specific information” Neuman (2011, p219) to enhance what the researcher seeks to investigate which in this regard was about the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan.

Two Chamber committees of the merSETA’s population of five Chambers Committees participated in the semi structured focus group interviews. Based on Table 4.1 and 4.2, in page forty nine (49) and fifty (50), the composition Focus groups and sample is balanced to provide fair balanced views from both business and labour perspectives to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings from the study, and this arrangement, according to Neuman, provides a good sampling frame which is necessary for good sampling Neuman (2011, p.225).

3.5 Primary data collection

3.5.1 Semi structured focus group interview

The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi structured focus group interviews. The choice of the semi structured focus group interview as a data collection instrument was primarily based on the need to create a research enquiry and a dialogue with Chamber committee members to understand their thoughts, views and expectations in the SETA work, particularly in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan. According to Neuman, focus groups are a special qualitative research technique with the advantage of a natural setting, allowing participants in a relaxed mode, to express their opinions Neuman (2011, p. 142) a very critical element for the success of this study with regard to the data required and gathered through the small groups of participants interacting freely Neuman (2011, p. 414). In this study, the first and the second focus groups comprised of fourteen (14) and nine (9) participants respectively.

Other forms of primary data collection within the broad qualitative discipline, included follow up telephonic interviews from participants in the focus groups for more clarity on the information and data collected during the focus group sessions, although these follow up telephonic interviews sessions were on a small scale, they proved to be useful in providing more clarity on the data already collected.

The primary data was also supplemented by the documentary analysis of the minutes of Chamber meetings and Chamber Committees files; Chamber performance assessment reports and training reports. According to Robson, the advantages of document analysis is that documents are unobtrusive and can be used without imposing on participants; they can be checked and re-checked for reliability - Robson (2002, p.358).

According to Grooves (1998, p.273), the quantitative research data gathering instruments like survey questionnaires is only considered in cases where it is

necessary to determine 'preferences, opinions; past or present behaviour' based among others, on committee members' years of service in the Sector – Chamber committee - new or long serving committee members. This was only used to supply supplementary information that was statistical in nature, from AURCOR Chamber performance self assessments (AURCO, 2012).

3.6 Secondary data

The secondary data included both the reports received from focus group members and desktop research; merSETA annual general meeting (AGM) and Chamber committees files involving, SSP reports compiled during NSDS I;II and III, for the period translating into 2002 to 2012 were used as additional secondary data over and above the literature reviewed in Chapter two of the study.

According to Boslaugh, the advantage of using secondary data is the breadth of data available, Boslaugh (2007, p.4) secondary data helps to make primary data collection more specific since with the help of secondary data, we are able to make out where the gaps and deficiencies are, and what additional information needs to be collected.

3.7 Data presentation

In line with Neuman's recommendations, data collected was structured for presentation purpose in accordance with the research questions drawn to guide study discussions so as to proceed in a logical step-by-step manner - Neuman (2011, p. 491).

In this study, data was summarised and presented in various forms, mainly in a narrative form due to the qualitative research method employed in the study. Other forms of data presentation included tabulation and diagrammatic bar charts to complement and condense a large mass of data to bring out the distinct patterns in data in an attractive form that enables comparison to be made easily among classes of data collected.

As data presentation begins to shape data analysis, other techniques used in the study to present data are themes and sub themes, either informed by the literature review or by emerging trends from data collection.

3. 8 Data analysis and interpretation

Data collected from the two semi-structured focus group interviews, was refined and analysing firstly, in accordance with the three research questions pursued in the study and secondly, according to themes and sub-themes drawn when the researcher was reviewing and analysing interviewing notes and minutes for identifying emerging patterns themes.

Data were also categorised and analysed based on the themes drawn and identified from the literature reviewed for matching similar patterns and new emerging patterns from the focus group interviews.

The approach followed by the researcher has also been consistent and guided by the literature reviewed in the area of data analysis so as to enhance the credibility of the study and avoid any unwittingly tendencies that might lead to some biased findings and misleading conclusions and in the process, which might compromise the study.

According to Neuman, Neuman (2011, p. 343) data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data collected. In this study, data were collected, summarised and refined into categories related to themes in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two, and important to the research questions being studied Boslaugh, (2007, p13).

The data was analysed using, among others, Glaser and Strauss 'grounded theory cited in Elliot and Higgins, that data analysis and verification is comparative analysis involving case study techniques Hartley (2004) and Yin (2003) that seeks to discover theory from data through the general method that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experience, in order to understand the emerging trends with regard to the responses to the research questions –Elliot and Higgins (2012,p.2) .

3.9 Validity and Reliability

The approach followed by the researcher for analysing data collected, consciously sought to avoid and eliminate any possibilities of inconsistencies that might lead to some bias and skewed results and, in the process, compromise the validity and the reliability of the study results.

Various instruments were used in the study to collect data, which included, semi structured focus group interviews, follow up telephonic interviews, documentary analysis and literature reviewed, assisted in comparing data collected to ascertain the reliability and validity of data collected and the elimination of inconsistencies and in the process, enhance the validity and the reliability of the study findings and conclusion.

The strategy followed by the researcher in using and employing various instruments to collect data, including a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods often referred to as triangulation, is supported by Patton (2001) and Maxwell (1998) cited in Golafshani (2003, p. 603) where it is argued that the approach has a potential to strengthen the study by combining data collection methods.

3.10 Significance of the Study

The business intention of this research study is to contribute to the on-going debate seeking to assess the efficacy of SETAs and related institutions in using the current skills development initiatives as a critical catalyst in alleviating post 1994 South Africa's problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Based on the DoL (and subsequently DHET), merSETA has been rated as one of the high performing SETAs, through delivering in the development of the SSP. The study is hoping to share lessons learnt in merSETA Chamber committees and makes recommendations to merSETA and its related Chamber Committees not participating in the study, and further recommendations to the SETA and vocational education training fraternity in South Africa, SADC, the continent of Africa and the international training institutions.

Based on the problem statement of this research and the literature reviewed, there is still a need for more research to explore alternative approaches and strategies for future consideration for effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands, but to look at human resource development in totality to address poverty, unemployment and inequality locally and internationally. The significance of this research study is embedded in seeking to make a contribution in efforts to explore effective Sector Skills Plans and education and training interventions that look beyond industry skills demands to address South Africa's post 1994 socio economic needs.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Neuman, conducting a research study and reporting its results can create controversy and raise contentious ethical issues, so that it is necessary to protect research subjects to maintain integrity while doing research Neuman (2011, p. 490).

The researcher endeavoured to observe all ethical considerations during and beyond the research process by relating to study participants with respect and dignity, assuring participants the information shared whilst doing the research, during the group interviews and beyond, will be kept confidential and the anonymity of the study subjects will be kept as such by using symbols instead of real names - Neuman (2011, p. 138 – 142).

The researcher further assured participants that the study was conducted purely for academic purposes and not for publicity or commercial gain, that both the integrity and reputation of the merSETA and WITS University School of Public Development and Management would be maintained and respected during and beyond the study.

3.12 Limitations of Study

Given the limited resources and the magnitude of the study, inherently there were limitations to the study and potential weaknesses in the sense that the study sampling was reduced and excluded data collection evidence within broad SETA institutional

structures, and data from the other twenty SETAs, and related fraternal institutions within the skills development sector.

Due to non-availability and geographical spread of Chamber committees and focus group members in this study, the researcher was compelled to target two Chamber committees available at the time to participate in the focus group sessions. Despite these challenges, the volume and quality of data collected was sufficient for the study to be conclusive in its findings, given SETA's generic approach in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

As stated in Chapter one, this study sought to supplement the existing knowledge gap resulting from the earlier work of SETA review studies by (Marock, C et al , 2007) and the NEDLAC (2007) which excluded significant data and information from SETA stakeholders committees responsible for the development and implementation of SSPs.

Despite the researcher in this study being the employee of the merSETA, and participating focus group members being levy paying members of the merSETA, the researcher cautioned participating focus group members upfront, that there might be a “conflict of interest” given participants’ relations with merSETA. That the study findings and conclusions arrived at, might be viewed to be biased in an attempt to support and maintain current and future relations with both the participating focus group Chamber committees and merSETA. However, it is necessary for the credibility of the study to be “professional and responsible” in approaching the study and members are at liberty not to participate if not comfortable - Neuman (522 – 524).

3.13 Conclusion

This Chapter attempted to describe and explain the research methodology followed to collect, present and analyse the data in a manner required to respond to the research questions seeking to provide clarity on the study research problem. The researcher's main and primary data collection instrument through which two of the five merSETA Chamber committees were interviewed, has been semi-structured focus group interviews. As a strategy, triangulation was considered thereby allowing findings to be compared and then corroborated for validation and reliability. The two focus group

sessions were held in November 2012 during Chamber committee meetings, two Chamber committees participated in the study. Conclusive findings were arrived at, based on data collected and analysed to provide clarity and insight with regard to the challenges and possible solutions in improving the processes employed by Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The next Chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the problem this study is investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the SSP, the performance of SETAs, in this regard, how merSETA Chamber Committees develop and implement the Sector Skills Plan, a process tailored to respond to industry skills needs (based on identifying scarce and critical jobs or priority occupations in the industry) meant to contribute to increasing productivity at workplaces and, in the process, creating economic opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country.

The purpose of the study is therefore, to investigate the role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan to assess the effectiveness of SSP tool against the intended objective(s), that is, is the SSP the way it is being developed and implemented effectively responding to industry skills demands to improve productivity, the economy, and creating opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequality. The study seeks to explore best approaches to address challenges in the SSP processes by conducting an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber Committees based on their role and their experiences in grappling with factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP; to establish trends and best practices in the development and implementation of the Saputo analyse and interpret findings to provide recommendations for strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of the SSP.

The data collected from the two chamber committees which participated in the semi-structured focus group sessions and document analysis is presented and explained. In this regard, with the involvement of SETAs in particular Chamber Committees in the skills development, an analogy can be made with the participatory literature reviewed in Chapter two where citizens (Chamber Committees) are urged to become more involved

in a participatory democracy in which they play an active role in the reconceptualization, and the reconstruction and development of their country Ramphela (2012, p. 175)

The following responses received are categorised into various themes which emerged during group interviews in both focus group sessions represented by the two Chamber committees participating in the study.

The following themes drawn from the study, supported by the accompanying quoted comments coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory, cited in Neuman (2011, p.157) and Creswell (2007, p.42) where key points are categorised and coded based on extracts from the group interview texts and verbatim notes developed during the process of research. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts* in order to make them more workable, as in Thompson, cited in Neuman (2011, p.425)

This chapter starts by describing the profile of the respondents who are, in the main, Chamber committee members. A profile of Chamber Committee members is necessary to provide background information to give more insight into the composition and accompanying perspectives within Chamber Committee structures beyond just the description of organised business and trade unions in the sector.

In keeping with the principles of confidentiality and privacy, the identities of respondents and/or participating Chamber Committees were protected by using code names or referring to the focus groups as, 1st Focus Group and 2nd Focus Group, as shown in Table 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below.

4.2 Profile of Chamber Committee members

Table 4.1 Composition of the 1st Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
HRD Manager	Engineering Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	National Senior Certificate – NSC
HR Training & Development Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	Admin. Diploma
HR Manager	Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HR Manager	Post Graduate	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Human Resource Director	HR Degree	Full time Shop Steward	Artisan
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Diploma	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

Table 4.2 Composition of the 2nd Focus Group

Business		Labour	
*Position	Qualification	*Position	Qualification
Training & Development Manager	Education Post Graduate Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Coordinator	Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	Diploma
Training Manager	Degree	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Manager	Mechanical Engineer Diploma	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Technical Training Manager	Artisan	Full Time Shop Steward	NSC
Training Manager	Degree	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
SDF	HR Diploma	Full time Shop Steward	NSC
HRD Manager	Post Graduate	Training Coordinator	Diploma

Source: 2011 merSETA Chamber Committee members' nomination forms

***All Chamber Committee members and Focus group members that participated in the study are also Plant Training committee representatives.**

4.3 Semi-structured focus group questions and responses

Similar sets of semi-structured focus group questions were used and applied in both separately arranged focus group sessions held on different dates, one on Wednesday, 21 November 2012 and the second focus group held on Friday, 30 November 2012. Refer to Appendix 1 on page ninety three (93).

The focus group sessions were held during the normal Chamber committee meeting schedule. Chairpersons of both Chamber Committees were very generous and accommodating in allowing and agreeing to put two hours each aside to convene focus group sessions for the purpose of the study. Of significance to this study, is that both these Chamber committees formed a quorum, confirming the legitimacy in representation and ability for both the Chamber and the focus groups for the purpose of the study to make decisions. According to Neuman and Creswell, the two focus group sessions can also be confirmed to be representative samples for a population of all five Chambers at merSETA Creswell (2007, p.125) and Neuman (2011, p 219).

Minutes of the focus group sessions were electronically recorded by the professional Administration Support Services, contracted to record minutes of the Chamber committee meetings at merSETA, most important for the research is that minutes were in verbatim format to make it possible to categorise and code, re-package and re-allocate responses, according to the research questions and themes drawn during the group interviews and from the literature reviewed in chapter two (2).

The following emerging themes supported by the quoted comments made during the group interviews are underpinned by the responses received during evidence led in response to the research questions presented before focus group members.

4.3.1 Factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans

SETA are required to develop and implement Sector Skills Plans in line with SETA performance indicators set out by the DHET within the skills development discourse in post 1994 South Africa.

Under factors leading to the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plans, in line with one of the objectives of this study in describing the understanding and experiences of Chamber Committees of merSETA in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan, the following findings can be confirmed:

4.3.1 (a) State of readiness by Chamber committees to participate in the SSP processes

The theme about the significance of awareness and state of readiness of Chamber committee members about their responsibilities at merSETA within committees on which they serve, emerged from the literature review in Chapter two and merSETA Chamber committee annual self assessments by Audit, Risk and Control Company (AUCOR) –Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2 and during the two focus group sessions conducted separately for the purpose of this study.

In both separate focus group sessions held with the merSETA Chamber committees, the need and requirement by the DoL (and now DHET) to develop and implement Sector Skills plans was confirmed. Although the two Chambers sampled in this study were able to some extent to demonstrate awareness of the purpose of the Sector Skills Plan as required in the National Skills Development Strategy for the implementation of Skills Development Policy, there has been some unevenness and elements of uncertainty among the focus group with regard to the purpose and what constitute the Sector Skills Plan. In both focus group sessions responses indicated some doubt, demonstrated by comments such as . . . “Can I try” to some certainty like . . . “Sector Skills Plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”.

In further unpacking findings under this theme, it can be confirmed that in both focus group sessions, the business constituency in Chamber committees are more aware of the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP as compared to labour constituency, where in both focus group sessions only two members mainly appeared to be spokespersons, and were the ones talking and others demonstrating affirmation of responses made.

It can be confirmed that there is a relatively sufficient awareness among Chamber Committee members of the need and factors leading to the development and

implementation of the SSP, given the responses received irrespective of from whom – business or labour.

The responses when asked, “Why we need SSP”, included:

1st Focus Group: “Sector Skills plan basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan”; “It provides the opportunity to look at the scarce and critical skills within the chamber and concentrating on that” (group interview, November 21, 2012) (Group F. F., 2012)

2nd Focus Group: “So we can plan properly”; “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained, so there is a lot of alignment.”

“I think the sector skills also gives direction on businesses going forward and Government”;

“It is focusing on specific shortage of skills and not just training for the sake of training”; “It also is a sort of a link between business and government in order to report back on what has been achieved in the form of specific focused training interventions”; “To keep up with the industry as it keeps on changing the requirement of skills from the industry - the technologies keep changing” (group interview, November 30, 2012) (Group S. F., 2012)

4.3.1 (b) Results of the Chamber Performance Assessments on Chamber state of readiness to participate in SSP processes

The results of average awareness with regard to factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP have further confirmed through the recent survey commissioned by merSETA to AURCO (Audit; Risk and Control Company), that there is an average state of readiness amongst both Chamber committees and focus groups sessions conducted.

These annual Chamber performance self assessments apply to governance structures of the SETA. They commence with the highest decision making structure of the SETA, the Governing Board, and all subcommittees of the Board including Chamber committees. These assessments are done towards the fulfillment of the National Skills Development Strategy's (NSDS) first objective relating to the need to establish credible

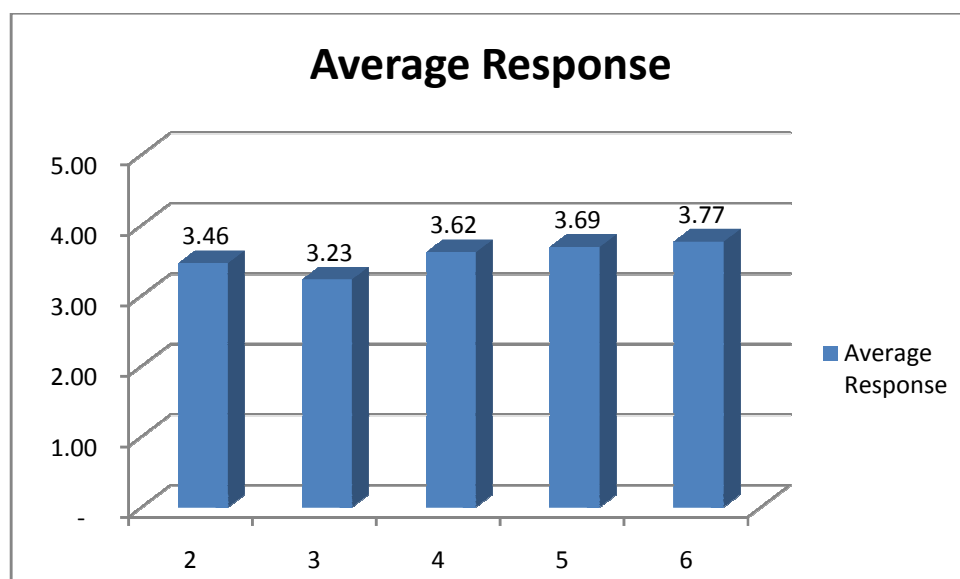
institutional mechanisms for skills planning. In this regard, each governance and operational structure of the SETA is assessed against its terms of reference (ToR) as defined in the SETA Constitution – refer to Table: 2.1merSETA Constitution: Chamber Committees terms of reference on page twenty seven (27).

Figure:4.1 and Figure: 4.2below confirm the average results when the two Chamber Committees were assessed in September and November 2012 respectively against Chamber Committee responsibilities, which in the main are about the development and implementation of the SSP.

Figure: 4.1 Chamber assessment results of the1st Focus Group

RESPONSIBILITIES

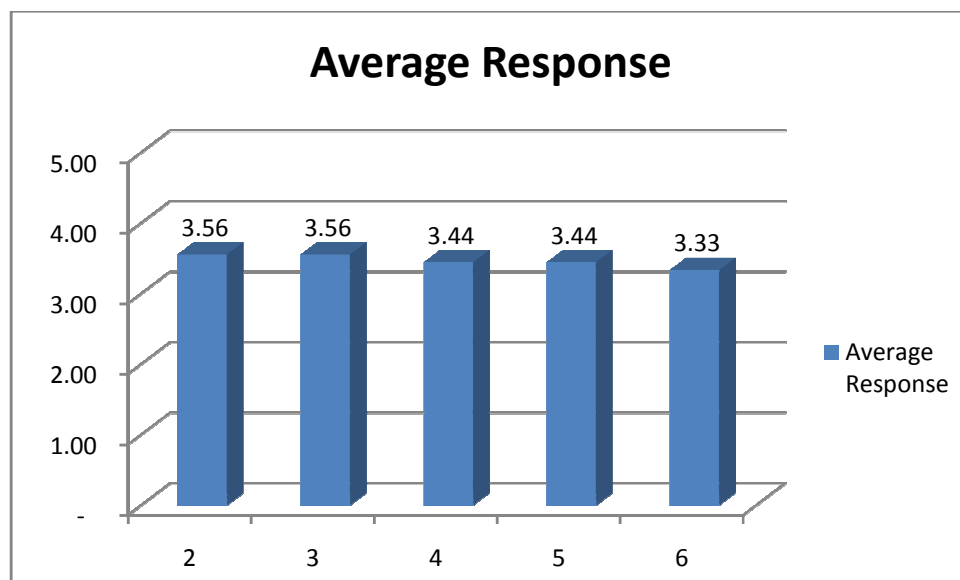
-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURCOmerSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group(AURCO, 2012)

Figure: 4.2 Chamber assessment results of the 2nd Focus Group
RESPONSIBILITIES

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines |
| 3 | The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector |
| 4 | The Chamber monitors the development implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector |
| 5 | The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector |
| 6 | The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations |



Source: AURCO merSETA Board Chamber Assessment Results for the 1st Focus Group,(AURCO, 2012)See Appendix 3 for a full AURCO 2012 Chamber Self Assessment report.

4.3.2 Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

This question in the main sought to establish as widely and in-depth as possible through a research enquiry, whether merSETA Chamber committees understood the SSP process and whether the SSP process has been effective through members sharing their experiences and any lessons learnt.

A mixed bag of findings can be confirmed depicting, among others, the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities and, familiarity with the SSP processing itself. Once again, labour and business perspectives came to the fore as in the previous focus research questions.

The following emerging themes are underpinned by quoted comments made during the group interviews. As earlier stated, the accompanying quoted comments are coded and categorised in accordance with Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory.

4.3.2.1 Lack of industry specificity

The quoted comment the 1st Focus Group suggest a need for an industry specific SSP.

“Tyre industry is a much specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

The need for an industry specific SSP is also supported by the 2nd Focus group through the following quoted comments.

The national bargaining forum (NBF) policies refer to the **2nd Focus group** statutory bargaining forum, a body responsible for determining conditions of employment in the Auto sector. The accompanying quoted comment further confirms the need for the SSP that is industry specific.

“The governance and the new processes and all of that, I am saying this is going to come from government. The NBF, the new process policy and this will be done for labour and for employers as well”

The need for an industry specific SSP is further supported through the emphasis made on the direct influence by company human resources, as per the quoted comment received from the 2nd Focus group.

“There I am talking about the roles and responsibilities of shop stewards because even from an employer’s side some employers do not know that shop stewards can take, if you are full time shop stewards, how many days you can take leave or if you are a part time shop steward how many days you can go out of the office. It is little things that I am

talking about and I am saying from an employer's side that needs capacity building as well" (group interview, November 30, 2012).

4.3.2.2 Current SSP Content

Emerging from both the group interviews conducted, and supported by the literature reviewed in chapter two, concerns were made with the 'make up' relating and inferring to the content of the SSP which seem to be numbers driven instead of being informed and underpinned by market analysis based on changing needs and preferences of the public and customers.

The following quotes and comments from the 1st Focus group confirm concerns received about the nature of the content of the SSP.

"We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based";

"We continued to develop the skills that we needed ten years ago when we were making 13 inch Tyres we would have been out of business".

The following quotes and comments from the 2nd Focus group further concur with regard to concerns on the current content of the SSP.

"There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork"

"What I sometimes battle with is there is so much data where it is kept. So for example the government has got a data base, labour has got a data base you know and how do you align all of those what is required to get an SSP for your company or your business. There are lots of data and lots of information".

"The SSP has been I would say to some extent - there is overwhelming amount of information"

4.3.2.3 Inaccuracies in process followed in the prediction of industry skills and priority occupations

Both 1st and 2nd Focus Group raised shortcomings with regard to the method employed for predicting industry skills and priority skills using the SSP. Shortcomings in this regard were also confirmed in chapter two during the literature review.

The following comments received from the 1st Focus group session demonstrate shortfalls in the SSP in trying to predict number of employees and new occupations the industry might need in the future.

“We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

The 2nd Focus group sessions, through the accompanying quotations, further confirms the inherent inability in the SSP to accurately assist the industry to plan and prepare for future skills needs.

“I’m still grappling with the process and, without saying the process is right or wrong, it is important that the SSP plan is not something that is fixed but continues to be updated and move with the development in the industry”.

“I think we are still grappling with the process and some of us are new as representatives”.

4.3.2.4 Misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs

In the 2005 – 2007 Growth Laboratory study was commissioned by merSETA to analyse the WSPs and ATRs submitted by companies in merSETA. Although the main findings found that there has been a general decline in submissions in the period under review, particularly in the Metal, Motor and Plastics chambers due to the changes in format of the WSP templates, of interest to this study is the list of priority scarce and critical skills as listed in the SSPs during the period under review 2005 – 2007, identifying artisans and technicians as a great need in the sector but the information could not be drawn from the WSPs and ATRs. Sector training for all 3 years under review, has been in the occupation of plant and machine operators and assemblers contrary to training of trade artisans and technicians.

Table: 4.3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006)

Occupational Category	Chamber Committee			
	1 st Focus Group		2 nd Focus Group	
	No.	%	No.	%
Legislators, Senior	73	1.38%	871	3.83%

Officials and Managers				
Professionals	194	3.68%	2617	11.49%
Technicians and Associated Professionals	844	15.99%	3256	14.30%
Clerks and Administrative Workers	257	4.87%	1449	6.36%
Sales and Service Workers	206	3.90%	556	2.44%
Agricultural and Fishery Workers	158	2.99%	180	0.79%
Crafts and Related Trades Workers	206	3.90%	2526	11.09%

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	3312	62.75%	9962	43.75%
Labourers and Related Workers	28	0.53%	1353	5.94%
Total	5278	100%	22770	100%

SOURCE: Adapted from merSETA (merSETA, Analysis of WSPs & ATRs, 2009, p. 38)

4.3.2.5 Company Training Reports

The nature of training and skills needs in the 1st and 2nd Focus group sectors presented during November 2012 appeared to be to be industry specific and often not informed or in keeping with the merSETA SSPs.

Company training reports in the 1st Focus group are predominantly short, non-technical and technical Skills Programmes training, compared to the training reports in the 2nd Focus group which are characterised by a dominance of non NQF Aligned Automotive Industry Certificate (AMIC) training programmes targeting employees in the hourly rate category in the industry which amounts to 28 332 people. There is also a mixture of NQF aligned skills programmes, full learnerships and apprentice programmes and any other training programmes targeting industry staff in salaried categories.

4.3.3 How can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

In responding to the third research question , both focus groups confirmed that the current SSP processes being followed are not effective enough to address the intended objective in guiding the sector and its companies to address industry training needs in keeping with NSDS imperatives, as understood, and the groups earlier confirmed that the “SSP basically give us direction in terms of what we are planning with our training and to form a basis for the workplace skills plan” and “it helps companies to align what training is required into what should be trained” as respectively confirmed in both 1st and 2nd Focus group.

4.3.3.1 A Need for Industry Specific SSP

The following responses were received when focus groups were asked how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP. As previously stated, where possible, alike and related comments are grouped together irrespective of the source, that is, either 1st or 2nd Focus group or both focus groups:

The need for an SSP that is industry specific is also confirmed in the literature review in chapter two. The suggestion for an industry specific SSP is once again supported by the quoted comments.

1st Focus Group

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the sector skills plan. It is not down to the finer detail”

2nd Focus Group

The Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP) is a joint initiative between the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Auto sector. It used to be called Motor industry development programme (MIDP) . This is an industry specific programme which of late is an integral component of DTI's Industry Policy Action Plan (IPAP), a framework seeking to guide the development of the country's industry policy.

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

Although the following quoted comments by the 2nd Focus group presented in response to the second research question seeking to solicit views on Chamber experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, these comments equally cater for the 1st Focus group as well.

4.3.3.2 A Need for a Simplified SSP

1. Simplify SSP Process

It appears, based on this theme through the accompanying comment made by the 2nd Focus Group, that the SSP process is complex. This view was also confirmed under the theme looking at Chamber states of readiness in grappling with SSP processes. Based on the evidence led, it was confirmed Chamber committees are not ready or fully prepared to fulfill their role in the development and implementation of the SSP as described under Chamber committee terms of reference (ToR).

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

1.1 Focus On Right Stuff

The accompanying quoted comment also confirms the need not to cloud what goes into the SSP.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

1.2 Step By Step Approach

The following quoted comment suggests a simplified SSP process of Chamber committee members being taken through a ‘step by step’ approach.

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

1.3 Avoid Repetitions

“I agree with Doug avoid repetition because in most cases we are repeating things changing it there and there and making unnecessary improvements and claiming that we have improved this instead of making quality sort of things and moving forward”

4.3.3.3 Ongoing Capacity Building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building is identified by both focus groups when asked how the development and the implementation of the SSP can be improved in line with the third research question.

The following quoted comments received confirm the need for ongoing capacity building.

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us (labour)”

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to yourself so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the Automotive Development Production Plan (APDP). Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

4.3.3.4 Aligning SSP process with other skills planning processes

Synergetic Process / Team Approach

It appeared, as confirmed by the quoted comments received from focus group interviews, that there is no synergy or team approach when addressing the SSP. There are too many related SSP processes concurrently taking place, often not known by Chamber committees, either at SETA level, or industry or company level.

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...”

“We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”.

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

4.3.3.5 Use of resource sparingly

Based on the feedback received on how to improve the development and implementation of the SSP, it is evident that funding is a critical component in the successful implementation of the SSP.

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

4.4 Summary of findings

Based on the three research questions underpinning this study in seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the SETA model's SSP processes in addressing industry skills needs to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities in the post 1994 democratic South Africa, the following main results findings are summarised :

4.4.1 On citing factors leading to the development and implementation of SSP

Awareness of the SSP processes but not on the same wavelength

The findings of the research here presented, have shown and confirmed the level of awareness although with some unevenness with regard to the factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP, among the two Chambers Committees of the merSETA that participated in the focus group sessions. It is evident that respondents in the focus groups know the purpose being served by the SSP, hence the awareness. It can also be confirmed that focus group members are not on the same wavelength, given their diverse background, despite the common skills development purpose that brought them together. The awareness was further confirmed in the survey results when committee members were self assessed about the performance of the Chamber committees in particular the about the “Responsibilities” of the merSETA Chamber committees. These “Chamber Committee's Responsibilities” were in the

following five areas invariably concerning the development and implementation of the SSP:

- The Chamber ensures that merSETA develops sub-sectoral input into the sector skills plan in accordance with the principles, criteria, policies and guidelines
- The Chamber identifies education and training needs in the sector
- The Chamber monitors the development and implementation of all learning programmes as well as all other training in the sub-sector
- The Chamber makes inputs to education and training policies and systems that may be particular to the sub sector
- The Chamber liaises with relevant bargaining councils, forums and professional associations

The nature of the survey findings given in this regard, confirmed a quantitative average response, which is the reason why a quantitative research methodology is not an appropriate approach for data collection in this regard, due to inherent lack of depth often found in qualitative research approaches in unpacking underpinning factors.

4.4.2 On sharing experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs

A finding of a mixture of both common and varying ranges of experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP in the quest to implement the skills development, were displayed and demonstrated when the two focus groups were asked to share their experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Both the 1st and the 2nd focus groups saw and confirmed the necessity to embark on the process such as the SSP since it assisted in planning to address industry training needs. However, irrespective of the length of service as a Chamber committee member, the two focus groups interviewed raised concerns about too much data and information to grapple with in the SSP processes so that in the process, everything becomes overwhelming and confusing.

4.4.3 On how can the development and the implementation of SSP be improved?

4.4.3. 1A Need for Alignment of the SSP related processes

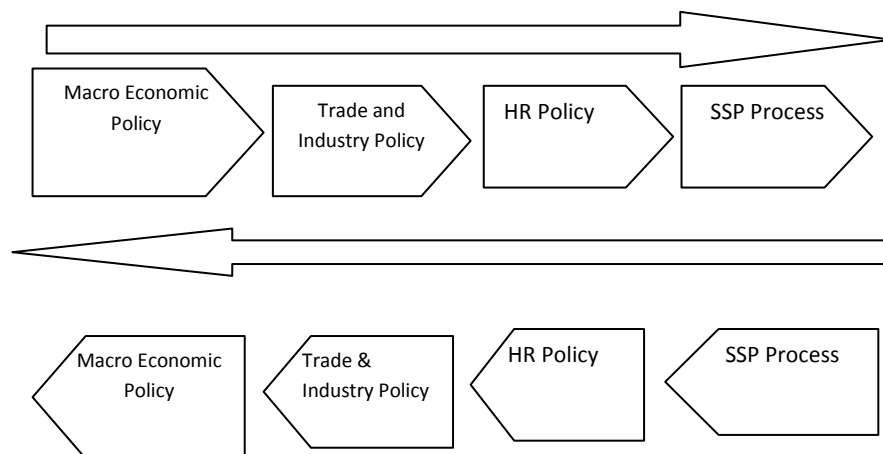
The two focus groups indicated in their recommendations a strong need for amending the format of the SSP in particular the approach, methodology and content - that the SSP should be simplified; be industry focused; specific and driven, compared to the current generic SSPs predominantly perceived to be externally driven, based on the government national imperatives - reference was made to the new 2012 SSP approach being piloted which is industry led.

Above all, a need to link and align the SSP processes to the industry policy - bargaining processes and imperatives; market needs and HR policies was identified as one of the critical factors to be considered in improving the development and implementation of the SSP to be effective in realising and achieving skills development objectives to do with addressing poverty; unemployment and inequalities in the post democratic South Africa.

The comment . . . “We often train not knowing there are vacancies”, is very central to this study. Linked to this comment, it was also reported that the SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there, and it represents Labour as well as Employers, however, not everyone was aware of the initiatives to address some of the critical problems identified under the findings.

Figure 4:3 seeks to demonstrate the need for the alignment raised in the findings.

Figure4:3: Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic policy



Source: Own compilation based on main findings (2012)

4.4.3.2 Capacity building on SSP processes

A need for capacity building on SSP processes and the NSDS was also identified as a critical component to enable Chamber committee members to be effective in adding value to the skills development processes. As it is, the SSP processes are viewed as complex, containing too much information and data loaded – hence capacity building is necessary to simplify the process to be user friendly so as to encourage and achieve maximum stakeholder participation.

4.4.3.3 SSP structure, content and approach

Two focus groups confirmed the complexities in the process and content matters pertaining to the development and implementation of SSP. This was also confirmed in the literature reviewed Marock et al (2007, p.61) that clear SSP implementation guidelines are needed.

4.4.3.4 Ongoing innovation research and development

It appeared initiatives from the SETA of establishing a sub committee to review and refine SSP processes are unknown by the majority of focus group members. This point was only submitted during the 2nd focus group session.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings of the study concerning the development and implementation of the SSP based on the research engagement with 1st and 2nd focus groups representing two of the merSETA Chamber committees were presented and explained in detail. Main issues emanating from these findings were summarised, the next chapter analyses the main findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and analyse the research findings presented in the preceding Chapter four in an attempt to find meaning in relation to the research questions posited for the purpose of this research study, whether merSETA sectors and companies have benefited and seen gains through the use of sector skills plans (SSPs) approved by the SETA at regular review intervals, in line with the NSDS imperatives striving for the realisation of the skills development objectives as envisaged and articulated in the skills development policy. In the process of the analysis in this chapter, findings will further be refined and categorised into related themes and be subjected to critical analysis in line with literature reviewed in Chapter two. The main objective in this regard is to search for a meaning and understanding of the research findings to unearth new perspectives that will assist in enhancing skills development initiatives towards addressing challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities facing post democratic South Africa.

The approach for data analysis and interpretation in this regard is in keeping with how data was collected; organised and presented in Chapter 4, wherein:

The first level of analysis focuses on the research question one -assess through conducting a group qualitative enquiry what has been the understanding and experiences of Chamber committees in so far as factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are concerned. The second level of analysis and interpretation looks at responses for research question two – analyses and interprets findings presented by Chambers committees based on their experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond. The third level of analysis is based on the research question three – discusses findings on suggestions presented on the way in which the development and

the implementation of the SSP can be improved from the perspective of Chamber committees at merSETA

The data analysis in this regard will further establish any data relations or patterns and emerging trends while interpretation will provide underlying meaning Neuman (2011, pp.459 – 460).

As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, data analysis in this Chapter is mainly premised on the three main research questions and is also organised in categories on the basis of themes drawn from the literature reviewed in Chapter two. This Chapter will in itself begin to pave the way in providing building blocks for the next chapter on conclusions and recommendations for the study and, further possible areas for future research and considerations.

5.2 Findings on factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP

This section analyses the responses received, based on the experiences by the Chamber committees with regard to the factors underpinning and necessitating the development and the implementation of the SSP - for the purpose of this section of the study, a distinction between the development and implementation factors is considered, to establish a deeper understanding between the two critical processes within the SSP. However, the study first sought to establish with merSETA participating Chamber committees during the focus group sessions whether members of the Chamber committees are aware of, and understand as participants and benefiteres in the skills development, the purpose of the SSP process.

5.2.1. Chamber Committee members awareness and state of readiness of the SSP processes within the skills development trajectory

As discussed above, given the level of awareness with regard to the purpose and factors leading to the development of Sector Skills Plans, the prevailing unevenness with regard to the understanding among focus group members can be attributed to various factors, which include, among others, exposure and participation in SETA and Chamber activities and the historically divergent views and perspectives between labour

and business within the industrial context of South Africa dating pre 1994 democratic South Africa to date, more than a decade since the dawn of the democratic South Africa.

The Chamber Committee members' profile earlier presented further confirm the labour and business split within merSETA Chamber committee composition given constituencies and occupational position. The split is characterised by occupational positions at work and can also be seen to be confirming that Chamber Committee members are often not on the same wavelength in many aspects of the skills development, including how they relate to the SSP process in general.

Although the business constituency in the Chamber Committees that participated in the focus group seemed very vocal and held the view that a common vision is necessary in understanding what the SSP is all about and how to work together towards attaining a common vision of the broad skills development objectives, the labour constituency was not as vocal in articulating their views in this regard. The labour constituency preferred not to elaborate, but instead to speak through one or two of their members and often suggested they are still learning and grappling with the process and they are aware of the need to keep pace from skills development point of view with the rapid technological changes.

The findings with regard to a labour bystander kind of positioning are also confirmed in the NEDLAC SETA Review report with regard to unions overall participation in SETA processes except where senior officials are involved NEDLAC (2007, pp,20 – 21); Grawitzky (2006, p.26).

A relatively combined average assessment response with regard to the awareness and understanding of the SSP process was confirmed more precisely through the Chamber annual assessment survey results. The survey was based on the self assessment study that was conducted with regard to Chamber committee members' performance against Chamber terms of reference which are all about the development and implementation of the SSP involving business and labour constituencies.

- **State of readiness**

Evidence led under this section can also be related to the Chamber committee state of readiness in relation to various aspects of the skills development trajectory – a point argued very sharp in the participatory literature. It is stated in the participatory literature that to achieve a meaningful and maximum participation from the committee, members should be ready to grapple with tasks presented to them Kusek and Rist (2004, pp. 1 – 3) and Kraak (2008, p.15) and Ramphela (2012, p147).

- **Capacity building**

Linked to the state of readiness, capacity building needs identified, further confirm existing knowledge gaps among committee members. Capacities building needs identified are very central in this regard in raising the level of awareness and consciousness among committee members of their diverse backgrounds and how diversity can be used as strength to strive to forge a common vision, which is emphasised in the literature.

It can be concluded under this section that awareness and the state of readiness about factors leading to the development and implementation of the SSP are critical pillars for the maximum effective participation in the SSP processes. The analysis, based on the data established, identified existing gaps with regard to expectations and how skills development and its key instruments such as SSP processes, are understood. It is the view of this study that these matters warrant a purposefully designed ongoing capacity building and assessments related to interventions geared towards enhancing committee members understanding - to pave the way for building a common vision that is necessary for a meaningful and effective participation in the skills development key activities, including SSP processes being reviewed in this study from Chamber committees' perspective.

5.3 Data on experiences shared with regard to the development and implementation of the SSPs during the NSDS I and II and beyond

This section presents an analysis of the findings in this study about data provided with regard to experiences to date in the development and the implementation of the SSP

during and beyond the first and the second NSDS terms. The reason to expand there view period for investigating the role of Chamber committees in the development of SSP ,was purely to allow maximum feedback from participating focus group Chamber committee stakeholders. As previously described during Chapter four, a mixed bag of findings depicting, among others the length of service in the SETA and Chamber activities, and familiarity with the SSP process in itself, was displayed.

Findings, in this regard, will be categorised into evidence leading with how the SSP is understood from the format and structure; content and the approach.

5.3.1 SSP Format

- Misalignment

Despite the average response confirming the relative understanding of the SSP, participants in the focus group seem to hold the view that the design of the SSP is too complex, and that it should be simplified. Alignment seem to be lacking about training required and what and who should be trained, the case in point in this regard is very evident with the disparities between the training identified in the workplace skills plan (WSP), and plant annual training reports (ATR) often not talking to the SSP or demonstrating any congruence. The misalignment was also evident with Table 4:3on page 58 depicting training often planned and actual training being implemented either at plant or sectoral level.

This anomaly and the misalignment here presented can also be attributed to what seems to be the disjuncture or poor coordination between what training is planned, implemented and the evaluation process necessary to adjust and align SSP development and implementation processes during annual review cycles. Findings further indicate that this trend goes as far as at the plant level where it was reported that HR and training division often do not operate in a synergetic way such that “we often training not knowing there are vacancies” - 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012.

- Training and employment trends

The findings in this regard are best described and confirmed with the often poor communication and misalignment between HR and Training divisions, the poor communication problem is central to the problem the study seeks to address, regarding the failures of the skills development in addressing problems of unemployment through current skills development initiatives. Literature reviewed in this regard, further confirmed that training is often not informed by internal skills development needs or company internal processes but by external factors Kraak (2008, p14) as with the recent 2003 Growth Development Summit (GDS) conference resolutions for training of the unemployed with the aim of finding employment, and the merSETA artisan accelerated training project (AATP) 2012 Tracer studies that reviewed the merSETA AATP. Findings in this regard highlighted that employment after training has been successfully completed, is not guaranteed, that employment is often slow and not immediate, so that even those employed range from fixed to non-fixed and short term contracts, often characterised by asymmetrical forms of employment. It is also not confirmed which sub-sectors seem to be targeting or retaining and absorbing learners after successfully completing training - (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012, pp. 71 - 75).

Suggestions to counter and discourage emerging trends of poor communication and misalignment within the skills development trajectory to do with training and placement are demonstrated in Figure: 4.3 in page 58 – titled “Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio-economic needs” - which calls for alignment across all key structures and institutions to do with policy formulation and implementation in the skills development arena.

Analysis of the evidence presented in this section considers that there is a need to develop synergy between various structures and substructures and components within and outside of the SSP, for the SSP and skills development initiatives to be effective and deliver on what it is intended for – to facilitate skills development that addresses post democratic problems of poverty; unemployment and inequality. The need for the

synergy here suggested, should be monitored and managed accordingly “so that there is a proper plan going forward” (Group interview, November 30, 2012).

5.3.2 SSP Content

- Lack of industry specifics

Evidence led through findings with regard to the training content reported in the merSETA SSP reports is viewed to be national and generic and often not effective and confirmed not to be industry specific with regard to training and skills needs reported in the 1st and 2nd Focus groups, two focus group sessions which are made up of predominantly multinational companies. Company training reports in the 1st focus group often presented during quarterly Chamber committee meetings provide evidence that confirms short, non-technical and technical training programmes as the preferred training in the industry. The nature of the training here referred to is of a skills programme nature and industry specific, contrary to the artisan development training promoted in the merSETA2012 SSP report (merSETA, Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016, 2012).

- Quantitative data problems

The findings led during focus group sessions in this section further raised concerns with regard to too much loaded quantitative data in the content of SSPs - “we tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based” - (1st focus group interview, 21 November 2012) from suspicious data often far from being accurate. This view is further supported in the literature reviewed Kraak (2008, p. 10) where it is argued that quantitative data provided by some of the SETAs could not be verified or validated, resulting in skewed results. Given evidence led with regard to the development and implementation of SSP, it is evident that SSP plans developed based on flawed statistics lacking credibility, are likely to lead to skewed and irregular results, as confirmed during the focus group sessions and through the literature reviewed. It is therefore evident that SSPs developed from such a background are not going to make any effect or impact on the intended purpose.

- **Limitations of National performance indicators and targets**

The concern raised about the lack of industry specifics in SSPs is further evident in Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) and in his review of the NSDS and its implementation instruments where the content of performance indicators and targets are nationally determined so that industry specifics are downplayed particularly on the implementation phase of the SSP Kraak (2008, p. 13)

Analysis of the evidence led in this regard point to the fact that for as long the SSPs fail to have credible inputs for formulating plans, and a tailored implementation strategy with clearly spelled out set industry performance indicators and targets, they are likely to be ineffective in both content and approach or design and implementation. It is also evident that SSPs are likely to fail and come short with review processes, since they are likely to have compromised monitoring and evaluation instruments due to a very weak and poorly designed implementation strategy.

5.3.3 SSP Approach

Findings under this section regarding the approach and the methodology prescribed by the DHET for guiding how the SSP process should be followed further continued to indicate shortcomings in various areas to do with the development and implementation of the SSP including the following accompanying areas.

- **Limitations in predicting priority skills needs in the sector**

Findings from the focus group sessions evidenced concerns with inherent limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, in particular, the most emphasised scarce and critical skills in the SSP approach.

Skills prediction in this regard relies heavily on quantitative and statistical data which often lack integrity, as earlier explained that “the plan is very number based”. It was also raised that due to rapid technological changes it becomes difficult to plan ahead since it is not easy to predict the effects of technology.

Additional evidence led in this regard from most merSETA SSPs reviewed during the first and second NSDS and beyond indicated serious misalignment, particularly with what the priorities are and what sectors and companies are actually training. Evidence in this regard include Table 4:3 Actual training by occupational categories and Chambers (2006) about misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs.

Further evidence also viewed and interpreted shortcomings and contradictions within the SSPs in the merSETA SSP Report 2010/11 – 2015/16 which promotes and predicts the need for prioritizing artisanal training, which often involve long drawn out training programmes, when the actual training in the sector and from participating companies is training on short training programmes, and often intermediary skill levels characterised as ranging at low levels of NQF between NQF Level two to three, contrary to the predicted high level skills of NQF Level 4 and 5. Evidence led in the 1st Focus group company training report suggests priority training is informed by short term production requirements. Evidence led in this regard confirms an argument here being advanced that contrary to merSETA SSP suggested priority training, most preferred training and emerging trends in the industry is training of short term and lower NQF levels.

The merSETA commissioned a study (merSETA, Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR, 2009) to analyse and assess whether what is predicted and planned in the SSPs is what actually features in the WSPs and ATRs, to the contrary, the majority of the WSPs and ATRs analysed did not indicate any skills priority for the years in which the plans were drawn.

More evidence confirming the inability of the SSP approach as a predicting skills plan, is in the recent 2012 merSETA commissioned tracer study (merSETA, AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study , 2012) – findings in the report confirm the argument here being made in that despite the huge intake and success rate of artisans being developed, the majority of these qualified artisans do not automatically on completion of training, get

employed instead remain unemployed, despite calls made for artisan development including in the merSETA 2010/2011 to 2015/2016 SSP as earlier cited.

Literature reviewed in Chapter two , Archer (2007, p. 7) also corroborate limitations in the SSP tool in predicting future industry skills needs to address unemployment, both in the free markets and planned economies due to too many and often self regulatory measures in the markets, and the effects of the dominating integrated global economic trajectory.

- Limitations with one size fit all approach in the SSP

Evidence was led in both the 1st and 2nd focus groups suggesting that the two sectors being represented New Tyre Manufacturing and the Auto Manufacturing are very specific and unique from other subsectors of the merSETA which include the Metal engineering, Motor retail and components manufacturers, and the Plastics manufacturing.

Given the national generic approach in the SSPs due to nationally defined SETA performance indicators, which inadvertently led to neglect of sectoral needs and activities, - Kraak (2008, p.16) and Grawitzky (2006, p.29) concerns confirming this state of affairs were raised in the 1st focus group session, 21 November 2012 that “merSETA SSPs do not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills and qualifications that are used often come from other sectors”.

- Lack of supporting industry policy

Findings led during focus group sessions further indicated the SSPs often do not focus on the right stuff such that “we do not achieve anything at the end” – (2nd focus group session, 30 November 2012). Further evidence in this regard indicated a need for the SSP approach to be policy led particularly from the resolutions of the AUTO National Bargaining Forum (NBF) and the Automotive Production Development Plan (APDP).

These findings are further confirmed by the literature reviewed in Chapter two Chang (2009, p83) and Kraak (2009, pp. 1 – 5; 320) argue that any initiatives for sectoral growth and development to create more opportunities invariably need strategies that are uniquely customised to meet sectoral conditions which should be supported by a particular type of policy that deliberately favours particular industries over others.

- **Lack of monitoring and evaluation guidelines**

Evidence led with regard to the approach of the SSP indicate that the approach is not focused, a point made earlier, although in this context, if there were monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines, focus group members have not made comments that suggest current SSP processes are “not focused”; “We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness” and comments suggesting the process should be simplified. This evidence is also confirmed in the literature reviewed in Chapter two. It is argued in (Marock, C et al , 2007, p. 61) that there is no clarity in the SSP on how to address issues of incompatibility between industry economic demands and issues of social equity transformative agendas, as there are no policies and regulations related to SSP processes.

Analysis of the findings in the two focus groups and the literature reviewed could not find evidence in SSPs being able to predict or plan future industry skills requirements despite SSP being understood to be an instrument to assist in predicting and planning skills needs in the industry.

Analysis further confirmed shortcomings with the format and approach in the SSP often rendering the SSP tool to be ineffective in influencing training in the sector and guiding in planning and implementation of training at workplace level through WSPs.

There are suggestions though on how to improve weaknesses within the SSP for it to be effective in carrying its mandate within the skills development trajectory in South Africa. The section addressing the third research question dealing with strategies or

improvements for future consideration will reflect on suggestions presented on how to improve to be more effective.

5.4 Analysis of data suggesting strategies for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP

It is not all doom and gloom about the SSP process despite evidence presented which lead to an analysis that suggest shortcomings in the format, content and approach in the SSP processes. There are positive elements and hope from the two focus group interviews held that SSP processes can be improved.

The interpretation of evidence led in this regard present some hope in the skills development and its implementation instruments which include the development and implementation of the SSP. Evidence led in this regard, is confirmed (Figure: 4.1 and Figure 4.2) by the average response results in the Chamber performance self assessment report with regard to Chamber terms of reference stipulated on the merSETA Constitution.

Based on the data submitted during the focus group interview sessions under this section and the literature reviewed in Chapter two, areas for improvement are analysed and interpreted under the following categories and concepts.

- **Alignment of SSP processes**
 - Policy consideration matters
- **Funding**
 - Use of resources sparingly
- **SSP structure, content and approach**
 - Monitoring and evaluation tools -current tools monitor and manage the process without evaluation and feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact, and at the same time, identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.
- **Capacity building**
 - State of readiness for preparing participating stakeholders and ensuring maximum participation and taking ownership of the SSP process.
 - Chamber performance self assessment report

- **Ongoing innovation research and development**
 - A need for ongoing innovation, research and development on matters pertaining to the SSP was identified.
 - A sub-committee to review and refine SSP processes

5.4.1 Alignment of the SSP Processes

Analysis based on evidence led under a need identified for alignment of the process highlights a host of factors that need to be considered. However, what is important is that the SSP process is not an end in itself but a means to an end, however, informed by various processes which are never standalones but dependable processes on other factors, discussed and clarified later in this section. The process is very iterative in nature and not organised in a particularly systematic and dogmatic order.

The earlier cited **Figure: 4.3 Alignment of SSP related processes with industry socio economic needs** on page 58, attempts to demonstrate and explain in theoretical terms, key features for consideration in the SSP alignment process as presented in Chapter four.

- **Team approach and strengthening of inter-intra SETA related institutional arrangements**

Data led under Alignment of SSP related processes included a need to adopt an inclusive - team approach where at company level and at sectoral level all relevant stakeholders from various diverse businesses, labour, youth sector and communities at large – rural and urban, divisions and departments, and fraternal institutions are roped together. The analysis and interpretation of data collected also suggest the SSP approach has been more top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes – Cloete and Wissink (2002, p.174). This analysis is supported by the following quotations earlier cited under the Chapter on the findings:

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of

how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)” ; “Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work on SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans (SSP)”

“The only thing I would bring for SSPs is there needs to be a lot closer alignment with colleagues in HR so we know we are recruiting the right people. So, you do not have HR recruiting mechanical artisan meanwhile in our SSP we said maybe we do not want it. There must be that close alignment so that recruitment and who we need, so that there is a proper plan going forward that needs to be...” ; “We often train not knowing there are vacancies - I have started looking at that because often what happens is that you train people in the training division and then I do not know if there is a vacancy, but if have got somebody sitting on my team that knows there is a vacancy at least they know that, that artisan is going to go there because otherwise they will take outside people instead of taking our own people”;

“The SETA has realise the problem that there is too much data and they have created a small steer com group of people from all chambers within the SETA that is sitting there and it represents Labour as well as Employers there and looking at this data, filtering through it, making recommendations to it and interrogate that data whether it is the true reflection of what is required out there in business areas. Are parties aware of suggested the steering committee aware? – from employer side yes, we are”;

Labour, “we do not know of the steering committee”

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

The need for the development of effective SETA institutional arrangements is further emphasised in various SETA review studies including (Marock, C et al , 2008, p. 33).

- Industry Policy

The analysis and interpretation of the evidence led in this regard indicate a need for SSP reports that are focused in nature and informed and underpinned by a clear policy

with specific and deliberate intentions that favour the economic growth and development of the sector. The understanding of the SSP processes by focus group members is that it is a tool that assists in planning for the sectoral and company training needs in support of the industry growth and development strategies and programmes from the bargaining forums, industry policy and broad macro and integrated global economic imperatives.

Based on the evidence led in the previous Chapters, most SSPs were not seen as relevant or useful in guiding in training at all levels, and as such did not appeal to the industry because they lacked clear relevant industry policy pronouncements Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 320); Chang (2009, p.83) Hence the misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs earlier reported under the Chapter on the presentation of the findings.

The evidence here being analysed and interpreted is supported by the following quotations:

“Tyre industry is a very specified industry. It is not like Metal or Plastics a very big industry. Sometimes it is very difficult or I personally feel that sometimes merSETA SSP does not really take the Tyre industry into consideration when it comes to scarce and critical skills”; “Qualifications that we are using at the New Tyre are coming from other sectors like apprenticeships that we are borrowing are from the Metal industry”;

“We have specific needs that perhaps are only addressed in a general way in the SSP. It is not down to the finer detail”

“Although sector skills plan aims specifically at the manufacturing industry it is not sector specific”

“The Tyre Sector is not reported correctly”.

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

The need for the alignment of the SSP processes is supported in the literature reviewed in Chapter two by Kraak (2009, pp. 1-5; 32) and Chang (2009, p.83) where they caution about the ineffectiveness of the “one size fit all SSP” not linked to any industry policy.

5.4.2 Funding

The use of resources was submitted as one of the suggested points for improving the development and implementation of the SSPs. Funding remains an important resource for the success of any developmental project. Funding is necessary for both the research and development of the SSP and also for projects designed in the implementation of the SSP.

The aforementioned interpretation and the analysis here submitted is in relation to the evidence here quoted:

“We must keep in mind that we do not have a bottomless pit of funding that we can tap onto always do these things. We have got to utilise the resources that we have more effectively in order to ensure that we do achieve better things over a time period. So looking at the funding we get how do we utilise it we must utilise it more effectively to achieve better things at the end which ultimately gives us the results that we are looking for”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

Literature reviewed regarding broad SETA review studies and reviews of the NSDS strategies also cautioned about the significance of proper use of funds in a very accountable manner for the credibility and integrity for SETAs to win support and buy in from the public Kraak (2008, p14) Kraak (2008,p.14); Marock et al (2007, pp.19 – 20) and Marock (2008,pp. 18 – 19).

5.4.3 Simplification of the SSP structure, content and approach

The interpretation and analysis of evidence led in this section suggest changes in the structure, content and approach of the SSP. Concerns raised are analysed and interpreted to suggest a rethink and a new approach that is Chamber led and simplified for maximum participation by Chamber members.

Apart from previously suggested limitations and how SSP should be improved, the following quotations confirm evidence here being described and explained as some of the new suggested strategies to be considered in taking the SSP process forward to

improve the implementation of the skills development. These new strategies include the following quotes presented during Chapter four:

“We tended to put a plan together that is very numbers based”; “We looked at what happened last year how many people resigned, how many people left the organisation and we just took that figure and said that is what we need without really interrogating that information and saying well we had 100 people leave the organisation therefore we need a 100 people across various jobs”.

“We did not take in consideration what was happening economically within the market”.

“We did not take into consideration what was happening in terms of technology within the industry”.

“We did not look at what developments were taking place in other sectors that has impact on our sector”

Source: 1st Focus group, 21 November 2012.

Further quotes include:

“There is overwhelming amount of information. We all run jobs; it is very difficult to find a quiet time to read through all these heaps of paperwork. Maybe we could simplify the message to executive summary one pager. It would help to further get the success of the implementation rate going”.

“We must be focused on the right stuff and not the wrong stuff and we tend to do that sometimes to focus on the wrong stuff and then we do not achieve anything at the end of the day”

“We must not try to build Rome in one day. Rome was built over centuries. We need to take small steps to achieve a lot and we tend to do everything within one specific time period. We must take small steps in order to achieve greatness”

Source: 2nd Focus Group, 30 November 2012

The analysis and the interpretation of the evidence led by the 2nd focus group suggest a need for monitoring and evaluation tools - current tools only monitor the implementation without evaluating and providing feedback mechanism necessary to assess whether the process makes an impact and at the same identifies areas for continuous improvement to perfect the process.

- **A rethink in the SSP processes**

The literature reviewed in Chapter two argues for a rethink in the current SSP processes if skills development initiatives are ever to address socio economic challenges characterised by poverty, unemployment and inequality. Calls for the new strategies suggest a need for a wider skills approach which does not solely link or tie all endeavours to address unemployment to enterprise training, underpinned by the industry demand led approach embraced in the SSP processes. These emerging views include models such as 'organisational innovation' Payne (2009) quoted in Archer (2007, p.7 – 17) which suggest in the main, based on international trends, that skills forecasting is subject to unknown margins of error, including the complex, and are not amenable to generalisation of the relationship between technological change and the associated human capital inputs, and as such, skills forecasting is no longer practiced widely internationally; Strategies put emphasis on the "youth employment strategies" DBSA (2011, pp. 1 - 7) where it also suggested that wider skills development approaches are necessary to equip the current 72% of unemployment youth with skills to enter the world of work as the current growth path is not labour - absorbing and the current education system has failed. The argument here being advanced, also support the need for programmes and institutions to create pathways for new labour market entrants into the world of work through the integration of vocational and academic subjects in schools likely to bring the needs of employers and schooling together in a new way and giving renewed impetus to lifelong learning Adam (2012, p.4)

New vocationalism

Evidence led through workplace training reports, portray training trends, depicted from participating companies in the focus group, and which conclude that training is on the decline and conducted on voluntary basis and focusing mostly on short term rather than long term training, further strengthens calls for a wider skills approach which involves integrated vocational and academic subjects in schools which are, in the main, based on the assumption that education hinges primarily on bringing all of the population to minimal levels of literacy because education and training appear to minimize the

adverse consequences of technological change for workers, and workers with such training and education adapt to change better and faster – Archer (2007, p.16)

The call for the new vocationalism is also supported by COSATU and NUMSA - NUMSA (201, p. 16) in the debate advanced against wage subsidies, that young people with or without National Senior certificate should first gain skills prior to entering the labour market.

The argument by COSATU and NUMSA is also informed by the declining enterprise training where job retention is sustained only when there are incentives or subsidies. It is therefore suggested SSPs should expand and begin to incorporate the notion of new vocationalism, that government, public institutions, the private sector and civil society should be leveraging off each other DBSA (2011 p7).

This study notes the views for new vocationalism do not necessarily oppose enterprising based training upon which the current skills development model is premised, but further suggest alternative considerations and strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address poverty, unemployment and inequality.

5.4.4 Capacity building

The analysis and the interpretation of evidence led with regard to a need for capacity building as a strategy for improving the development and the implementation of the SSP confirms how important it is to ensure participants are on board and understand the kind of inputs required of them make meaningful contributions to the SSP processes. The need for capacity building by stakeholders in itself is a positive indication in support of skills development initiatives and willingness to know about the skills development processes to meaningfully participate and take ownership in skills development activities including SSP processes.

Although labour also supported a need for capacity building, they were however not as certain or upfront in articulating their capacity building needs but wanted to be afforded time to consult on the matter. This simply confirms the low ranking and quality of labour

representation within SETA processes, given the knowledge, experience and authority required for decision making and maximum participation.

The following quotations from the focus groups interviewed confirm the analysis here submitted:

“Need a capacity to deal with issues that we are intended to deal with. Because there seems to be a distance between our core employers in terms of capacity and us - labour”

“One that thing that I am looking at capacity building is the APDP. Shop stewards need to know that because it has a massive implication on new form. It is an APDP”

“Need capacity building on the NSDS III goals and objectives we are not all familiar with what are the goals and what are the objectives and we want to set up a SSP but we do not know what we are, the SETA, these are things that we need to be aware of before we make certain decisions in the form of a SSP”.

“Yes, there is a gap we need to reduce that gap. But in terms of identifying the skills that we need the capacity on, if we can agree that we forward that to you so that we are able to get time and check which are those skills that we need to be capacitated on”

“Labour seems to be somehow left behind and I believe we could have much more better process and work SSPs that are well vested if we can have that synergy of how do we bring labour closer together with the employers in developing our plans”.

Source: 2nd Focus group, 30 November 2012

- Chamber self assessment results

The average response results on Chamber performance assessments against chamber terms of reference for both 1st and 2nd Focus group, suggest the state of readiness for Chambers Committees in grappling with Chamber activities as per the Chamber terms of reference. The results further confirm training intervention based on the scoring rates – refer to both Figures: 4.1 and 4.2 on page 50 and 51 respectively.

The Participatory, governance and SETA review studies in chapter two also confirm the analysis and the interpretation of the evidence suggested for capacity building, in particular the significance of the state of readiness of participating Chamber committee representatives and acknowledgment of poor quality inputs due to a lack of the required level of experience and knowledge Marock et al (2007 p22) and NEDLAC (2007 pp20-21).

5.5 Conclusion

The above analysis of data collected has highlighted several weaknesses in the processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSP from the Chamber committee's perspective and the literature review in chapter two. These weaknesses range from ineffective coordination was resulting from top down SSP processes characterised by poor communication, where various structures and departments within and outside the SETA do not talk to each other; the need for capacity building for meaningful contribution by Chamber committee members in the SSP processes. Although there is a realisation that the labour and business constituencies need to work together in unison, this challenge is not practical as yet. The SSP process from the data collected and analysed, is a very technical research intensive process. However, despite challenges out there in the development and implementation of SSP, what is encouraging is that Chamber committee members are aware of the need for SSP including solutions and possible enablers on how to improve the approach to the development and implementation of the SSP. The most interesting part in this study is the similar themes and views established from the empirical primary data collected and the secondary data from the literature review in chapter two. Based on the analysis and interpretation of the findings, the institutional arrangements within and outside of merSETA and its Chamber committees, should be prioritised for the realignment and development of the effective skills development institutions, in order to address the current challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides conclusions regarding the findings of the study in respect to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA by Chamber committees for planning and implementing skills development in the sector, as well as providing recommendations aimed at addressing the problem identified by the study and possible future areas for further improvement and research.

The purpose of the study was to conduct an investigative research enquiry with merSETA Chamber committees to assess the effectiveness of the SSPs in responding to industry needs to improve productivity, the economy, and to create opportunities to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities by asking the following research questions:

- What are the factors leading to the development and implementation of SSPs?
- What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the SSP?
- How can the development and implementation of the SSP be improved?

Two separate group interviews were conducted with two of the five Chambers committees. The primary and secondary data analysis on skills development initiatives were respectively supplemented with extensive useful documentary analysis and a literature review on the skills development landscape and merSETA and its Chamber activities covering SSP processes for the period NSDS I; II and beyond.

6.2 Conclusions

The analysis conducted in Chapter five has revealed and confirmed both constraints and possible enablers to be considered in the development and implementation of SSPs. Moving from this premise, the study drew the following conclusions with regard to the results findings of the study.

Based on the evidence led for the period being reviewed, the study noted that from participatory and governance perspective, merSETA Chamber committees have been exposed and actively involved in the SSP processes. Despite changes in the representation in Chamber committee composition, these findings were also confirmed by the average response results for the Chamber performance self assessments against Chamber committee terms of reference confirming merSETA Chamber committees' extent of involvement in the development and implementation of SSPs - (AURCO, 2012). The study further noted that business and labour constituencies despite knowing what purpose the SSP serves, and being committed to work together, both constituencies are not on the same wavelength with how the SSP should unfold. Although the business constituency seems to know what to expect from the SSP process, labour could not be upfront about how the SSP process should unfold. The weakness in this regard is viewed to be one of the major constraints inhibiting the much needed full participation and good governance in Chamber Committees for the maximum effective participation in the skills development processes in order to realise the desired results in the skills development policy as expresses and articulated in the NSDS.

The analysis with regard to the Chamber committees' experiences in the development and implementation of the SSPs, appeared to suggest the SSP approach has been top down so that there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up by continually improving and fostering effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Linked to an analysis of a top down approach, there seems to be misalignment with regard to various SETA structures involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs which suggest that the SSP processes should be streamlined and simplified even though the processes are iterative.

Flowing from the misalignment of various structures involved in the development and implementation of SSPs, it is also noted that although there is training in various SETA approved programmes, however, the training being conducted is informed by companies' immediate production needs with less effect and impact in addressing broad

skills development national imperatives as articulated in the NSDS because of the inherently and invariably existing misalignment between the identified priority training in the WSPs/ATRs and SSPs, often resulting with many of the unemployed learners and workers remaining unemployed after training.

Further trends emerging from the data that was analysed mentioned that there was too much information and data to work with during the development of the SSP so that participants end up being lost in the process. Apart from the overwhelming data to deal with, the quality of the quantitative data and statistics serving as critical input in the development of SSPs, often could not be verified and/or validated, resulting in skewed decisions and results.

On the implementation of the SSPs, data analysed also informed about poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments often monitoring or confirming outputs implemented without evaluating the impact and desired outcomes. These inefficiencies and ineffectiveness were also confirmed in the study with regard to the designed SETA overall performance measurement tool by the DHET. The nationally-defined performance indicators often neglect specific sectoral trends.

Resulting from the poorly designed monitoring and evaluation instruments being employed, the study noted the existence of gaps in the feedback necessary for continuous improvement in the development and implementation of SSPs and skills development activities in general.

The analysis of data with regard to how the development and implementation of SSPs can be improved, deliberations in this regard were extensively covered during the preceding section in the concluding remarks with regard to the Chamber committee's experiences in the development and implementation of the SSP.

Without repeating what has already been addressed, or deliberating on the recommendations, the need for capacity building was viewed to be necessary for empowering participants through enhancing their knowledge about SSP processes to achieve maximum participation in the skills development processes.

Furthermore, evidence suggest the industry policy to be a significant integral component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans depend on other plans within and outside of the sector if these are to make an impact on the skills development mandate and also address the current misalignment challenges earlier noted.

Linked to the significance of industry policy, there are also emerging trends on how to improve the current SSP approach; in this regard calls are being made for a rethink on strategies for human development given shortcomings on the current strategies and institutions. These calls suggest, among others, a move away from mainly predictions of scarce and critical skills for enterprise development and workplace training, and mention that whilst industry demand led training is necessary to guide vocational training, other strategies should be considered, such as organisational innovation, new vocationalism and the development and facilitation of programmes and institutions to create a pathway aiming at preparing and equipping youth during transition from school to the world of work, either as employees or self employed persons.

This study further noted the emerging calls for consideration of alternative strategies which include reviewed forms of vocational education and training and, ongoing innovation research and development seeking to strengthen and enhance initiatives being explored in the skills development trajectory to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In conclusion, it can be argued by the study that, although the current initiatives for skills development are a necessary component for the socio - economic development geared towards human development for addressing problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the post democratic South Africa, a lot still needs to be done in improving the effectiveness of the skills development institutions and its key planning instruments; implementation and evaluation guidelines for continuously reviewing and aligning and adjusting the development and implementation of SSPs to enhance the delivery of skills development.

6.3 Recommendations

In light of the research findings in Chapter four; analysis and interpretation of the findings in Chapter five and conclusions in the current Chapter six, the study begins to provide insight from Chamber committee participants' perspectives into both opportunities and constraints with regard to the development and implementation of SSPs at merSETA in pursuit of the skills development objectives, as articulated in the NSDS.

The critical challenges emerging from the study relate to the following areas which call for improvements in SETA institutional arrangement:

- The desired state of readiness and common vision among participants in addressing SSP processes;
- the need for capacity building for participants to keep up with various processes pertaining to the development and implementation of SSPs and;
- capacity for effective applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments to ensure continuous feedback in assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise skills development objectives.
- On-going and continuous innovation, research and development programmes in streamlining education and VET related plans to explore emerging trends geared towards the provision of effective education and training to support and enhance skills development initiatives.

These recommendations, based on the findings of the study, are submitted for the consideration by both stakeholders and constituencies involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and in pursuit of the skills development for addressing

problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality central to inhibiting human and socio-economic development.

Given the dynamic nature of various structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of the SSPs, the study sees inclusivity as a necessary approach to be embraced by all related institutions participating in the skills development processes because there is a need to balance the approach to be neither top down nor bottom up but to strive for enhanced and effective communication amongst participating stakeholders within and outside the SETA structures and processes.

Capacity building on SSP processes and NSDS among participating stakeholders and constituencies is necessary for maximum effective and meaningful participation in skills development processes.

Linked to the complex nature of the SSP processes as perceived by participating stakeholders from Chamber committees, and the fact that participating industry stakeholders deployed in SETA structures are from diverse backgrounds and occupy various ranks within their constituencies, the SETA personnel need to be sensitive about capacity building needs by providing the necessary assistance and guidance required for participants to take ownership of the skills development process.

To take ownership of the skills development processes by participating stakeholder constituencies, knowledge and practical applicability of monitoring and evaluation instruments is necessary for assessing the effectiveness of the structures and processes involved in the development and implementation of SSPs and, for maximum participation in the skills development processes to realise the objectives set.

It is also necessary to establish effective monitoring and evaluation instruments for continuous feedback that can assist in simplifying the SSP processes through the provision of guidelines and clarification on what is to be monitored and evaluated which also draws a distinction between outputs and outcomes for all participating stakeholders constituencies to be able to conduct self monitoring and evaluation of various SETA processes from the participant perspective and be able to share their experiences and

findings within their constituencies and at the relevant SETA decision making structures and committees.

As most of the in-puts necessary for the development and implementation of SSPs, including statistics and quantitative data, which is invariably information received from the industry, it is important for participating stakeholders and constituencies to be sensitised about the correctness and the significance of keeping and supplying the office with proper and updated records to achieve the data integrity necessary for effective and legitimate SSP reports.

Currently nationally-defined performance indicators and targets by the DHET to measure SETA performance need to be reconstructed to include a component reflecting industry sectoral specific performance to provide feedback relevant to sectoral needs and activities during the development and implementation of the SSPs.

Alignment of the SSP processes to the industry policy is a significant component in guiding and underpinning SSP processes as sector plans should first be industry specific, although these are also dependent on other plans within and outside of the sector given the nature of today's global continental, regional and local integrated economies – as in figure 4.3 on page 62.

A need for on-going inclusive and empowering innovation research and development is also recommended for keeping the SSP relevant and effective all the time.

6.4 Future research

Given the purpose of the study and the approach followed in exploring international, continental, regional and local trends in the skills development arena, there are various emerging trends and shortcomings which are identified from time to time, given the dynamic nature of the vocational education training.

This study further recommends to the Chamber committees at merSETA, a research on a results-based monitoring and evaluation instrument that will empower and enable Chamber committees to be able to take charge of the SSP processes through

generating the required relevant constant feedback necessary to align and update their SSPs to remain effective and relevant sector skills planning instruments.

Last but not least, the need for inclusive innovation, research and development in the field of education and training cannot be emphasised more, given the dynamic nature of the skills development trajectory. Emerging trends around the new view on vocationalism necessitate a need to keep on exploring alternative strategies to strengthen and enhance initiatives employed in the skills development arena to address poverty, unemployment and inequalities.

REFERENCES

- South Africa Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit. (2004). *Demand Driven Occupational Learning System' of the Department of Labour & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ):*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Adam, A. (2012). *The role of skills development in overcoming social disadvantage*. Bonn: EFA Global Monitoring report.
- Akoojee,S; Gewer,A and McGrath,S. (2005). *Vocational Education and Training in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Archer, S. (2010). *Key Issues in the Assessment of SETA Performance in South Africa's National Skills Development Strategy*. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT.
- Archer, S. (2007). *The international literature on skills training* . Cape Town : DPRU, UCT.
- Archers, S. (2010). *SETA Performance* . Cape Town: SULDRU,UCT.
- AURCO. (2012). *merSETA Chamber Self Assessment Against Terms of Reference*. Johannesburg: AURCO.
- Badenhorst, C. (2007). *Research Writing: Breaking the Barriers*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Baker, F. (2008). *The South African Labour Market*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Biggam, J. (2011). *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A step-by-step handbook* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Open University Press.
- Bird, A. (2012). *The articulation challenge*. unpublished .
- Bogdan, B and Bilken,S,K. (2003). *Qualitative Research for Education : An introduction to Theory and Methods.4th ed*. Boston: Allyn &Bacon/Pearson Education Group.
- Boslaugh, S. (2007). *Secondary Data Sources for Public Health*. St Louis: Washington University, .
- Chang, H.-J. (2009). *Industrial Policy : Can We Go Beyond and Unproductive Confrontation?* Seol, South Korea: ABCDE (Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics).
- Cloete, F & Wissink, H . (2002). *Improving Public Policy* . Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Commission, R. o. (2012). *RSA National Development Plan (NDP)*. Pretoria : Government Printers .

- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2011). *Business Research Methods* (11th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- DBSA. (2011). *Youth Employment Strategies for South Africa*. Johannesburg : Development Planning Division DBSA .
- DHET. (2012). *Green Paper*. Pretoria : Government Publishers .
- DHET. (2009). *HRD-SA*. Pretoria : Government Printers .
- DoL, S. A. (2004). Sector Skills Plan - SSP Guide . *SA Department of Labour DoL and Skills Development Planning Unit - SDPLU Sector Skills Plan Guide* . Pretoria , Republic of South Africa : Government Printers .
- Elliot, N & Higgins,A. (2012). *Grounded theory review - Vol. II, Issue 2*. Dublin: Trinity College.
- Gilliam, B. (2005). *Case Study Research Methods* . London: Paston Press .
- Golafshani. (2003, December 4). Understanding Reliability and validity in Qualitative Research . *The qualitative report volume 8 number 4* , pp. 397 -607.
- Government Gazette, N. (2006, August 11). merSETA Constitution. *The merSETA Constitution* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: Government Gazette.
- Grawitzky, R. (2006). *SETAs - a vehicle for the skills revolution*. Cape Town: DPRU - UCT.
- Grooves. (1998). *Cited in Neuma 2011, Social Research Methods* . Boston: Pearson .
- Group, F. F. (2012, November 21). The role of Chamber committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan at merSETA. (T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Group, S. F. (2012 , November 30). The Role Chamber Committees in the development and implementation of Sector Skills Plan . (H. M.-T. Researcher, Interviewer)
- Hartley, J. (2004). *Case Study Research*. In Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon (Eds.), *Essential Guide to qualitative methods in organisational research*. London : Sage .
- Henning, van Rensburg and Smit. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Henning,E; Van Rensburg,W and Smit, B. (2004). *Find your way in Qualitative Research* . Pretoria: Van Schaik .
- Karl, M. (2000). *Monitoring & Evaluating Stakeholder Participation in Development Projects* . Sustainable Development (SD) United Nations .

- Kraak, A. (2008). A Critical Review of the National Skills Development Strategy in South Africa . *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* Vol.60,No.1 , 1 - 18.
- Kraak, A. E. (2009). *Sectors & Skills the need for Policy Alignment* . Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Kusek,J and Rist,R . (2004). *Ten Steps to a Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation System* . Washington: World Bank .
- Labour, R. D. (1998). Skills Development Act, 1998. *Department of Labour Skills Development Act - SDA* . Pretoria, Republic of South Africa, Republic of South Africa: Government Printers.
- Leurner, J. (2010, November 11). A Change in Focus to Stakeholder Engagement as the King III Code is Described as a Future Corporate Governance . *University of Pretoria , Masters Dissertation* . Pretoria, RSA, RSA: University of Pretoria.
- Lolwana, P. (2012). *Strengthening the skills development system in the post-school system*. unpublished .
- Lundall, P. (2003). *Sector Education Training Authorities and the Delivery of Training : Preliminary Remarks on the New Skills Dispention in South Africa*. Cape Town : DPRU, University of Cape Town (UCT).
- Lynch, L. (2007). The Adoption and Diffusion of Organisational Innovation : evidence for the US economy. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 2819* .
- Marock, C; Harrison-Train, C; Soobrayan,B; and Gunthorpe,J (2007). *SETA Review* . Cape Town : Singizi Cosulting, DPRU and DfID .
- Marock, C. (2008). *SETA Review* . Cape Town: DPRU, UCT .
- Marshall, C and Rossman,GB . (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research, 2nd ed*. CA: sAGE .
- Mbeki, M. (2009). *Architects of Poverty*. Johannesburg: Picardo Africa.
- merSETA. (2012). *AATP Post Trade Test Tracer Study* . Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of 2005 - 2007 WSP & ATR*. Johannesburg: merSETA.
- merSETA. (2009). *Analysis of WSPs & ATRs*. Johannesburg : merSETA.
- merSETA. (2012). *Sector Skills Plan 2010 to 2016*. Johannesburg : merSETA .
- Mhone, G. (2000). *Enclivity and Constrained Labour Absorptive Capacity in Southern African Economies*. Harare: ILO/SMART.
- Miles and Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative Data* . California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Mills, G. (2012). *Why Africa is Poor* . Pietermaritzburg: Penguin Books .
- NEDLAC. (2007). *SETA Performance and Functioning*. Johannesburg: NEDLAC.

Neuman, W. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

NUMSA. (2012, July). NUMSA News . *NUMSA News No. 2* , p. 5.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Education Research Methods 3rd ed* . Thousand Oaks: CA : Sage .

Payne, J. (2009). Divergent Skills Policy Trajectories in England and Scotland after Leitch,. *Policy Studies* 30, , 473 - 494.

Porter, M. (1980). *Competitive Strategy*. New York: The Free Press.

Pozzoni,B and Kumar, N. (2005). *A Review of the Literature on Participatory Approaches to Local Development for an Evaluation of the Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community - Based and Driven Approach Development Approaches* . Washington, DC : The World Bank Operation Evaluation Department - OED .

Ramphela, M. (2012). *Conversations with My Sons and Daughters* . Johannesburg: Penguin Books.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research 2nd Edn*. Oxford: Blackwell.

RSA-DHET. (2012). *Green Paper for Post - School Education and Training*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

RSA-DHET. (2009). *Human Resource Development for South Africa - HRD SA 2010 - 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Sako, S. (2006). *Challenges facing African Regional Economic Communities in Capacity Building*. Harare : The African Capacity Building Foundation Occasional Paper No. 5.

Strauss, A and Carbin,J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. . London : Sage .

Terreblanche, S. (2012). *Lost in Transformation* . Sandton : KMM Review.

Terreblanche,M and Durrheim,K . (2002). *Socail Construction Methods, In M,Terreblanche & K, Durrheim Resaerch in Practice*. Cape Town: Cape Town Union Press .

Twineyo-Kamugisha, E. (2012). *Why Africa Fails*. Paarl: Paarl Media Paarl.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods*. London : SAGE .

Zide, G. (2010). *Higher Education and Training Transformation Process*. Va der Bijl Park: Unpublished inagural lecture at Vaal Unversity of Technology.

APPENDIX 1 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

RESEARCH TOPIC:

A review of the participation of merSETA Chamber Committees in the development and Implementation of Sector Skills Plan (SSP)

Focus Group interview / discussion guide

1. Why you need a Sector Skills Plan (SSP)? (awareness)
 - purpose
 - What are factors underpinning/influencing the development and implementation of the SSP
 - what is the process / methodology to be followed
 - What are targets?
 - Time frames
 - Who is involved?
2. What has been the experience in the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan(s) (SSP)? (reflections)
 - is the purpose being achieved
 - is the process / methodology
 - Understood/
 - Doable/workable or not?
3. How can the development and implementation of the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) be improved? (recommendations for consideration)
 - Any suggested improvements
 - process / methodology
 - Any prior training needed
 - Any other issues to be considered

