

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY APPROACH

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Skills development is a crucial element in improving the effectiveness with which organisations operate in the current global arena. The level of skills of employees in any organisation should be of significant managerial concern. The principal aims of this study is firstly to investigate the success achieved in skills development initiatives in the agricultural sector in South Africa and secondly to develop a theoretical framework of important individual and organisational variables for skills development in agriculture.

Management on farms need to develop the skills of their employees in order to ensure effective adaptation to changes in the sector. A strong need for development also exists among South Africans working in the agricultural environment, as the sector is rapidly modernising and the people employed in this sector often possess low skill and literacy levels. The key question is whether the skills development strategies and initiatives of farms are conducive to successful human resource development, in light of the specific individual and organisational context.

A multiple case study research design was used, exploring the various ways in which six different farms approach skills development and the variables which impacted on the success thereof. These approaches and effects are compared to the literature and across cases to move towards the development of a skills development framework applicable to the unique agricultural context in South Africa. Data collection included primary (semi-structured interviews with employees and management) and secondary (background and administrative) information to comprehensively describe each case. Pattern matching was used to determine common trends between the cases and illustrate them in terms of a conceptual framework.

General support was found across the six cases for the complex and extensive framework of variables. The following individual variables were found to have an impact on the effectiveness of skills development: ability to learn, motivation to engage in and transfer training, attitude to skills development, locus of control, and perceived ability to learn. Organisational variables which affected the effectiveness of skills development included the following: labour relations, organisational strategy, culture, climate, and systems. Many of these variables comprised a number of sub-

variables, which were also shown to be relevant in the framework. Variables in the individual and organisational frameworks were also found to demonstrate interactive effects within and across framework boundaries.

The results of the study serve as thought provoking reading for managers, which could stimulate critical thought and an inquisitive attitude to skills development on their farms. In general, training and development was approached in a very informal manner in terms of strategy, goals, and practice. Managers can surely benefit from adopting greater formalisation in these aspects as it would ease the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating training.

In certain instances additional variables or interrelationships were identified for future study. The establishment of the framework of variables serves to inform future research: it represents a point of departure for research in a critical field where little recent research has been published.

OPSOMMING

Die ontwikkeling van vaardighede is 'n kernbelangrike aspek om die doeltreffendheid waarmee organisasies in die huidige internasionale speelveld optree te verbeter. Die vaardigheidsvlakke van werknemers in enige organisasie behoort van kernbelang te wees vir bestuurders van sulke organisasies. Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie is dus eerstens om die mate van sukses met vaardigheidsontwikkelingsinisiatiewe in die landbousektor te ondersoek en tweedens om 'n teoretiese raamwerk van die belangrikste individuele en organisatoriese veranderlikes vir vaardigheidsontwikkeling in landbou te ontwikkel.

Die vaardigheidsvlakke van werknemers in die landbousektor moet deur die werkgewer ontwikkel word om te verseker dat effektiewe veranderinge in hierdie sektor plaasvind. Daar is 'n besonder sterk behoefte aan vaardigheidsontwikkeling onder werknemers in die landbousektor van Suid-Afrika, aangesien die sektor 'n snelle moderniseringsproses ondergaan, maar die werknemers in baie gevalle oor besonder lae vaardigheids- en ontwikkelingsvlakke beskik. Die vraag bestaan of die strategieë en inisiatiewe wat deur die werkgewer geïmplementeer word wel aanleiding gee tot suksesvolle menslike hulpbronontwikkeling, gegewe die spesifieke individuele en organisatoriese konteks.

Deur gebruik te maak van veelvoudige gevallestudies as navorsingsmetode, is daar gekyk na ses verskillende plase se benadering tot opleiding, asook die impak en sukses van hierdie opleiding. Hierdie benaderings en invloede word vergelyk met die literatuur en tussen gevallestudies met die oog op die ontwikkeling van 'n vaardigheidsontwikkelingsraamwerk spesifiek binne die unieke konteks van die Suid-Afrikaanse landbousektor. Data-insameling behels primêre inligting (semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude met werknemers en bestuur), en sekondêre inligting (agtergrond- en administratiewe) om elke geval omvattend te beskryf. Patroonpassing is gebruik om algemene tendense tussen die gevallestudies te identifiseer en vervolgens die gevallestudies met die konseptuele raamwerk te vergelyk.

Die ses gevallestudies het die komplekse en omvattende raamwerk van veranderlikes in die geheel ondersteun. Resultate toon aan dat die volgende individuele veranderlikes 'n klaarblylike impak gehad het op die doeltreffendheid

van opleiding en ontwikkeling: die vermoë en motivering om te leer en vaardighede oor te dra; die houding teenoor opleiding ontwikkeling; die lokus van beheer; en die waargenome vermoë om te leer. Die doeltreffendheid van opleiding en ontwikkeling is ook deur die volgende organisatoriese veranderlikes beïnvloed: arbeidsverhoudinge, organisatoriese strategie, kultuur, omgewing en stelsels. Die sub-veranderlikes van die individuele en organisatoriese veranderlikes is ook as relevant binne die raamwerk aangedui. Verder is die voorgestelde verwantskappe tussen veranderlikes (binne sowel as oor die grense van die individuele en organisatoriese raamwerke) ook ondersteun.

Die resultate van hierdie studie dien as insette vir bestuurders om kritiese denke en 'n ondersoekende ingesteldheid teenoor opleiding en ontwikkeling op hul plase te stimuleer. Opleiding en ontwikkeling is oor die algemeen op 'n baie informele wyse geïmplementeer ten opsigte van strategie, doelwitbepaling en uitvoering in die praktyk. Bestuurders kan baat vind by die formalisering van bestaande praktyke omdat dit die proses van beplanning, implementering en evaluering van opleiding en ontwikkeling kan vergemaklik.

Addisionele veranderlikes en interverwantskappe is geïdentifiseer vir verdere navorsing. Die samestelling van die raamwerk van veranderlikes dien juis as uitgangspunt vir toekomstige navorsing in 'n kerngebied wat min aandag in navorsing geniet.

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| DECLARATION | i |
| ABSTRACT | ii |
| OPSOMMING | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | xi |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xi |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 The need for human development in South Africa | 3 |
| 1.3 The nature of the agricultural sector in South Africa | 5 |
| 1.4 Levels of development needs in the agricultural sector..... | 8 |
| 1.4.1 Macro-level needs in the agricultural sector | 8 |
| 1.4.2 Meso-level needs in the agricultural sector..... | 10 |
| 1.4.3 Micro-level needs in the agricultural sector..... | 11 |
| 1.5 Government response to the need for development | 12 |
| 1.6 The farm as organisation | 12 |
| 1.7 Developmental exercises in agriculture..... | 13 |
| 1.7.1 Unique challenges in the agricultural sector | 13 |
| 1.7.2 Variables in successful development..... | 14 |
| 1.7.3 The case for effective development initiatives | 16 |
| 1.8 Purpose of study | 16 |
| 1.9 Conclusion: Chapter 1..... | 17 |
| CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 19 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 19 |
| 2.2 Skills development on farms | 21 |
| 2.2.1 Strategic goals..... | 22 |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 2.2.2 | Needs analysis | 23 |
| 2.2.3 | Future strategy and needs considerations..... | 25 |
| 2.2.4 | Formulation of development strategy | 25 |
| 2.2.5 | Implementation of development strategy | 25 |
| 2.2.6 | Evaluation of development strategy impact | 25 |
| 2.3 | Individual (micro-level) variables impacting skills development in agriculture | 26 |
| 2.3.1 | Individual ability to learn and develop skills | 28 |
| 2.3.2 | Motivation to engage in learning and skills development..... | 31 |
| 2.3.3 | Attitude to learning and skills development..... | 35 |
| 2.3.4 | Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning..... | 37 |
| 2.3.5 | Perceived ability to learn and develop skills | 38 |
| 2.4 | Conceptual framework of individual variables impacting skills development in agriculture | 41 |
| 2.5 | Organisational variables impacting skills development in agriculture | 41 |
| 2.5.1 | Farm strategy and skills development | 41 |
| 2.5.2 | Labour relations in the agricultural context | 42 |
| 2.5.3 | Organisational culture..... | 44 |
| 2.5.4 | Organisational climate | 45 |
| 2.5.5 | Organisational systems | 47 |
| 2.6 | Conceptual framework of organisational factors impacting skills development in agriculture | 50 |
| 2.7 | A conceptual framework for successful skills development in agriculture ... | 51 |
| 2.8 | Conclusion: Chapter 2..... | 51 |
| CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY | | 54 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 54 |
| 3.2 | Critical overview of case study research | 55 |
| 3.2.1 | Criticism of case study research methods | 56 |

| | | |
|---|--|------------|
| 3.2.2 | Response to criticism against case study and qualitative methodology | 57 |
| 3.3 | Research process | 62 |
| 3.4 | Methodology | 62 |
| 3.4.1 | Selection of cases | 64 |
| 3.4.2 | Design and evaluation of research tools | 66 |
| 3.4.3 | Conducting individual case studies | 72 |
| 3.4.4 | Case capturing and data analysis | 72 |
| 3.4.5 | Analysis of data: cross analysis of cases | 73 |
| 3.5 | Conclusion: Chapter 3 | 74 |
| CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION | | 75 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 75 |
| 4.2 | Case study 1: Rooibos farm 1, Clanwilliam | 75 |
| 4.3 | Case study 2: Rooibos farm 2, Clanwilliam | 77 |
| 4.4 | Case study 3: Fruit farm, Citrusdal | 78 |
| 4.5 | Case study 4: Wine farm 1, Franschoek | 80 |
| 4.6 | Case study 5: Wine farm 2, Paarl | 81 |
| 4.7 | Case study 6: Wine farm 3, Paarl | 83 |
| 4.8 | Case study interview results | 84 |
| 4.9 | Discussion | 84 |
| 4.9.1 | Individual variables impacting on skills development | 84 |
| 4.9.2 | Organisational variables impacting on skills development | 106 |
| 4.10 | Adapting the framework of variables | 112 |
| 4.11 | Conclusion: Chapter 4 | 114 |
| CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | | 115 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 115 |
| 5.2 | Conclusions | 116 |
| 5.3 | Implications and recommendations | 119 |

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 5.4 | Recommendations for future research | 121 |
| 5.5 | Limitations | 123 |
| 5.6 | Conclusion: Chapter 5..... | 125 |
| REFERENCES..... | | 126 |
| APPENDIX A: Background information form..... | | 141 |
| APPENDIX B: Employee interview..... | | 143 |
| APPENDIX C: Employer interview | | 153 |
| APPENDIX D: Case interview reports..... | | 161 |
| | Case study 1: Rooibos farm 1, Clanwilliam | 162 |
| | Case study 2: Rooibos farm 2, Clanwilliam | 171 |
| | Case study 3: Fruit farm, Citrusdal | 179 |
| | Case study 4: Wine farm 1, Franschoek..... | 189 |
| | Case study 5: Wine farm 2, Paarl | 198 |
| | Case study 6: Wine farm 3, Paarl | 206 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| Table 1 | PESTEL analysis for national development needs in agriculture | 9 |
| Table 2 | Individual factors impacting on training | 27 |
| Table 3 | Criteria for case study selection | 65 |
| Table 4 | Interview section B: perception of individual variables impacting skills development..... | 70 |
| Table 5 | Interview section C: perception of organisational variables impacting skills development..... | 71 |
| Table 6 | Summary table of findings on individual variables | 85 |
| Table 7 | Summary table of findings on organisational variables | 91 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|----------|--|-----|
| Figure 1 | The strategic skills development process | 22 |
| Figure 2 | Proposed individual variables impacting skills development in the agricultural sector..... | 40 |
| Figure 3 | Proposed organisational variables impacting skills development in the agricultural sector..... | 50 |
| Figure 4 | A framework for successful skills development in the agricultural sector | 52 |
| Figure 5 | Chain of evidence in a case study project..... | 61 |
| Figure 6 | An adapted framework for successful skills development in the agricultural sector..... | 113 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the modern South African environment, ever more pressure is being placed on the government who, having made several promises to its constituents in the early days of democracy, has failed in many instances to deliver thereon. One of the major factors contributing to this pressure being exerted on government is the widespread poverty that is still persistent in the country after nearly two decades of democracy and equal rights. To address the effects of institutionalised discrimination and systematic oppression of individuals' rights under Apartheid, government has promulgated legislation regulating the actions of employers and providing motivation for businesses to comply therewith.

A number of laws were promulgated to redress such past inequality in the workplace and aim to ensure a free and fair society for all, among others the:

- Basic Conditions of Employment Act (no. 75 of 1997)
- Labour Relations Act (no. 66 of 1995)
- Employment Equity Act (no. 55 of 1998)
- Skills Development Act (no. 97 of 1998)
- Skills Development Levies Act (no. 9 of 1999)
- Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (no. 53 of 2003)

The formulation of these legislative documents promotes equality and the empowerment of the disenfranchised groups in South Africa, and constitutes the legal response to problems experienced in the South African labour environment. Legislation targeting employment and skills development practices in South Africa are regulated through various bodies and departments. The Department of Labour enforces all labour legislation, through the appointment of labour inspectors. It is the responsibility of these inspectors to visit employers and investigate their compliance (Republic of South Africa, 1995, 1997, 1998a, 1998b). Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) is regulated by the Department of Trade and Industry (Republic of South Africa, 2003).

One of the major concerns in addressing the existing inequalities found in the labour market is the development of skills and knowledge among members of previously disadvantaged groups. Under the apartheid government, access to skills development was severely restricted for non-white citizens (Horwitz, Browning, Jain & Steenkamp, 2002). These discriminatory policies resulted in a barrier to skills development which resulted in a multitude of non-white South Africans being unable to experience vertical growth in their careers (Mayer & Altman, 2005; Silolo & Oladele, 2012). This lack of vertical growth resulted in hampered business development among non-white South Africans in general and may have enhanced the perpetuation of traditional, lower level and non-commercial agricultural activities among the previously disadvantaged groups (Mampholo & Botha, 2004; Mayer & Altman, 2005).

Rectifying this situation is imperative given that the Strategic Plan for the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries places strong emphasis on the reform and redistribution of agricultural land (DAFF, 2010) and the National Skills Development Strategy 2011/12 – 2015/16 on the development and empowerment of previously disadvantaged groups (DHET, 2010). These strategic plans constitute only two of several policies aimed at establishing transformation and economic growth. Across these documents, the central theme becomes abundantly clear: South Africa has enjoyed democracy for several years, but a lot of work remains to be done in establishing a society where equal opportunities are offered to all its citizens. Strategic plans such as these serve to plot government's course to establishing such opportunities. This applies to all sectors in the economy, including agriculture.

Agriculture is traditionally a sector dominated by white South Africans. The sector has been the source of much debate in the media and academia, with regards to the reform thereof. The aim of South African government is to engage in development and reform of the agricultural sector as contributor to the economy (DAFF, 2010). One factor which has been identified as an area of concern is the readiness of emerging farmers to engage in managerial activities required in the operation of a farm (AgriSETA, 2011). Development does not constitute an instant solution to the existing problems in terms of low skill levels, illiteracy, poverty, among others, but it does form part of the long term process involved in developing the sector and the individuals working in it in a manner which promotes the eradication of these issues.

This is a process which requires commitment from both management and labour in achieving the goals set through legislation.

1.2 The need for human development in South Africa

Jenkins (2006) argued that, while the importance of globalisation and adaptation to international trends is essential to the long term competitiveness of industry in South Africa, it can be expected that it would be met with much opposition from organised labour. This has recently been illustrated in the massive opposition to the acquisition of Massmart by Walmart. The parties opposing this action cited potential job losses (among others) as a key reason for their opposition (Steyn, 2011). Jenkins (2006) also indicated that the expectation of labour in light of globalization could be that job losses may incur as a result. The fact that unemployment numbers are excessively high (according to Statistics South Africa, 2013, p.6, p.11) unemployment was at 25.2% and 36.8% in the official and expanded definitions respectively in the second quarter of 2013) and economic development already suffers at the hand thereof makes this a valid concern. Development in terms of global competitiveness is essential in establishing sustainable growth in the South African economy, which could ultimately be expected to lead to greater measures of national development and job creation (DHET, 2010).

The goal organisations should set in terms of competitiveness should be aligned to the global tendency of becoming more oriented towards the export of high quality products and services. This carries with it the implication that the focus in achieving competitive advantages will be drawn away from labour intensive and low skilled work and more towards a scenario where training and skills development features more strongly in working towards the new organisational goal of global competitiveness (Anderson, 2010; Kraak, 2005; Reardon & Barrett, 2000).

The argument posed by Kraak (2005) is that South Africa is experiencing a skills crisis in terms of the development of its people. The concept of the skills crisis is based on the fact that South Africa's developmental record has been found wanting. An exacerbating factor in the underdevelopment of people is the great measure of income inequality prevalent in the country. Tregenna (2011) indicated that the Gini coefficient among all employed adults in South Africa was 0.60. South Africa's high

unemployment rate was cited by Tregenna (2011) as a key factor in addressing income inequality. Tregenna also postulated that the greatest proportion of unemployed people in South Africa are low-skilled, thus through increased employment, inequality could be reduced for this group. Mayer and Altman (2005) attributed the high unemployment rate to slow economic growth and low measures of labour absorption, stating that South Africa's economy needs to grow by at least 6% per annum to maintain the status quo in unemployment numbers at the time; however economic growth is dependent on national growth in skills, technology and capital and the implication is thus that skills development becomes an essential area for investment in fighting unemployment (AgriSETA, 2011; Mayer & Altman, 2005; Tregenna, 2011).

South Africa is at a point where skills shortages are so severe that government is considering an "import" of skills from other countries (DHET, 2010). This seems to be ironic, given the existing unemployment rates. Skills development can thus be considered to be central in addressing inequality and unemployment in South Africa, as the high numbers of unemployed people in South Africa are mainly low-skilled and the country is experiencing a definite skills shortage (AgriSETA, 2011).

One key factor which must be taken into account whenever development of human resources in South Africa is considered is the detrimental effects of apartheid suffered by the previously disadvantaged. Individuals from these groups are still affected negatively, as developmental gaps were entrenched during the apartheid era, leading to the underdevelopment of several generations of these groups. This is especially true within rural communities, where access to education, development and career opportunities were even more limited. As such, agricultural workers can be identified as a particularly vulnerable group in terms of skill levels and developmental opportunity (Horwitz et al., 2002; Mayer & Altman, 2005; Silolo & Oladele, 2012).

The aforementioned discussion serves to illustrate that there are definite macro factors in play within the South African context which result in the dire need for development of human resources on a national scale. These factors are not the only macro influences on development, but serve to illustrate the existence of a macro-level need for the development of human resources in South Africa in general

(Mayer & Altman, 2005). This same lack of development occurred in the agricultural sector, which has been especially hard hit in terms thereof due to the fact that rural development in general tends to lag behind urban development (Mampholo & Botha, 2004; Mayer & Altman, 2005). This lag in development is clearly illustrated in the tendency of young South Africans to leave their rural homes to look for work in urban areas, thus draining rural areas of potential candidates for employment (Terblanché, 2006; Verschoor, 2003).

1.3 The nature of the agricultural sector in South Africa

Agriculture has come a long way since ploughing, planting and harvesting was done all by hand. In developed countries, a definite trend towards more technologically advanced methods for food production exists, and has been in existence since the industrial revolution. This is the same trend that can be observed in many other sectors such as manufacturing or mining for example. One of the recognised implications of technological advances is that the need for lower skilled human involvement decreases, but the demand for higher skills increases accordingly (Edwards, 2004; Machin, 2001; Reardon & Barrett, 2000).

The agricultural sector in South Africa presents an interesting case, as the technological development in this sector is not universally high, due to the fact that many farmers, especially among previously disadvantaged groups are subsistence farmers (as opposed to commercial farmers) who have little access to, or knowledge of modern agricultural practices (Mampholo & Botha, 2004). The importance of the agricultural sector in South Africa has been recognised for many years and government investment in the development of those individuals working in the sector has been in place since before the country became a democracy (Verschoor, van Rooyen & D'Haese, 2005). According to Stacey (1992) government investment in agriculture development projects in Bophuthatswana prior to 1994 illustrated this recognition of the importance of establishing advanced agricultural activities in order to assist those involved in growing in skill and means, but several factors inherent in the approach of government resulted in a marked lack of sustainable success (Stacey, 1992). Verschoor et al. (2005, p. 502) stated that "...these centrally managed schemes failed as a development model largely because insufficient

attention was paid to social reality, skills and entrepreneurial development and management requirements”.

It is here that the motivation for an investigation into the development of skills in farm labourers can be found, as the ideal would be for these individuals to acquire the skills to become effective farmers themselves and for this transfer of knowledge and capacity to ultimately assist subsistence farmers to engage in more effective agricultural practices. The goal is to ensure that the lessons from past mistakes are taken into consideration and where development is concerned (especially in light of the focus on land reform policy) effective interventions are developed (Verschoor et al., 2005). They went on to list four guidelines for success in the development of the agricultural sector as a whole, with specific reference to strategic government projects:

- Technical factors related to the project must be compatible with the social structure and the broader context within which it is to be implemented,
- Diversity must be promoted and established through dedicated support,
- Business networks must be established and strengthened,
- Skills development and the participation of stakeholders in the targeted sector therein must be formalised and promoted.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) (2012) recognised the importance of the role of agriculture in the South African Economy, given that agriculture is the primary source of economic contributions in rural areas and as such provides the greatest measure of employment in these areas. Adding to the guidelines proposed by Verschoor et al. (2005), the NPC (2012) proposed several ways to promote the development of the agricultural sector including:

- the increase of land under irrigation,
- more expansive use of land for agricultural purposes,
- support of commercial sectors in agriculture with high growth and employment potential,
- support of employment creation in related sectors (e.g. service providers, secondary production), and
- promoting ease of access of new entrants in the sector to support functions.

Investment in the development of the agricultural sector in South Africa holds the potential to create approximately 969 500 (643 000 direct and 326 500 indirect) jobs, according to the NPC (2012, p. 220). An essential consideration in the creation of these jobs is the development of the skills of incumbents to the relevant positions, i.e. the development of skills among the working (and unemployed) population in rural areas (NPC, 2012).

Agriculture itself represents a contentious industry in South Africa, as there are ever more calls for stronger action on the part of the government to redistribute land and return disputed lands to their traditional owners (Woodhouse, 2012). These calls still generate strong emotional reactions from both the applicants for redistribution as well as the farmers who own the land they would wish to obtain. Be that as it may, the course for the future in South Africa seems clear: more agricultural land needs to be put in the hands of previously disadvantaged groups in order to redress past injustices. The implication here is that the recipients of this land need to possess the skills and capacity to utilise what they receive effectively in order to maintain sustainable production and food security (Minkley, 2012). The international focus in agriculture seems to be centred on food security and the sustainability of food production (Hart, 2009; Reardon & Barrett, 2000). The implication of the growing concern with food security and sustainability especially affect subsistence farmers (Minkley, 2012). Individuals who pursue this form of agriculture should thus be specifically targeted in terms of skills and capacity development (NPC, 2012).

Larger commercial farmers, who have already established their farms as successful, productive business enterprises, will likely wish to improve upon their success and expand their businesses but will be required to adapt the way in which their organisations operate in the global market (Phillipson, Gorton, Raley & Moxey, 2004). A shift is occurring in the global management of farms: the focus of management on an increasing number of farms worldwide is to become more competitive and entrepreneurial entities. This shift carries significant implications for South African farms, especially in terms of the new skills that are inherently required as a result of such changes (NPC, 2012; Phillipson et al., 2004).

Verschoor et al. (2005) argue that the situation which arises is problematic in that a clear model according to which skills development in the agricultural sector can be

applied more effectively is lacking. Hart (2009) and the NPC (2012) suggested that the development of such a model could allow greater effectiveness in setting developmental goals ranging from global (e.g. food security) to national (e.g. economic growth and transformation) and even individual (e.g. personal growth and earning power) imperatives. As such it can be concluded that ineffective developmental interventions on the part of the various stakeholders could put progress in agriculture at jeopardy.

1.4 Levels of development needs in the agricultural sector

The need for skills development is widely recognised by various stakeholders and the importance thereof is clear in terms of the growth and development of individuals (micro-level), organisations (meso-level) as well as society as a whole (macro-level). It can be assumed that the needs of these stakeholders are interdependent as each stakeholder-level forms part of the next, and none can exist without the other. The principal focus of this study is on variables falling in the realm of meso- and micro-levels of skills development needs in the agricultural sector (organisational and individual levels respectively). The macro-level need has a great impact on the context within which skills development on the meso- and micro-levels occurs and is perceived, and as such needs to be taken into account when considering the phenomenon of skills development in the agricultural sector. Each level mentioned here will be briefly discussed in the following sections and the variables affecting needs on the micro- and meso-levels will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.4.1 Macro-level needs in the agricultural sector

On the macro level, the government has a vested interest in the development of the skills of its citizens, as such development is strongly related to the welfare of the country in general (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda & Nel, 2008; Johanson & Adams, 2004; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999). AgriSETA (2011) analysed the factors for development in agriculture according to a PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legislation) framework. This analysis comprises the major drivers for change and development at the macro-level and is summarised in Table 1 (p. 9).

Table 1***PESTEL analysis for national development needs in agriculture***

| Analysis factor | Development drivers |
|------------------------|---|
| Political | Government policy centred on land reform, job creation, rural development, food sustainability etc. |
| Economic | Supply and demand as well as prices of produce, plant, materials National and local economic state |
| Social | Migration of labour from rural to urban areas High unemployment rate Criminal actions (especially farm attacks) Business and work conditions HIV / AIDS crisis |
| Technological | Long term investment in technology and effect on labour demand New technology requires new professional services |
| Environmental | Water supply affecting international interest in local produce and pressure on traditional crops Natural conservation and pressure for 'healthier' foods requires new approaches to farming |
| Legislative | High national regulation (labour, tenant laws and enterprise regulation) as well as international health and safety standards impact on the nature of business Government policy on certain products (e.g. bio fuels) create uncertainty of sector direction |

(AgriSETA, 2011, p. 30)

Johanson and Adams (2004, p. 5) stated that "governments have a public interest in removing skills bottlenecks to economic development and in promoting access to skills for those who are socially and economically disadvantaged". The South African government views skills development as a key factor to combat poverty and unemployment and in doing so lending aid to the development of South Africa in terms of local and global economic performance as well as international competitiveness (DHET, 2010; Mayer & Altman, 2005).

The development of individual skills within the agricultural sector is specifically highlighted by the NPC (2012) as being a critical factor in facilitating growth and transformation in the sector and thus obtaining national development goals. Akoojee

(2010) supported this view in that skills development can be utilised as an instrument for economic growth and the promotion of social inclusion and consequently a reduction in inequality.

1.4.2 Meso-level needs in the agricultural sector

Organisations in any sector have needs for certain skills to operate effectively. These skills can be attained in the organisation through employment of appropriately skilled employees or the development of the skills of existing employees in the organisation to a satisfactory level. The key drivers of organisational needs for skills development are vested in the organisation's strategic orientation and labour composition (Malik, 2009; Tharenou, Saks & Moore, 2007). The agricultural sector is bound to the same changing global environment which drives development in other sectors, and as with other organisations in this sector, a commercial farm's chief strategic goal is to remain a profitable, sustainable entity (Byerlee, De Janvry & Sadoulet, 2009). In order to fully comprehend the importance of skills development on farms it is important to consider the economic influences impacting on the operation and management of these farms as profit generating entities and how these farms design their organisational strategy to adapt to these economic factors.

As technological resources for more effective production techniques increase, so too will the demand for skilled workers to operate or work with these new technologies (AgriSETA, 2011; Reardon & Barret, 2000). Pressure is being placed on farmers to produce greater volumes of food in order to sustain food security, demands for specific production certification or quality is changing (e.g. organic produce demand, certification demands such as Fair Trade), and farmers are being presented with the challenge of remaining competitive in an increasingly globalised market (Moyo, 2010; Raynolds & Ngcwangu, 2010). This requires the commercial farmer to invest in the capacity of human resources to meet new production needs which can be done through targeted skills development initiatives (AgriSETA, 2011; Reardon & Barrett, 2000; Verschoor et al., 2005).

It is not only the economic concerns which are driving the need for development on farms. Domestic social pressures are also acting as drivers for human development on farms. Farm workers are among the most vulnerable groups of employees in South Africa today, as they are more exposed to potential unemployment (due to

decreasing employment of temporary labour and increased utilisation of labour brokers) than employees in other sectors (Bhorat, 2000). Poverty and inequality in South Africa is most obvious among vulnerable groups of employees like farm workers given the fact that these workers earn the lowest statutory minimum wage. Many farm workers are the sole providers of income in their families. This is due to the fact that many permanent farm workers live on the farm and the agriculture industry is male dominated (Barrientos, 2009; Bhorat, 2000; Kruger, Lemke, Phometsi, Van't Riet & Pienaar, 2006). Bhorat (2000), Kruger et al. (2006) and Tregenna (2011) argued that the employers of these workers are in the position to address the extreme measures of inequality witnessed here, not at the hand of wage increases, but rather through development of skills and consequent empowerment.

Thus, the need for skills development on the organisational level stems from two major drivers: firstly, the imperative to continue operations as a profit generating entity in a sustainable manner in the modern world and secondly, the need for farm worker communities to grow and be empowered.

1.4.3 Micro-level needs in the agricultural sector

In an organisation, the capacity of an individual is assessed to determine the person's readiness to perform a certain function. In a scenario where the individual fails in his role as employee or is deemed to not possess the skills required to perform a certain function, a need is identified to develop the skills of the individual by means of a gap analysis (Erasmus et al., 2008).

Skills requirements or behavioural deficiencies on an individual level are often defined and specific. Development of these skills or correction of the behaviour is required by the organisation to fulfil its strategic objectives. The challenge the organisation is faced with here, becomes one of identifying whether the problem in performance is due to the capacity or the attitude of the individual, as capacity can be altered through skills development, but attitude requires a different approach in terms of performance management and motivation among other factors (Erasmus et al., 2008; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999).

The interests of the individual in development of certain skills is also an important factor in the broader developmental framework, however the focus of this project

rests with the skills development needs and projects of organisations, rather than individual efforts.

1.5 Government response to the need for development

Various responses have been received from government in the form of legislation and policies to engage in the active development of agricultural workers and effective transformation of the agricultural sector. These initiatives have been marred by failure and a situation has arisen where land purchased from white commercial farmers under the auspices of land reform has forcibly been sold due to poor performance of the new entity (Binns & Nel, 1999; Borrás, 2003; Lahiff, 2008).

Further to this, legislative regulation and monitoring on the part of the government serves to place even greater pressure on farmers to actively engage in the development of their employees' skills. It must be noted that because of the multi-level complexity and volatility of the South African agricultural sector at this point in time, farmers (who would support employee development under stable conditions), could foster negative attitudes to concepts such as skills development, employee empowerment, and land reform.

1.6 The farm as organisation

The goals of an organisation are dependent on the type of organisation and its strategic purpose. For example: charity organisations typically aim to help those who cannot help themselves or struggle to do so. The farm as organisation is no different. Strategic goals are at the core of all operations on the farm. The ultimate organisational goal of a farm is to deliver a certain raw product to its customers, which will then go on to be processed and packaged, shipped to a different organisation which will then provide it to customers of its own (Kay, Edwards & Duffy, 2009).

There is much about farms and their management that set them apart from organisations in other industries. In the South African context agriculture is at the centre of much debate, as farms are traditionally owned by white families, while the

labour force consists of predominantly black and coloured workers. In addition labour relations on farms are contentious and complex, even by South African standards. Farmers often provide housing and other services to employees, further entrenching their position in the power relationship. This and other managerial facets are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

The implication is that the farm needs to be managed, as any commercial organisation does. The only difference being that many large organisations are located in urban areas and consequently have greater access to a labour and infrastructure. The managerial approach utilised on farms thus needs to account for these differences in context.

Farms are dependent on human resources as much as any other organisation is. The implication is that where technological, managerial or other organisational development exists, an organisational need for skills development will also be experienced. Skills development should be seen as an investment, and as such serve the strategic objectives of the organisation. A strategy for skills development which maximises the value added to the organisation as well as the transfer of skills is thus imperative.

1.7 Developmental exercises in agriculture

In light of the current situation in the agricultural sector in South Africa, many farmers have started realising that the status quo cannot and should not be maintained any longer. As a result, some of these farmers have begun to search for ways in which to develop not only the practical and job oriented skills of their employees, but also their 'soft' skills, such as management practices, financial planning and general business skills. This could be seen as an essential step in the right direction, provided that it is applied correctly.

1.7.1 Unique challenges in the agricultural sector

In the course of this study, it was foreseen that several unique challenges related to the agricultural sector would be encountered along the way. The agricultural sector has long been perceived to be polarised in terms of the political environment present

therein, which in itself could present the researcher with a challenge to manage the attitudes of both the owners and the labourers of specific farms.

The entrenched poverty and unskilled nature of workers' developmental levels will also present challenges in terms of data collection and providing coherent results to the intended research. The author foresees social issues such as learned helplessness and other phenomena which may have been established as a result of the oppression of vulnerable groups (such as farm workers) for such a long time as a major obstacle which needs to be addressed. It is also acknowledged that if factors such as these are present in the environment to be researched, this may hold serious implications for any sort of developmental programme which may be attempted by the farm owner.

1.7.2 Variables in successful development

Skills development as adopted in an organisation needs to be considered on two separate, but equally important levels: the organisational level and an individual level. It is crucial that any skills development initiative is aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation. Furthermore, the individual needs to experience growth in terms of technical or potential capacity to perform certain functions. It can also be argued that skills development has a higher goal: to empower the individual and enable him to grow in his career (Johanson & Adams, 2004).

To assist with skills development in various sectors of the economy, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established under the Skills Development Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998). AgriSETA regulates skills development in the agricultural sector. In the Agricultural Sector Strategic Skills Plan: 2011 – 2016, AgriSETA (2011) identified seven factors the organisation deemed crucial in the identification of scarce and critical skills:

1. Basic skills development
2. Employability
3. Enterprise viability
4. Enterprise sustainability
5. Sector growth
6. Sector competitiveness
7. Human resource development capacity

These factors are related more to the applied technical skills required in individuals' jobs. With due consideration for government's policy on land reform, it is important to consider the soft skills which need to be developed amongst farm labourers if they are to progress from labourer to farmer. Nuthall (2010) identified three essential skills in farm management (which can be considered to be relevant to the envisaged job level of farm workers with the will and capacity to engage in such skills development). These three skills are observation, anticipation and risk management.

Individuals hoping to own or manage a farm need to develop the ability to observe the functioning of the farm as a single entity, to recognise and correctly interpret important information with regards to operations on the farm and in doing so develop an understanding of the core strategy of the farm itself. Anticipation relates to the individual's (potential) capacity to plan ahead in terms of production and operations and be able to implement the strategic plan devised through observation of the functioning of the farm. The individual must also develop the ability to manage risk in such a manner that the integrity of the organisation can be maintained. This would require the individual to be able to gather relevant information and to make critical decisions based on the information collected (Nuthall, 2010).

In order to enable the researcher to determine the effectiveness of any given developmental initiative, it is crucial to define the criteria against which this success or failure will be measured. What makes the definition of these criteria especially challenging, yet even more important is that in all probability, the lack of development amongst labourers in this sector has not only been limited to skills development, but could possibly entail underdevelopment in terms of psychological and social functioning.

This study focuses on skills development rather than social and psychological development, but the author deems it important to take into consideration these factors when considering the variables potentially involved in successful skills development (as discussed in the literature review), as the individual person will always be influenced by his environment and the stimulation (both positive and negative) he draws from it.

1.7.3 The case for effective development initiatives

It has been made abundantly clear that creative and radical developmental strategies are required in the agricultural sector to ensure that the employees within this sector are developed to their full capacity. These strategies should contribute to the establishment of a legacy of continued development through which future generations can also experience benefits in the form of continuous skill development and consequent earning power.

It is the point of view of the researcher that to sit idly by while a massive number of people live in poverty and find themselves in a position where they are personally unable to effect a change in this scenario would constitute inhumane and immoral behaviour on the part of those with the resources to make a meaningful impact in the lives of these individuals. There must not only be intent to challenge the status quo and effect change, but also a concerted effort based on an effective system in order to ensure that the developmental initiatives which are supported ultimately serve the goals they are intended to achieve.

1.8 Purpose of study

Farm labourers in South Africa typically receive very low remuneration and form a segment in the population which finds itself underdeveloped in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities (AgriSETA, 2011; Bureau for Food and Agricultural Policy (BFAP), 2012). Some employers do implement programmes intended to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of their employees as well as empower them on various levels.

The question which arises here is what individual and organisational variables will affect the success of skills development, given the unique context in the agricultural sector. The research initiating question is therefore: how do agricultural employers (farmers and farm management) approach the concept of skills development on their farms, and which individual and organisational variables impact upon the effectiveness of training and skills development on these farms. In order to address this research question, the following goals were set:

1. To formulate a conceptual framework of individual and organisational variables impacting on effective skills development in agriculture
2. To describe the farm-specific context of each case used in the study
3. To determine the strategic orientation of each farm in general and specifically regarding skills development as envisioned by management
4. To determine the perception of farm management regarding the purpose, value and effectiveness of skills development on their farms
5. To determine labourers' perception of the purpose, value and effectiveness of skills development on their farms
6. To compare findings across cases in order to determine whether patterns emerge which could indicate the existence of causal relationships between identified variables and effective skills development
7. To refine the conceptual framework for further study

1.9 Conclusion: Chapter 1

The contentious nature of the agricultural sector in South Africa has resulted in the emergence of an active and often polarised debate. This debate is centred on the role of agriculture in the economy and the best approach to development in this sector, given the unique South African environment. This debate is inherently linked to the well-being of various stakeholders, including farms (as profit driven organisations), farmers, farm workers, and government. These various stakeholders have as common interest the imperative of sustainable development and reduction in poverty and inequality.

Skills development is a crucial consideration in any sector or organisation, but agriculture in South Africa is a unique case given the various contextual and historical factors which impact on this sector. Research directed at the manifestation of skills development in the agricultural sector is thus required to demonstrate the way in which the human element of development will be best managed. In Chapter 2, several individual and organisational variables which are expected to impact on the effectiveness of skills development on farms are identified and discussed. These variables form the key components of the conceptual framework which guides this study. Chapter 3 presents the method by which these frameworks were to be

investigated. An overview of the multiple case study methodology, a critical review thereof and the way in which it was applied is presented, along with the data collection tools and analytical approach of the study. In Chapter 4 the results are presented on a case-by-case basis, compared across cases and discussed in terms of the relation to the literature. The thesis is concluded in Chapter 5. Here the conclusions which were drawn from the study, the implications of the findings and their relevance to academia and practice, as well as limitations experienced in the process are explained.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to present the relevant research findings on skills development in agriculture in terms of the variables which impact thereon. This entails the description of each variable considered in the study and the manner in which it could affect skills development. Research on skills development effectiveness in the agricultural sector in South Africa is limited, and as such a generic review of relevant literature is provided under the assumption that farms as agricultural organisations face the same or similar challenges in operations as organisations in other sectors. Hereafter the individual (micro-level) and organisational (meso-level) variables for success in agricultural skills development are explored.

The literature review culminates in a conceptual framework of variables which could impact on the success of skills development on farms. This literature-based framework serves as the basis for the design and development of research instruments used in this study. These instruments will be designed to assess the success of skills development initiatives on farms and determine the effects of the separate variables in specific cases.

The agricultural sector is under great pressure to adapt to a global increase in demand for food and changing environmental factors (Hart, 2009; Reardon & Barrett, 2000). As such farms need to develop in order to sustainably account for these factors (Kay, et al., 2008). An inherent requirement for the success of organisational development on this level will require skills development of the people employed in the organisations (Hurst, 2007; Kay et al., 2008). The changes which occur as a result of skills development need to be addressed effectively and often require new and more advanced or diverse skills from employees in addition to these employees being strategically deployed in their various roles (Clardy, 2007; Erasmus et al., 2008).

Although an apparent lack of research on skills development in the agricultural sector of South Africa exists, there are several studies thereon in the context of other developing countries. These studies are mostly focused on pedagogy and the design

of particular curricula. Studies such as one by Wallenborn (2009) demonstrated the value of skills development within an agricultural context: in Tajikistan rural economies were highly reliant on agriculture to provide families with income. Where vocational education and training was implemented successfully, higher productivity and personal income were realised. Allais (2012) recognised the relevance of vocational education and training in the South African context, but highlighted certain policy issues which have marred the potential effect thereof (e.g. government policies related thereto and the composition and operation of SETAs, both macro-level factors as contemplated in Chapter 1).

Palmer (2009) highlighted the importance of appropriate policy and educational programme design in promoting effective technical and vocational skills development within the Ghanaian context. In Ghana programmes such as informal apprenticeships have been shown to promote skills development, however there was a lack of quality assurance, which was to be addressed through appropriate policy development. Technical and vocational education and training is established as an important element in ensuring sustainability in agricultural operations. To support the success of this education and training, the needs of the particular agricultural industry and the competence of the individual needed to be considered, as Barrick, Samy, Gunderson and Thoron (2009) argued in terms of the Egyptian agricultural context. These studies highlight relevant and important concerns; however they fail to appropriately address the individual and organisational variables which impact on skills development in agriculture, especially in light of the South African context.

This particular context is of importance when viewing skills development in agriculture as a largely needs driven process between various stakeholders (the state, employers, employees, training providers and regulatory bodies) (AgriSETA, 2011; Eraut & Hirsh, 2010; Erasmus et al., 2008). The application and success of skills development in the agricultural sector can therefore be assumed to be strongly context dependent. This assumption can be made given the diverse needs expressed by the various stakeholders involved in the process. This study is focused on the individual (employee) and organisational levels. A description of the variables identified as having the potential to affect the effectiveness of skills development on farms on these levels follows.

2.2 Skills development on farms

As previously argued, skills development in organisations has at its core needs on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. It is crucial that organisations consider skills development as a process and not a haphazard solution to some arbitrary performance problem in the workplace. The organisation must determine specific skills development requirements (within the context of macro-level influences) utilising an effective needs analysis comprising the micro- and meso- levels (Eraut & Hirsh, 2010; Erasmus et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2008). The focus on these two levels corresponds to the human resource development function in an organisation, as described by Mankin (2001), where human resource development is seen as an integrated function of human resource management, comprising organisation development (on the meso-level), career development, and training and development (on the micro-level). Human resource development is thus not used synonymously to training and development here; training and development is seen as part of the strategic process which human resource development entails.

Following this, it is imperative that the value of the intended skills development project be taken into account to determine its feasibility. From an organisational point of view, skills development should serve a strategic goal within the organisation and contribute to the ultimate operation of the organisation (Barron, 2003; Price, 2008). This needs to be done in a rational manner that serves the needs of the organisation and makes a definite contribution to the functioning of the organisation (Barron, 2003; Bechet & Walker, 1993; Price, 2008; Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Baker and Leidecker (2001) showed that strategic planning on farms will positively impact on performance, especially in light of the fact that such planning is not often engaged in. Management in agriculture also face strategic decisions similar in nature to those in other sectors, as such the strategic importance of skills development could be argued to be generalisable (King, Boehlje, Cook & Sonka, 2010).

Skills development initiatives must be aligned strategically, but it is of equal importance that the process is designed in a manner which constitutes effective transfer of knowledge and ability. It is thus essential that stakeholders in strategic roles in the organisation ensure that all such exercises are conducive to effective

skills transfer, which would benefit the organisation as well as its employees (Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010; Grossman & Salas, 2011; King et al., 2010).



Figure 1. The strategic skills development process

(adapted from Erasmus et al., 2008; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999; Michalak & Yager, 2001)

The skills development process in an organisation can be described according to a systematic framework. It is a process flowing forth from an organisation's strategic goals and training needs and which should culminate in the organisational skills profile determined to be the most suitable according to strategy and needs (Erasmus et al., 2008; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999; Niazi, 2011; Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Figure 1 above presents the strategic skills development process and an explanation of the different stages follows.

2.2.1 Strategic goals

In this phase, the organisation should consider its vision, mission and objectives in terms of performance, growth, competitiveness, culture and other organisational

concerns to obtain clarity on its strategic direction as a business entity (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Erasmus et al., 2008; Tharenou et al., 2007). Tharenou et al. (2007, p. 268) stated that in order for training to make a contribution to organisational effectiveness it "...must be of strategic importance to the organization, effectively designed and delivered, and it must transfer to the job".

2.2.2 Needs analysis

This needs analysis stage is crucial in determining what skills development initiatives are to be conducted, as the purpose thereof is to define where the organisation needs to build skills in order to effectively serve its strategic goals (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Aguinis and Kraiger (2009, p. 461) recognised that "there continues to be little theoretical or empirical work on needs assessment". In spite of this it can be argued that such a needs assessment is instrumental in determining organisational and individual needs for development (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Erasmus, Loedolff & Hammann, 2010; Price, 2008).

Needs analysis exercises can comprise various elements and utilise various sources of information, yet the core principle is to draw a comparison between current and ideal skills profiles on both the individual (micro) and organisational (meso) levels (Iqbal & Khan, 2011; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999). Erasmus et al. (2008) utilised the model of Michalak and Yager (2001) to illustrate the process through which training needs can be determined. Kay et al. (2008) argued that the same model should be used in planning for human resources requirements in terms of quantity and quality as well as the working conditions inherent to the specific work roles. This model (Erasmus et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2008; Michalak & Yager, 2001) described the full process from behavioural discrepancies (underperformance) to dismissal of the employee in the following way:

- Firstly, the behavioural discrepancies in the organisation need to be determined.
- When this has been done, the employer should consider the various training programmes aimed at addressing the problem at hand in terms of its cost versus the value it may add.

- The employer should then consider whether the problem is the result of a lack of capacity on the part of the employee to perform effectively, or whether the problem is the result of unwillingness to perform on the part of the employee.
- If the employee is deemed not to possess the skills to perform a certain function, internal assistance should first be provided in an attempt to correct behaviour.
- Should this fail, external training can be provided to the employee in question.
- The employee will need time to exercise the skills he has been taught.
- If the employee still does not perform satisfactorily, the employer can consider changing the job itself.
- Further failure on the part of the employee to perform adequately after changing the job requirements could finally result in the transfer or dismissal of the employee.
- If the employee has been deemed to possess the capacity to perform his job well, the employer can consider the impact of incentives or corrective measures (such as disciplinary action), whether feedback given to the employee regarding his performance is sufficient or whether other factors are resulting in the observed behavioural discrepancy.

The employer can utilise a wide variety of tools to gather the relevant information, including (but not limited to): questionnaires, interviews with employees and managers, observation of employees in the workplace, facilitation of group discussions, study of documentary evidence, study of job descriptions and performance of job analyses (Iqbal & Khan, 2011; Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger & Smith-Jentsch, 2012). It is important to note that underperformance by employees in the organisation will not always be the result of a lack of skills or a behavioural discrepancy as previously contemplated, but could be the result of insufficient or out-dated technology, inappropriate work design and working conditions (Cekada, 2010; Erasmus et al., 2008; Kay et al., 2008). The training needs analysis can be considered to be the key step in this process. It lays the foundation for the remaining steps in the process in light of the strategic goals of the organisation identified in the first step.

2.2.3 Future strategy and needs considerations

The strategic plan of an organisation in terms of future skills development is dependent on the objectives the organisation sets for itself as well as external factors which may impact on the context within which the organisation operates (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). This is effectively an extension of the needs analysis, but in terms of the macro-level factors driving development needs, taking into consideration the organisation's function in its designated economic sector over the longer term (Erasmus et al., 2008; Lancaster & Wolfson 1998, Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Baker and Leidecker (2001) found that long term planning in terms of organisational goals to be positively correlated to farm performance.

2.2.4 Formulation of development strategy

With the completion of the needs analysis, the organisation can proceed to formulate a specific strategy for skills development, targeting the key areas identified for required development. This strategy comprises a comprehensive plan for skills development in the organisation over a specific period in terms of planned training and development interventions, and alignment with organisational strategy as a whole (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Erasmus et al., 2008; Way & Johnson, 2005).

2.2.5 Implementation of development strategy

During the period contemplated in the strategic plan for skills development, the organisation should implement the planned training and development interventions at the appropriate times in the manner best suited to the needs described in the analysis of required development (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Erasmus et al., 2008; Erasmus et al., 2010). It is of critical importance that the specific interventions are designed in such a manner that they promote effective transfer of knowledge and skills and serve the achievement of strategic objectives. Appropriate design and implementation of strategic training and development would allow the organisation to promote and align its human capital (the collective competencies of the organisation's workforce) to its operational strategy (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Ployhart, 2006, King et al., 2010).

2.2.6 Evaluation of development strategy impact

Where interventions aimed at establishing change and improvement are implemented, it is very important to critically evaluate the impact thereof on the

strategic goals of the organisation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Lancaster & Wolfson, 1999). The ultimate purpose of skills development is to aid the organisation in achieving its objectives, and if this has not been achieved, the intervention can be considered to have failed. A further purpose of such critical evaluation is to determine whether the intervention failed to cover certain areas, which can then be addressed forthwith.

2.3 Individual (micro-level) variables impacting skills development in agriculture

Learning, and by implication the transfer of knowledge, skills and abilities, is a personal experience. A focus on the personal nature of training can provide valuable insight into the most appropriate framework to use for effective skills development (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Blanchard & Thacker, 1999). Aguinis and Kraiger, (2009, p. 461) described the transfer of learning as “the extent to which new knowledge and skills learned during training are applied on the job”. Nunes (2003) argued that the transfer of learning is essential to realising the potential of an organisation’s investment in its human capital.

Bandura’s (1986) conceptualisation of social learning provides a useful broad framework for considering the way in which individuals acquire and retain certain behaviour and conceptualisations of knowledge. The underlying concept to social learning is that the interaction between cognitive, behavioural and contextual factors determines the transfer of learning experienced by an individual (Bandura, 1986; Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2009). The individual ability and motivation to learn have been shown to impact on the intent of the individual to transfer learning and thus realise investment in training and development (Bhatti, Battour & Sundram, 2013; Nunes, 2003).

According to social learning theory the cognitive factors impacting on learning are the motivation of the individual to learn, the attention the individual pays to training content, and the measure of retention of learned content after the training intervention has run its course. Newstrom and Lengenick-Hall (1991) postulated that in order to truly consider the effectiveness of skills development, other individual

dimensions apart from the cognitive factors identified here should be taken into account. Nunes (2003) supported this argument, indicating that the attitude and motivation of the trainee would have an impact on skills transfer. These individual factors are illustrated in Table 2.

| Table 2 | | |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Individual factors impacting on training</i> | | |
| Individual factor | Description | Classification |
| 1. Instrumentality | Require material to be immediately applicable | Motivation (expectancy) |
| 2. Scepticism | Requires justification for training to be taken | Attitude (scepticism) |
| 3. Resistance to change | Fear of consequences of change due to training | Attitude (resistance to change) |
| 4. Attention span | Gradual decay of attention paid in training | Ability to learn (cognitive engagement) |
| 5. Level of expectation | Individual requirement of specific degree of quality / quantity of training | Motivation (expectancy) |
| 6. Personal needs | Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations | Motivation (personal needs) |
| 7. Absorption level | Ease with which new material can be absorbed | Ability to learn (cognitive engagement) |
| 8. Interest in topic | Personal interest in the topic of training | Motivation (job involvement and interest in subject) |

(adapted from Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991)

Table 2 above illustrates one part of the complex network of individual variables which could be expected to have an impact on skills development on farms. The variables mentioned can be grouped to form five major individual variables impacting on skills development. These variables can be classified as: the individual's actual ability, perceived ability, attitude, motivation, and personality factors related to learning and skills development.

2.3.1 Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Learning is a natural phenomenon at its most basic level which is applicable to each person, although individual differences will impact on the extent to which the individual is capable of acquiring new knowledge, skills or abilities. There are several factors which determine an individual's ability to learn in terms of: influencing the way in which an individual interprets information, the speed at which the individual can do this, the measure of information retained by the individual after completion of a learning event, and the extent to which new knowledge and skills are applied in the working context (transferred) (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Nunes, 2003).

2.3.1.1 Learner readiness

In the agricultural sector, labourers often possess very low skill levels (AgriSETA, 2011) and these low skill levels can consequently be expected to negatively impact on their ability to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities if skills development initiatives are not designed appropriately. Skills development can be viewed as a progressive intervention in the workplace, whereby the employer seeks to change the behaviour of the employee at work, thus when building on the conceptualisation of learner readiness, the employee who does not possess the necessary skills to progress through training and development initiatives can be expected to experience a compromised attempt at further skills development.

The readiness of the individual to engage in learning and skills development can be expected to play a significant role in the ability of the individual to learn. Learner readiness can be conceptualised as the progressive development of skills which enable the individual to learn new and more complex abilities and allow the learner to be prepared for the challenges of new training exercises (Bhatti et al., 2013). Readiness to learn can thus be considered to be a progression through various developmental stages, implying that previously acquired knowledge, skills and abilities are considered to be the foundation for future skills development. An extension of this definition includes the readiness of learners for specific skills development initiatives in terms of awareness and involvement therein prior to the implementation thereof (Bates & Holton, 2004; Bhatti et al., 2013).

The link between learner readiness and motivation to transfer in terms of a learning transfer system has also been clearly demonstrated, indicating that motivation may be affected by the learner's readiness to engage in skills development (Bhatti et al., 2013; Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000; Nunes, 2003). The implication here is that the measure of readiness could impact on the willingness of the individual to engage in particular learning activities. It is thus possible that learner readiness may impact the effectiveness of skills development both directly and indirectly.

2.3.1.2 Learning potential

Learning involves the development and crystallisation of new knowledge and skills in the form of competencies. Over time, the learner draws on these established competencies when developing new ones. Existing competencies thus allow learners to effectively respond to new and unfamiliar stimuli and continuously develop them (to a lesser or greater extent, given individual differences) (De Goede, 2007; Taylor 1994). It is important to differentiate between learner readiness and learning potential in the context of this research project. Learner readiness refers here to the existing knowledge, skills and abilities the learner previously acquired that would impact on the learner's ability to develop further, whereas learning potential focuses on the capacity of the individual to acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to deal with an unfamiliar situation (Bhatti et al., 2013; Silzer & Church, 2009; Taylor, 1994). This capacity of the individual to transfer knowledge from a conceptual framework to established competency will directly affect the speed and effectiveness with which the individual learns.

Learning potential can be considered to be an essential factor in the capacity of the individual to learn and develop new skills and that this potential comprises inherent dispositions with regards to cognitive ability and learned processes of engaging in development which promote or restrict the capacity of the individual to build new competencies (Silzer & Church, 2009; Taylor, 1994). It can be assumed that each individual possesses some measure of learning potential and can develop in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities. Given the physical nature of work in the agricultural sector, training and development would most likely be aimed at developing basic cognitive and practical skills, which could imply that a lower measure of learning potential among trainees would be required than in the case of managerial employees, for example.

The issue which needs to be determined here is whether employees possess the ability to develop these basic skills and whether employers take any steps to identify the existence thereof. An additional possible benefit to the employer in considering learning potential is that employees could be identified for further training and development at the appropriate time. Utilisation of complex learning potential assessment instruments is expected to be limited (if not non-existent) among farm labourers, as these instruments are more likely to be used in formal, more highly skilled work contexts. Taylor (1994) observed that performance on complex learning tasks were more highly correlated to assessments of fluid intelligence (the capacity of the individual to process abstract thoughts and develop conceptualisations of the matter at hand) than simple learning tasks. This study investigates whether employees' learning potential (as displayed in training and development and workplace learning exercises) is considered as a selection criterion for further training by employers.

2.3.1.3 Cognitive engagement

As part of an expansion on a learning potential structural model, Burger (2012) indicated that cognitive engagement in learning exercises and the time learners spent thereon impacted on learning performance. By extension, it could be argued that the measure of cognitive engagement in terms of effort and time, could impact on skills development effectiveness in the agricultural sector. Such engagement constitutes an investment of intellectual resources on the part of the trainee which would thus enable the trainee to acquire knowledge to a greater or lesser extent.

The attention the individual pays whilst engaging in training will be a determining factor in the measure of new knowledge acquired, according to an information processing perspective on learning (Taylor, 1994). This measure of attention can be expected to impact on the amount of information received and the manner in which it is processed, resulting in a given measure of internalisation (Taylor, 1994). The cognitive input of the individual over time can thus be considered to be a determinant of the ability of the individual to learn and could also influence the measure of absorption of information during training and development initiatives (Burger, 2012; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Taylor 1994).

When considering an information processing approach as discussed by Taylor (1994), it becomes clear that an individual's propensity for information storage in short and long term memory will affect the effectiveness of learning. The strategies utilised by the individual to establish this storage may vary, but persistence in and focus on the task of learning is deemed essential in the successful development of new knowledge skills and abilities (Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke & Akey, 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

It stands to reason that the cognitive engagement of employees on a farm would likely also affect their performance in skills development initiatives. The measure of cognitive engagement on the part of employees is thus investigated as a variable impacting on the effectiveness of skills development.

2.3.2 Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

The conscious decision of an individual to engage in a certain activity is dependent on the motivation of the person, considering that motivation is a driver of behaviour (Gibson et al., 2009). The motivation of the individual can reasonably be expected to significantly impact the effectiveness of skills development, as a lack of motivation could result in the individual not making the effort to acquire the relevant knowledge skills and abilities being presented through training. It will also be necessary for the employee to be motivated to transfer new learned content to tasks at work, if the employer is to derive any value from this (Nunes, 2003).

Individual motivation to engage in skills development can be considered to be a complex phenomenon, one which is affected by various other factors and which has a central role in determining the success of training and development initiatives in terms of both learning and skills transfer (Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000; Nunes, 2003; Tharenou, 2001). Learning in itself constitutes an individual measure of success in training, whereas organisational success in training and development could be measured through the extent to which employees apply their new knowledge and skills at work. The complexity of motivation to learn (and transfer learning) is acknowledged in this study and the effects of other factors on motivation are indicated; however it is important to note that motivation to engage in skills development is one of several variables in the study and not the central concept to be investigated. Motivation to engage in skills development and transfer learning in

the agricultural sector could prove to be a critical factor in effective skills development, especially in light of the unique environment inherent to this sector.

It is important that proper differentiation is made between the motivation of the individual to engage in training and development and the attitude of the individual thereto. Motivation to learn refers to a specific future training exercise, whereas attitude refers to the general cognitive and emotional attitude to all training and development in the organisation (Noe & Scmhitt, 1986; Rowold, 2007; Warr & Bunce, 1995). The expectation was that an interactive relationship would exist between the variables, but that the impact of each on the individual determinants for successful skills development would be observed in different ways. It is expected that attitude would impact on the individual's motivation to learn, as this has been demonstrated previously (Noe & Scmhitt, 1986; Rowold, 2007; Warr & Bunce, 1995), thus necessitating the inclusion of attitude to training as a major variable. Motivation, considered as separate from the attitude of the individual could be seen as stemming from various sources such as personal needs of the individual, the individual's involvement with, and interest in his job and the expectations harboured by the individual with regards to skills development.

2.3.2.1 Personal needs

Motivation of an individual person is dependent to a large extent on the needs or desires of that person (Gibson et al., 2009). Where a personal need is experienced, the individual will be more inclined to engage in activities serving this need. Personal needs and work related needs are often related, as working life will impact on the personal life and circumstances of the individual (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Gibson et al., 2009; Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

One such factor related to the personal need of an employee to engage in effective skills development is the importance of remaining employable, especially in the South African environment where unemployment is very high. Skills development is deemed to be an essential element in an individual's employability and capacity to assume greater responsibility (Aggarval & Bhargava, 2009; Baker & Aldrich, 1996; Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle & Collins, 2001). This growth in terms of employability and capacity should enhance job security by ensuring sustained employment and growth in potential value to be added to the organisation.

Given the socio-economic conditions in which farm workers find themselves, perception of improvement on personal needs satisfaction could enhance motivation to engage in skills development. The immediate question raised here is whether employees on farms are aware of potential improvements in needs satisfaction at the hand of skills development initiatives and whether this motivates them to engage in such exercises.

2.3.2.2 Job involvement and interest in the subject

Job involvement can be defined as the extent to which an individual immerses himself in his work and develops a measure of psychological identification therewith (Širca, Babnik & Breznik, 2013). This, in addition to the individual's personal interest in the subject matter of skills development interventions could determine the measure of enthusiasm the individual expresses to take part in such an intervention (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Blume et al., 2010; Colquitt et al., 2000; Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Both direct and indirect positive impacts on individual performance in training and development could stem from job involvement and the interest of the learner in subject matter. The effort made by the individual to internalise new content could directly impact on performance in training and development while positive changes in attitude and motivation could represent an indirect impact.

The motivational aspect of high measures of job involvement stems from various sources, such as the individual's perception of improved value, performance and skills at work (Noe, 1986). It has been demonstrated that job involvement will have a positive impact on motivation to learn and transfer skills (Blume et al., 2010). Individuals who identify with their work psychologically could experience greater value from skills development, as they could be more inclined to observe changes in their work environment and their lives as a result thereof (Colquitt et al., 2000). Job involvement represents part of a complex framework which determines individual motivation to engage in training and development, as is acknowledged in this study. In the empirical stage of this study the level of employees' experience of psychological identification with their work and whether this motivates them to engage in skills development initiatives provided by the employer will be identified.

2.3.2.3 Expectancy in skills development

Each individual will have certain expectations of skills development initiatives in terms of the depth and width of content covered, based on the information received from the training provider and management. Expectations which are not met could result in the individual experiencing a decreased motivation to engage in the programme, thus compromising effectiveness (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Gegenfurtner, Veermans, Festner & Gruber, 2009; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Zaniboni, Fraccaroli, Truxillo, Bertolino, & Bauer, 2011).

Expectancy theory postulates that the motivation of an individual to perform a particular action is dependent on three constructs: expectancy (expectations of performance given a particular measure of effort), instrumentality (the outcome expected from the individual's performance), and valence (the extent to which individuals value the outcome of their behaviour) (Gegenfurtner et al., 2009; Vroom, 1964; Zaniboni et al., 2011).

Zaniboni et al., (2011) demonstrated the significance of expectancy in determining motivation to learn. Tharenou (2001) showed that the perception of instrumentality is a key factor in ensuring willing and enthusiastic participation of employees in training and development initiatives. The perception employees have of training determines whether the valence of the training is low or high and in combination with the expectancy of the individual with regards to the probability of a certain outcome, will determine the motivation of the individual to engage therein (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Zaniboni et al., 2011).

Utility of learning can play a major role in shaping both individual and organisational needs for development. An individual's perception of how useful in nature the content of skills development initiatives will be in his work role could impact on the extent to which the individual engages in the exercises and consequently affect the success thereof (Gegenfurtner et al., 2009; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Zaniboni et al., 2011). This utility can also be argued to represent another aspect of the valence involved in training motivation (i.e. training can be perceived to be inherently rewarding and thus hold value for the individual).

The implication is that skills development initiatives should clearly illustrate the practical and future value it will hold in terms of both organisational and individual

factors in order to ensure employee motivation to engage therein. It is possible that in cases where poor communication between management and employees exists, the instrumentality of skills development is not perceived by employees, an issue which is investigated in this study. It is expected that vertical communication on farms in South Africa may be limited in scope, due to large hierarchical separations inherent in organisations characterised by a structure which includes top-management, limited middle management and large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled labour.

In addition to the potential increase in motivation to learn, perceptions of utility of training and realisation of expectancies can also positively impact on employees' motivation to transfer such training to the workplace (Gegenfurtner et al., 2009; Nunes, 2003; Zaniboni et al., 2011). Employees who perceive training to improve or ease their daily tasks have been shown to be more motivated to utilise the content thereof on the job (Smith, Jayasuriya, Caputi & Hammer, 2008; Nunes, 2003).

2.3.3 Attitude to learning and skills development

The attitude an individual harbours towards training and development could promote or compromise the effectiveness of training as it could manifest in the measure of willingness to engage in or accept content presented in specific training and development interventions (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Newstrom & Lengenick-Hall, 1991; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Rowold, 2007). Due consideration should thus be given to the factors deemed to influence the individual employee's attitude to training and development. When considering the attitude of the individual towards skills development initiatives in the workplace, it is important to note that such attitudes could potentially be dependent on managerial practices and other organisational factors. This highlights the importance of investigating whether farms engage in effective management of training and development and successfully communicate this to employees. The impact of motivation on attitude is also explored, as low levels of motivation to engage in skills development could conceivably manifest in negative attitudes to such development where employees are required to undergo training as part of their work (i.e. where skills development is not on a voluntary basis). Rowold (2007) also found that positive general attitudes to training and development could have a positive impact on motivation to learn and transfer new skills. In order to explore the possible effects of attitude on skills development, two

factors are taken into account: the resistance some employees may exhibit to change and scepticism towards training or the organisation.

2.3.3.1 Resistance to change

Fear of the unknown is a common phenomenon among people. It is this fear that drives the resistance an individual exhibits when confronted with possible change. Skills development has at its core the principle of changing the behaviour exhibited by the employee in the workplace (Stanley, Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2005). Pocock (2009) argued that such resistance (especially among low-paid employees) could stem from the perception that training carries little or no personal reward. Resistance on this basis could thus be expected to diminish the effectiveness of training, especially given the typical low wages of farm workers in South Africa.

Resistance to change is cited as a major reason for the frustration experienced as a result of unsuccessful attempts at development within organisations (Stanley et al., 2005; Weick & Quinn, 1999). When considering skills development as a means to establish change, it becomes clear that failure to overcome resistance to change could damage the impact of training and development interventions as employees may reject the training they receive and in doing so inhibit the transfer of new knowledge, skills and abilities. Attention is thus given to the existence and impact (if any) of resistance to change manifesting in the resistance of employees to engage in skills development interventions and how such resistance to change through development could manifest in the employee's attitude to training and development in general.

2.3.3.2 Scepticism

Scepticism towards human resource management actions (such as training and development) could develop from individual employees' perception that they are being exploited or that such action provides organisational utility while compromising their own (Newstrom & Lengenick-Hall, 1991; Nishii, Lepak & Schneider, 2008). The expression of such scepticism by an employee who is to undergo training and development, could thus be argued to illustrate mistrust in the training provider, the training itself or the motives behind the intended training. This scepticism could ultimately lead to the rejection of newly acquired knowledge, skills and abilities if it is allowed to manifest as a negative attitude to training and development and not

overcome where identified. It is conceivable that in a situation where mutual trust between the employer and employees is deemed to be low, scepticism could be more prevalent as a result of skewed employee perceptions of motives for training and development interventions (Innocenti, Pilati & Peluso, 2011; Nishii et al., 2008; Pidgeon, Poortinga & Walls, 2007). Scepticism in a case like this could thus be considered to embody the manifestation of mistrust in the form of the employee's attitude towards the actions of management. It is thus investigated whether employees experience sceptical attitudes towards skills development, and if so what the reason for this might be.

2.3.4 Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

The measure to which an individual perceives the consequences of his actions to be due to his own decision (internal locus of control) or the external environment (external locus of control) could impact on the measure of responsibility taken for personal development in skills development initiatives (Rotter, 1966). An internal locus of control could thus promote the effectiveness of training and development through the increased acceptance of responsibility for success on the part of the individual. Employees who perceive the success of training and development initiatives to be in their own hands will be more likely to invest time and effort into the development of new knowledge, skills and abilities in order to achieve success than those who perceive such success to be out of their control (Fouarge, Schils & De Grip, 2013; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Weissbein, Huang, Ford & Schmidt, 2011). Agricultural workers with an internal locus of control could thus be expected to be more successful in training and development interventions, directly as a result of the responsibility they take for their success.

Previous research also indicated that locus of control can impact on individual motivation to engage in learning experiences and apply the content learned during training and development initiatives, especially among employees with low education levels (Baumgartel, Reynolds & Pathan, 1984; Colquitt et al., 2000; Fouarge et al., 2013). Locus of control could be a central factor in motivation to learn, as it can have an impact on motivational factors such as the expectancies and job involvement as well as the self-efficacy of the employee (Colquitt et al., 2000; Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Weissbein et al., 2011). An indirect effect on the training and

development effectiveness through motivation could thus be observed in employees of farms.

Locus of control could serve to moderate the impact of the climate in which training and development interventions take place (Smith-Jentsch, Salas & Brannick, 2001). Individuals with a greater external locus of control could be more susceptible to influences such as supervisor support (or lack thereof) during the course of training and development initiatives (Smith-Jentsch et al., 2001). By extension, it could also be feasible that employees with a higher internal locus of control will be less susceptible to negative impacts from supervisor and peer support in the training process.

2.3.5 Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

The perceptions harnessed by individuals regarding their own abilities to engage in certain activities or to improve upon their situations could impair the effectiveness of skills development (Feinberg, Miller, Weiss, Steigleder & Lombardo, 1982; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Smith et al., 2008). The constructs of self-efficacy and learned helplessness could thus be considered to affect skills development effectiveness through impairing or promoting the individual's perceived capacity to develop new knowledge, skills and abilities.

2.3.5.1 Self-efficacy

The belief of the individual in his capacity to perform certain actions successfully can be expected to extend to the perception of the person of being able to develop new knowledge skills and abilities. Bandura (1986) considered self-efficacy to be a key factor in regulating behaviour in individuals and can impact on the ability of the individual to learn, as higher measures of self-efficacy can be expected to lead to more positively directed behaviour in attempting to build skills, whereas lower levels can be expected to inhibit this behaviour. The concept of self-efficacy is strongly related to motivation, yet in terms of skills development can be considered to be a separate but related factor, as the belief of the individual in his own capacity to overcome a given challenge can be expected to drive his behaviour in terms of addressing it (Bandura, 1993; Bandura, 1986; Gibson et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008; Sookhai & Budworth, 2010; Zimmerman, 2000).

Zimmerman (2000) noted that differentiation between self-efficacy and self-perception is crucial in considering it as a factor for consideration in skills development. According to Zimmerman (2000), self-efficacy is the individual's beliefs regarding capacity to perform a specific function, whereas self-perception is the relatively constant view the individual maintains of himself as a person. This perception of efficacy is subject to change based on the experiences of the individual in training and development scenarios. The setting and achievement of personal goals was found to strongly affect the experienced self-efficacy of the individual learner (Schunk & Pajares, 2010; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Self-efficacy has also been shown to improve transfer of training (Sookhai & Budworth, 2010). Other factors which have been shown to affect self-efficacy are: the observation of a peer engaging in an activity and achieving a given measure of success, the social persuasion of peers with regards to the subject matter and the physiological and psychological state of the individual (for example anxiety prior to a training exercise) (Schunk & Pajares, 2010).

Self-efficacy would likely affect the success of training and development in agricultural settings and should thus be investigated as a factor impacting on the motivation and success of individuals in training and development initiatives. The approach of management is also considered in terms of providing employees with the skills to set goals during training and consider whether they achieved their personal goals.

2.3.5.2 *Learned helplessness*

Learned helplessness is the phenomenon where an individual becomes conditioned to have negative expectancies regarding certain stimuli, which in turn leads to "...motivational deficits, including passivity, apathy, avoidance, giving up, and failure to respond" (Skinner, Kindermann, Connell & Wellborn, 2009, p. 228). It can have three negative impacts on the individual in terms of firstly, the capacity of the individual to conceptualise and learn new relationships between behaviour and the consequences thereof, secondly, impairment of motivation to respond positively to new stimuli, and thirdly, a shift in affective orientation (Feinberg et al., 1982; Olson & Schober, 1993; Skinner et al., 2009). It could thus be argued that learned helplessness may in certain circumstances result in employees viewing their working conditions as unchangeable which in turn could result in their acceptance of the

status quo and an impaired motivation and capacity to engage in skills development effectively (Skinner et al., 2009).

Agricultural workers in South Africa are a particularly vulnerable group and have suffered extensively as a result of historical discriminatory practices and exploitation in terms of hard labour at very low remuneration (Silolo & Oladele, 2012). It can thus be conceivable that where employees were subjected to such circumstances, they could experience a measure of learned helplessness. Acceptance of such adverse circumstances as the norm and perceiving them as inescapable could have a debilitating effect on the capacity and motivation of the individual to develop new knowledge, skills and abilities, thus presenting a potential impairment to skills development effectiveness. Gaining insight into employees' conceptualisation of their roles at work and in society may provide additional information with regards to their willingness and capacity to engage in skills development. This should enable the researcher to determine whether it is possible that learned helplessness exists in this sector and what the impact thereof might be in terms of the effectiveness of skills development initiatives.

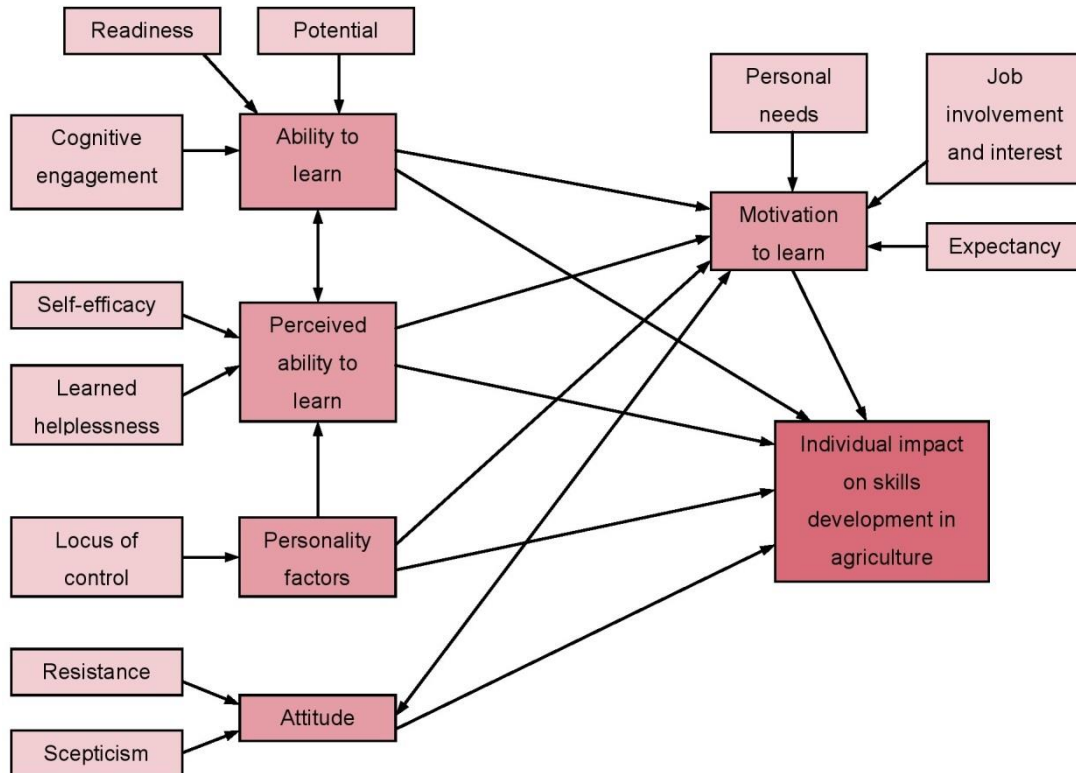


Figure 2. Proposed individual variables impacting skills development in the agricultural sector

2.4 Conceptual framework of individual variables impacting skills development in agriculture

The proposed variables which could affect the effectiveness of skills development in terms of individual participants can be presented in a conceptual framework as depicted in Figure 2 (p. 40). The framework was developed from various sources and is a visual representation of the variables which have been argued to impact on the individual level of skills development on farms and possible interrelationships.

2.5 Organisational variables impacting skills development in agriculture

Management in organisations are pivotal in determining how training and development practices manifest and what the outcomes thereof are in the organisational and individual context. In order to understand how the organisation's functioning affects the effectiveness of skills development on farms, several variables have been identified for investigation. These variables are: The organisation's training and development strategy, the nature and quality of labour relations, the measure of support each individual receives from supervisors, peers and instructors, rewards systems, the climate, and culture in the organisation. These variables can greatly affect the willingness of individuals to engage in the opportunities presented by organisations for skills development as they serve to define the direct environment in which such development is taking place. Management in the farm will also need to consider these variables and the direct impact they could have on employees' motivation to learn, acquisition of new skills, the transfer of these skills, and thus the effectiveness of skills development as strategic imperative. This will form the focus of the following sections.

2.5.1 Farm strategy and skills development

The strategic goals of the organisation will form a critical element in the decision of management whether to invest in skills development or not, and what the required areas for such development will be (Barron, 2003; Bechet & Walker, 1993, King et al., 2010; Niazi, 2011). The variable can be expected to have a strong impact on the effectiveness of training and development in serving the objectives thereof. The purpose of including this variable in the framework is not to prescribe areas for skills development, but rather to illustrate the impact of strategy on which skills are

developed among employees and how this is done. For example, an organisation strategy in the South African agricultural sector that is focused on the promotion of literacy could enable employees to develop the competencies required for more complex training and development (through literacy training) and in doing so increase their learning potential.

2.5.2 Labour relations in the agricultural context

Labour relations in South Africa has been very closely linked to the struggle for freedom during apartheid, as trade unions formed strong support bases for political organisations opposed to the discriminatory policies of the government at the time (Beresford, 2012). The historic development of relations between employers and employees resulted in much animosity in such relations in many cases (Beresford, 2012; Finnemore, 2006). The nature of relations between management and labour in the South African agricultural sector can be expected to reflect this animosity in many cases. Power and mutual trust are defining factors in the relationship between employers and employees, as the relationship cannot exist without trust between parties and both parties have their own goals and priorities which they attempt to serve (Finnemore, 2006; Innocenti et al., 2011).

At the time of publishing their paper, Ewert and Hamman (1999) found that the measure of unionisation among labour in agriculture was not common and did not seem to be growing strongly. The case has changed and unionisation on farms seems to be growing (e.g. the establishment of Sikhula Sonke, a labour union in the Western Cape, representing farm workers) (White, 2010). Where organised labour does exist in this sector, it can be expected to be met with strong opposition from management in many cases, as the expected hierarchical structure of a farm could lend itself to engender paternalism and possibly unitarism among management (Ewert & Hamman, 1999; Hall, Wisborg, Shirinda & Zamchiya, 2013; White 2010).

Du Toit (1993) described the farm as an organisation where the nature of labour relations is especially complex due to the fact that in many cases it is not simply an individual's working life which is defined in terms of this organisation. Permanently employed farm workers often live in a defined community on the farm itself and are dependent on the organisation for the satisfaction of basic survival needs in many cases. This provision by the farm as organisation could serve to establish

paternalism in labour relations even further, as the measure of power held by the employer over the employee is not restricted to the employment relationship, but extended to the social and domestic life of the employee (BFAP, 2012; Du Toit, 1993; Hall et al., 2013; Ewert & Hamman, 1999; White, 2010).

The data collection stage of this study coincided with a time when the agricultural sector in the Western Cape also saw unprecedented levels of industrial action linked to the remuneration of farm workers. It has since emerged that these protests were predominantly driven by temporary or seasonal labourers who received just below R 70 per day (BFAP, 2012). These protests were characterised by much violence and aggression, illustrating the often fragile state of labour relations in the sector and the desperation of workers in light of working conditions. At the same time, these protests were considered to illustrate the unsustainability of farms relying on cheap, low-skilled labour (BFAP, 2012; Christie, 2012; Kahn & Bernickow, 2013; Parker, 2013).

Employees on farms can be considered to be especially vulnerable in the sense that the loss of their job does not only entail a loss of income, but also more serious losses in terms of the employee's basic survival needs. This vulnerability prompted development of regulations in terms of basic conditions of employment in the agricultural sector as well as additional regulation on the rights of tenants (employees in the case of farms) when being evicted, but a high measure of power distance between labour and management remains (Atkinson, 2007; BFAP, 2012; Ewert & Hamman, 1999; Hall et al., 2013; Kahn & Bernickow, 2013; Parker, 2013). Both positive and negative consequences resulted from this regulation of evictions: farm workers living on farms have acquired more social security in that evictions must be fair and conform to established policies, yet some farmers have reduced their permanent labour force to the minimum, rather opting to utilise more casual and seasonal labour than risk struggling for extended periods to evict a dismissed employee (Atkinson, 2007; Ewert & Hamman, 1999; Hall et al., 2013).

Paternalistic tendencies imply that the employer perceives the actions of management to reflect the ideal situation for the organisation and its employees, often without any consultation with the employees affected by such actions (Finnemore, 2006). The implication here is that where paternalism is present on

farms, farmers or farm managers may engage in skills development programme strategy and design without consulting employees on what they perceive to be key areas for such development. This lack of involvement of employees in decisions affecting them in a very direct way could potentially affect their perception of the instrumentality of skills development interventions and the attitudes they harbour towards it, which could negate the effectiveness of such exercises. Consultation with employees in the skills development design process could assist the employer in determining the needs employees experience in terms of skills development. Such awareness could assist the employer in defining and addressing skills gaps more effectively, whilst conversely the lack thereof could inhibit the capacity of the employer to realise what personal development needs are prevalent among permanent employees (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Price, 2008).

2.5.3 Organisational culture

Organisations operating in the modern economy are being placed under pressure by macro-factors to remain competitive and enhance sustainability of operations. Such an organisation needs to ensure that its culture (those practices which are rooted in the fundamental values and beliefs generally upheld in the organisation by its members) is appropriately geared to effectively respond to the challenge (Fard, Rostamy & Taghiloo, 2009; Graham & Nafukho, 2007). Continuous and sustained development of the individual skills, and consequently the organisation's capacity for operations within a dynamic and changing environment, represents one means through which organisations aim to remain competitive in their respective industries (Fard et al., 2009; Graham & Nafukho, 2007; Mohanty & Kar, 2012). This focus on continuous learning allows knowledge creation and individual skills development to be more than a targeted intervention. It becomes a constant element of work which enriches the capacity of employees to perform their designated tasks and engage in progressively more complex functions. This is achieved through learning in formal as well as informal contexts within an organisation, and defines it as a learning organisation (Fard et al., 2009; Mohanty & Kar, 2012).

The agricultural sector in South Africa faces several factors which will drive the need for improved production and management practices and consequently the skills of employees in such organisations (AgriSETA, 2011). The promotion of learning and development as an inherent part of the culture of the organisation, can aid in skills

development success, as it can establish skills development as a core value of the whole organisation. Employees buying into this value could be more inclined to learn and engage in personal skills development (Rebelo & Gomes, 2011). Integration and acceptance of learning as a central cultural value within the organisation could impact on the individual as well as organisational levels of effective skills development, as the organisation would in itself sustain continuous development, beneficial to both itself and its employees (Fard et al., 2009; Rebelo & Gomes, 2011) and individual employees' attitudes toward skills development and the organisation as a whole could be improved (Baek-Kyoo & Ji Hyun, 2010).

2.5.4 Organisational climate

An organisation's climate (those aspects of the organisation which, when viewed collectively, comprise the internal environment as experienced by employees or external observers) which the individual works in can play a decisive role in the measure to which training and development is successful (Choudhury, 2011). This climate is dependent on the relations between management and their employees, company policies and other factors defining the environment in which employees must work. By maintaining an engaging and civil climate, employers could adjust employees' attitudes to the organisation, its goals and consequently the training and development it provides to be conducive to effective learning (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Blanchard & Thacker, 1999, Choudhury, 2011; Innocenti et al., 2011).

Two key factors for consideration in the organisational climate is the support provided to labourers during the course of their participation in skills development initiatives as well as the nature of the relationships between management and labour as has been contemplated earlier. These factors can be expected to encourage an environment which is open to change and encourages learning and development in the organisation (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2006; Sookhai & Budworth, 2010). Tharenou (2001) showed that support from key stakeholders (supervisors, peers and the employer) in the skills development process was a significant factor in the motivation of individuals to learn and engage in skills development. This supportive environment has also been shown to support the reinforcement of learning, thus promoting effective skills development (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Muth, 2008; Tharenou, 2001) and is therefore included in the proposed framework of variables.

2.5.4.1 Supervisor support

The support expressed by supervisors is essential to facilitate transfer of learning in organisations and comprises a major factor in facilitating learning and skills development (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Chiaburu, Van Dam & Hutchins, 2010; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Russ-Eft, 1997; Salas et al., 2012). This support can be expected to affect the motivation of individuals to participate in training and development initiatives (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Tharenou 2001). Support from supervisors could also impact on the transfer of learning directly (by emphasising reinforcement of appropriate behaviour) if supervisors make an effort to explain the value of the relevant training or skills development initiative and demonstrate the value it could hold for the individual as well as the organisation in terms of its application and the consequences thereof (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Holton et al., 2000; Salas et al., 2012). An example of this would be in the case where new technology is being adopted on a farm that would result in a lighter workload for the employee and improve productivity in the organisation, but which will require the individual employee to be trained in its use.

This raises the question of how much support is provided by supervisors and to what extent employees find motivational value in this support in the context of farms. It is possible that, given the nature of management in the agricultural sector, support from supervisors could be limited and thus have a detrimental effect on the attempts of management to develop the skills of the organisation's workforce. The support learners receive from supervisors is thus included in the proposed framework of organisational variables under organisational climate.

2.5.4.2 Peer support

Interaction between participants can affect training effectiveness through its impact on the individual's perception of value inherent to the newly acquired knowledge, skills or abilities, as the positive or negative attitudes of the people working with the individual can impact on his own perception thereof (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). The implication here is that the values and expectation of the trainee's peers can influence his attitude, beliefs and behaviour towards the training or skills development initiative as a whole and potentially have either a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness thereof (Román, Cuestas & Fenollar, 2008). Management harnessing a team's potential to encourage learning, could enable the

team to perform a coaching function serving the motivation of an individual to learn and thus improve training and development effectiveness (Bergman, 1993; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). The potential for the nature of peer perceptions of training and development to influence the individual is thus investigated as a variable in the framework for organisational variables impacting on skills development effectiveness.

2.5.4.3 Instructor support

The instructor can provide instrumental support through the provision of feedback to the trainees. This can be achieved by contacting trainees and discussing the training material which was covered and their application thereof in their working lives (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Salas et al., 2012). The instructor needs to be sensitive to the individual trainee's perception of all material covered and should engage with the trainee in a manner which promotes the view of the trainee as equal partner in the training relationship, and not an inferior bystander, a factor which could easily manifest in an adult education environment where the trainees are not highly skilled, as the case often is in agriculture (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999; Muth, 2008).

By adopting the role of a partner to the trainee in the skills development process, the instructor could establish a relationship more conducive to the transfer of learning (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Muth, 2008). Transfer can also be further enhanced by adapting the measure of support given to employees as their mastery of a particular skill improves in training (Salas et al., 2012) To address this variable, it will be established whether instructors in the agricultural sector adopt a role which establishes partnerships with trainees, what measure and type of support is given to trainees and how this affects the effectiveness of skills development initiatives.

2.5.5 Organisational systems

In any organisation, certain systems are employed to facilitate the management of organisational functions in a manner that promotes their effectiveness and efficiency, but it is important to note that these systems could impact on individuals' perception of training and the degree to which learning transfer is successful. Two major systems which could impact on the success of skills development initiatives are the approach taken by the organisation in designing, promoting and assessing learning

and the way in which learned behaviour is reinforced after training has been completed (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Salas et al., 2012).

2.5.5.1 Training and development approach

Social learning builds on the principle that individuals learn through the imitation of others by exercising newly observed behaviour and internalising that behaviour if the consequences are deemed to be beneficial (Bandura, 1986; Gibson et al., 2009). If peers are involved in the training and development process and act in ways similar to the behaviours being taught, this would serve to support the individual employee in practicing the intended behaviours and eventually internalising it (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Gibson et al., 2009; Salas et al., 2012). The implication is that in order for new knowledge, skills and abilities to be internalised, the organisation should ensure that these skills are demonstrated properly, are truly used in the organisation and also present its employees with the opportunity to exercise these skills.

By considering the concept of an organisation adopting a culture where learning is inherent to the everyday working lives of employees, a holistic approach can be formulated according to which the employer can approach training and development. Thorne and Mackey (2003) suggested that organisations aspiring to become learning organisations needed to recognise the full spectrum of potential sources (both internal and external) and approaches for skills development. According to Grobler et al. (2006), the spectrum of approaches comprises training on and off the job, coaching, formal and informal instruction as well as learning through multimedia and open and blended learning models. It could be the case that greater effectiveness in training and development could be achieved where management on farms recognise and implement more varied sources of, and approaches to, skills development.

Given the expected separation between hierarchical levels and skills levels of employees in each level on farms in South Africa as well as the high levels of paternalism expected among owners and managers, it could be the case that these organisations would not meet the definition of 'learning organisations'. The questions which arise here are whether employers in the agricultural sector recognise and utilise internal and external sources of, and various approaches to training and development as contemplated by Thorne and Mackey (2003) and Grobler et al.

(2006) and to what extent utilisation of these sources and approaches improve the effectiveness of skills development in each organisation?

2.5.5.2 Reinforcement of learning

Learning, in terms of Bandura's (1986) social learning theory is achieved through the observation and adaptation of behaviour, based on what an individual observes in his environment and deems to serve certain needs. Russ-Eft (1997) argued that learning is not contingent on reinforcement where behaviour modification is utilised in organisations, and that such reinforcement would rather serve to impact on the individual's motivation to learn. It could thus be argued that reinforcement of learning through conditioning (e.g. managers rewarding employees' correct behaviour after receiving training) would have an indirect effect on the effectiveness of training and development initiatives, resulting from changes in individual motivation to learn.

Supervisors should be aware of the nature of the training and development being provided to employees and encourage behaviour which is congruent with the learning material, establishing reinforcement of correct behaviours through conditioning (Chiaburu et al., 2004; Gibson et al., 2009; Salas et al., 2012). They should also be capable of relaying relevant information to employees regarding the benefit and application of the subject matter (Chiaburu et al., 2004; Salas et al., 2012). Continuous reinforcement of training material through material and immaterial means is considered to be an effective means of promoting transfer of learning; appropriate behaviour should be recognised and rewarded and inappropriate behaviour should be pointed out and corrected (Chiaburu et al., 2004; Gibson et al., 2009; Salas et al., 2012).

This implies that the use of a reward system for progress in terms of training and development could prove valuable in establishing and maintaining higher levels of motivation to learn. Reward systems need not be financial in nature and given the fact that the agricultural sector has the lowest statutory minimum wages in South Africa and the people working in the sector are often required to perform very basic functions, positive, individual feedback on skills development and performance could be highly beneficial in establishing effective behaviour modification (Chiaburu et al., 2004; Russ-Eft, 1997; Salas et al., 2012). It will thus be determined whether reinforcement (using material or non-material means to encourage employees) is

utilised as a motivational (and conditioning) tool and whether this is successful in motivating employees on farms to modify their behaviour as per skills development interventions.

2.6 Conceptual framework of organisational factors impacting skills development in agriculture

The organisational variables discussed in the preceding sections can be summarised in a conceptual framework as illustrated in Figure 3 below. These factors have been shown in previous research to be related to skills development effectiveness; however many of these factors have not been tested in the agricultural sector in South Africa, thus necessitating generalisations being drawn from the existing research in developing this conceptual framework.

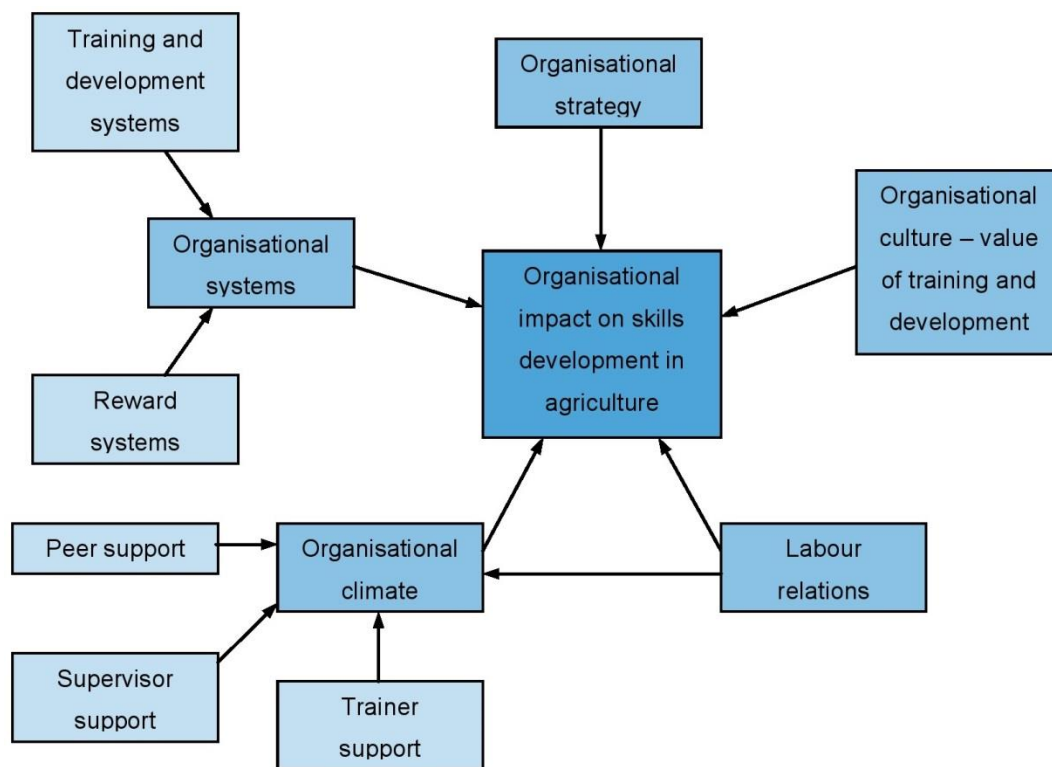


Figure 3. Proposed organisational variables impacting skills development in the agricultural sector

Two conceptual frameworks of (individual and organisational) variables have now been presented based on relevant literature. These two frameworks have at their

core the effectiveness of training and development interventions on farms. As such, they can be conceived to represent one holistic framework, operating across the individual and organisational domains and within the context of the agricultural sector as a whole. The next section presents this integrated conceptual framework.

2.7 A conceptual framework for successful skills development in agriculture

The factors discussed in this chapter provide a collection of variables which could be utilised in the formulation of a conceptual framework for effective training and skills development in the agricultural sector across the individual (micro-level), organisational (meso-level), and external (macro-level) context. This conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 4 (p. 52) and illustrates the combined individual and organisational factors expected to impact on the effectiveness of skills development in the agricultural sector in South Africa. The macro-environment will most likely also affect the way in which skills development is approached in this sector, and as such is depicted as the context within which the framework can be deemed to be operational.

2.8 Conclusion: Chapter 2

The agricultural sector in South Africa is facing a formidable challenge in terms of managing the development of employees. In this sector, employees often possess very low levels of education and live in poverty. In addition, many farm labourers are dependent on their employers for housing and other basic living needs and services. This creates an environment in which the individual employee is left vulnerable, especially when considering the generally low skill level of employees in this sector. Losing employment at a farm may have very negative consequences for the individual employee, as it can be difficult to find alternative employment. This creates social pressure for farm management to assist in the skills development of their employees.

The farm as organisation is also increasingly reliant on more highly skilled work on the farm, as technological processes are improved and work becomes more complex. Farmers in South Africa need to balance not only the needs of the farm as

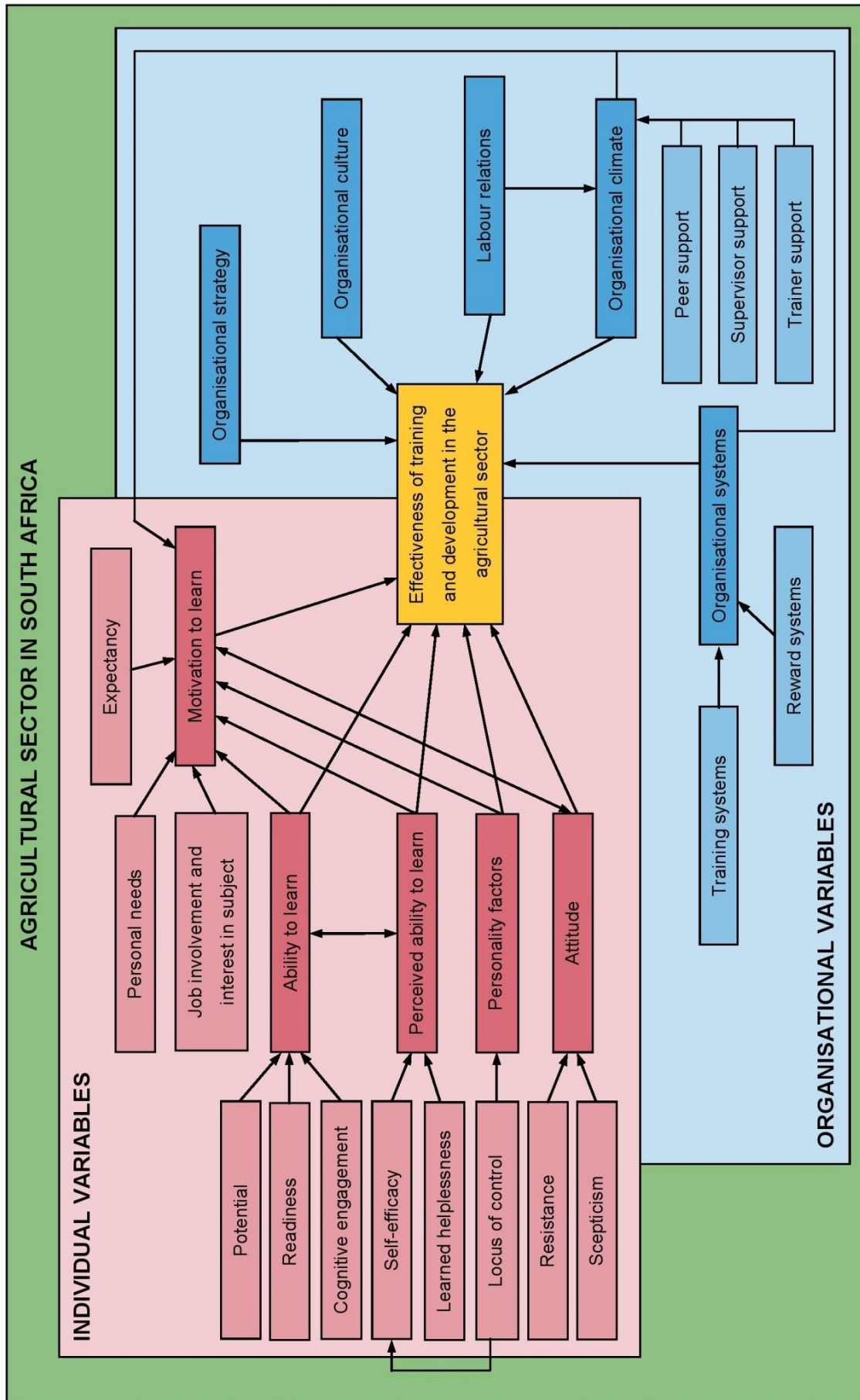


Figure 4. A framework for successful skills development in the agricultural sector

organisation, but also those of its employees and the state. Providing employees with training should aid in their skills development and could serve the needs of all three stakeholders by ensuring competitiveness, addressing glaring skills shortages and aiding in the uplifting a particularly vulnerable population group. There thus exists a strategic imperative for the effective development of employees' skills. This strategic imperative is addressed by means of investment in training and skills development on farms.

This gives rise to the question: how can the return on this investment be maximised (to both the organisation as well as the farm worker)? In light of this question, several individual (see Figure 2, p. 40) and organisational (see Figure 3, p. 50) variables were identified which may impact on training and transfer of training in some way. These variables were visually presented as an integrated conceptual framework in Figure 4 (p. 52). The next chapter addresses the methodology employed to investigate whether this framework is a useful basis for research and practice in training and development on farms.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The lack of directed research into the success of skills development on farms and the variables identified from the literature to affect such effectiveness illustrated the necessity for the utilisation of an exploratory approach to conducting the required research. This study is focused on the operation of various variables which do not lend themselves to be tethered in a structural model or structured manner as yet. The existing literature on the subject in question does not present an existing framework tailored to the agricultural sector in South Africa according to which the researcher could work to gather information for the purposes of this research.

The question which arose was what the ideal framework for skills development would be, given the unique context inherent to the agricultural sector in South Africa, at the hand of the individual and organisational variables which affect the effectiveness of skills development on farms. The literature review culminated in a complex conceptual framework for effective skills development which is considered to be applicable to farms. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether this framework presents a suitable framework according to which farms can design this skills development and to adapt the framework according to findings from the research conducted. The research method used in this study is that of a multiple case study based method. Darke, Shanks, and Broadbent (1998) described case study research as research focused on creating understanding of social phenomena in terms of the natural setting within which it occurs and the cultural context within which it operates through investigating and compiling various cases.

Stake (2006) expressed the importance of considering the nature of the phenomenon to be studied. The purpose of multiple case study research is to determine the effects of a given phenomenon within a particular context. The context applicable to this study relates to specific farms. Each of these farms constitutes its own unique situation and environment, within which the effectiveness of developmental initiatives can be studied. As this context is integral to the manifestation of the particular phenomenon, this context itself needs to be studied as well. Thus, the focus of the study is holistic in nature, taking into consideration the

functioning of the organisation as a whole in each case and the impact of contextual factors on skills development.

The study is exploratory in nature, as little previous research has been done on skills development effectiveness in the agricultural sector. Given the nature of the study and the complex environment within which it is performed, restriction of the methodology to one data collection technique would not be appropriate. Contextual information related to the operation of each organisation (with regards to the size of the organisation as a business, demographic profile and size of its labour force, types of training and development in place) is collected using a questionnaire format, whereas information related to the perceived effectiveness of skills development initiatives and the meaningful experiences of management and labourers lent themselves more to an interview format technique. These interviews utilised closed-ended questions to gather basic information regarding skills development initiatives and open-ended questions to gauge each individual's interpretation of the reality of skills development within their specific context. The implication is thus that multi-method techniques are utilised to gather all necessary information for analysis in each individual case study.

3.2 Critical overview of case study research

Case study research is often criticised for not being particularly effective as problems are incurred in terms of the extent to which it can be considered rigorous (Darke et al., 1998). This is a view which must be acknowledged in developing the ultimate research design, as any form of research conducted must necessarily be considered valuable in its field. Babbie and Mouton (2001) also highlighted that one of the issues with qualitative research is that it is questioned in terms of generalisability. They went on to argue that the purpose of qualitative research is rather to describe the meaning inherent in certain matters to respondents rather than generalisable results.

Dooley (2002) described case study research as a balanced investigative technique, which enables the researcher to approach research problems from a more holistic point of view. This enables the creation of new theories or the extension and development of existing theories fairly early in the research process as a result (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). An important factor to take into consideration with

these theories is the risk involved in stating them as fact. The researcher is aware of this risk and ensured that where new conceptual networks are proposed, the lack of statistical evaluation was acknowledged. The concept of multiple case studies being utilised here acts to promote the formulation and strengthening of new conceptual networks of variables as repetition of similar investigations (and consequent case reviews) will expose the researcher to new facts and support or reject the possible relationships between variables in the conceptual framework as a result.

Dooley (2002) differentiated between cases and case studies, which both form essential elements of the research design. Cases were described as the written account of a certain situation which should present the reader with a comprehensive, holistic conceptualisation of a given scenario in terms of its setting, parties thereto and the reality of what took place in the situation. Case studies are the evolutionary partners of cases as they constitute the critical analysis of the facts presented in each case (Dooley, 2002). Cases and case studies thus represent two major phases in the research process. This study considers various cases and examines each of them in turn to determine the existence (or lack) of coinciding data pointing towards a more effective framework of skills development on farms in South Africa.

Flyvbjerg (2006) also commented on the context-driven nature of case study based research, arguing that the context within which a certain phenomenon presents itself is integral to the manifestation of the phenomenon. Collecting information rich in depth and personal meaning to respondents allows the researcher to conduct a deeper, more detail focused study. Such a study allows for a stronger contextual focus on the phenomenon in question (Golafshani, 2003). In this study, the phenomenon studied (effectiveness of training and skills development on farms) is highly dependent on the context within which it manifests itself, as the agricultural sector in general and commercial farms are unique from other sectors and organisations. The implication is that context acts as a driver of research, and is not considered to be circumstantial as is often the case in quantitative studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

3.2.1 Criticism of case study research methods

Case study research has been the subject of debate in the past. Criticism has been directed against the method, discounting it as not capable of delivering valid, reliable

results. Three key areas of concern with case study methodology have been identified as (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Gibbert, Ruigrok & Wicki, 2008; Yin 2009):

1. Validity: the credibility and generalisability of results can in certain cases be called into question;
2. Reliability: the extent to which similar results can be obtained in similar studies are often disputed, given the context dependent nature of the case study as research method;
3. Objectivity: the bias or personal interest of the researcher can easily interfere in the objectivity with which a study is done.

The origin of these criticisms has often been identified where only a single case was used in a particular study and because the focus in case study methodology is usually on qualitative data collection techniques (Babbie & Mouton 2001; Yin, 2009). In this study multiple cases are examined and both quantitative and qualitative techniques are used. Steps were taken to ensure that, where areas of concern with the method are valid or applicable, appropriate action was taken to address them.

3.2.2 Response to criticism against case study and qualitative methodology

The researcher holds the view that, taking into account the demographic profile of the respondents as well as the nature of the study, a mixed method is preferable in this investigation. The research problem is one which places much emphasis on the context within which it is being studied. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 270) described qualitative research as being "...especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood in their natural setting" and as such proved invaluable in the current study.

In many cases the labourers on farms have only limited literacy. Consequently survey questionnaires would prove difficult to use. The study was also conducted in an environment where previous research is quite limited. The effect of this is that the definition of variables affecting skills development in this context does not lend itself to purely quantitative methods of research. These factors serve to highlight the context dependent nature of skills development as field of study in agriculture in South Africa. This study can be seen as an exploration of a known but neglected

realm of knowledge, with the intention of developing a framework for further research in this field.

3.2.2.1 Concerns with validity

The use of qualitative elements in research implies careful application of the methods employed was required to ensure that the validity of such a study is maximised (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This is not a concept which is limited to qualitative research, as quantitative studies also need to ensure this maximisation of validity (Yin, 2009).

The first step in establishing internal validity of research based in case study methodology, is to establish a clear research framework which guides the research process and allows the researcher to draw valid conclusions (Gibbert et al., 2008). Secondly, this clear framework should be supplemented through theoretical triangulation, whereby the researcher considers a wide variety of variables from several theories from which to develop conceptual frameworks (Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008). This was done at the hand of the literature review and the conceptual framework of variables presented in Chapter 2. Finally, pattern matching can be employed to compare empirical findings to theorised variable networks, by examining whether similar networks exist in cases as emerged from the literature review (Gibbert et al., 2008; Yin, 2009). A pattern matching analysis of the various cases is presented in Chapter 4.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) argued that a measure of compatibility needed to be established between the actual interpretations of reality by respondents and the meaning derived from their statements by the researcher. This is established through the utilisation of sufficient sources of data and by ensuring that the interpretations made by the researcher are fully explained to the respondent and considered meaningful and accurate by the respondent, the researcher and external parties (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009). In essence, this represents methodological triangulation, where the researcher verifies information collected based on information from different sources (Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009). This allows the researcher to establish greater construct validity (i.e. the extent to which reality is measured in the course of case study research) (Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008).

Neither single, nor multiple case studies lend themselves to generalisability in its classical form (i.e. statistical generalisation to populations) (Mabry, 2008; Yin, 1999; 2009). Such generalisation in case study research is not considered to be a critical factor for validity in case studies (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), yet the result of the study must be “transferable” to some extent. Yin (1999; 2009) proposed analytical generalisation as an appropriate means to test external validity of cases. This process involves generalising findings to theory, rather than populations: the findings of cases are compared to established research and evaluated in terms of the support or opposition thereof to existing theoretical views. This allows further theoretical development and could open new avenues for research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 1999). The dependence on contextual factors implies that the results obtained from case study research can be expected to be restricted to the specific context in which it is performed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006); however, given application in a similar context, the results may be transferable if described in sufficient detail and sufficient cases with varied contextual factors are analysed (i.e. inter-case generalisation may exist) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009).

Flyvbjerg (2006) condemned the view of critics of case study methodology that the contribution to scientific knowledge through this method was less valuable than more quantitative and experimental studies. The fact is that the value of case study research is more often found in the study of variables that are inextricably linked to the context in which they are observed than in providing a model for generalisation across a population (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009).

The subject of this study (i.e. training and development in the South African agricultural sector) is an example of such a context dependent phenomenon. The available knowledge and demographic profile of some respondents indicates that this study does not lend itself to a purely quantitative method of research.

3.2.2.2 Concerns with reliability

Babbie and Mouton (2001) argued that the establishment of validity in qualitative (or as in this case, an amalgamation of quantitative and qualitative techniques, i.e. mixed methods) research implies that reliability is also present in the study. The

extent to which a case study is replicable in a similar context provides the researcher with a useful measure of reliability (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009). This propensity for replication is established if evidence is presented that if a study were to be repeated using similar respondents in a similar context, similar results would be found (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008). The concept of multiple case studies serves to present such evidence and address concerns with reliability, as it has the potential to illustrate how a particular approach to various cases can yield similar results (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009).

3.2.2.3 Concerns with objectivity

One of the most serious concerns with studies involving a qualitative element is the potential for bias on the part of the researcher to influence the outcome of the study or the interpretation of results. The direct involvement of the researcher in gathering data through qualitative means could present the temptation to influence the data collected in favour of the purpose of the study at hand (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Yin, 2009). Another source of concern with objectivity lies in the researcher's pre-existing knowledge on the subject matter and theory at hand, which could influence interpretations of meaning-rich data, yet is in itself essential in drawing correct conclusions (Patton & Appelbaum, 2003).

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that objectivity is maintained in conducting the study. Bias in a study such as this could be encountered in the data collection and interpretation phases. The researcher was directly involved with respondents when data collection was done. During this stage of the process, the researcher relied on the observation of each respondent's behaviour and interpretation of the meaning inherent in the statements made by each respondent. It was crucial that the researcher ensured that objectivity was maintained in interaction with respondents in order to avoid bias early in the research process. The researcher is furthermore involved in the interpretation of information collected in each case and ensured that appropriate conclusions are drawn from the acquired data. The use of multiple sources of data (such as documentation, archived records, interviews, questionnaires and direct observation of participants) yields richer data and as such served to prevent much of the potential bias which could have resulted from purely qualitative methods (Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 1999, 2009).

Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 278) also argued that an adequate audit "... trail should be left to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry." Such a process can be conceptualised as the establishment and maintenance of a case study database as well as a clear chain of evidence, as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

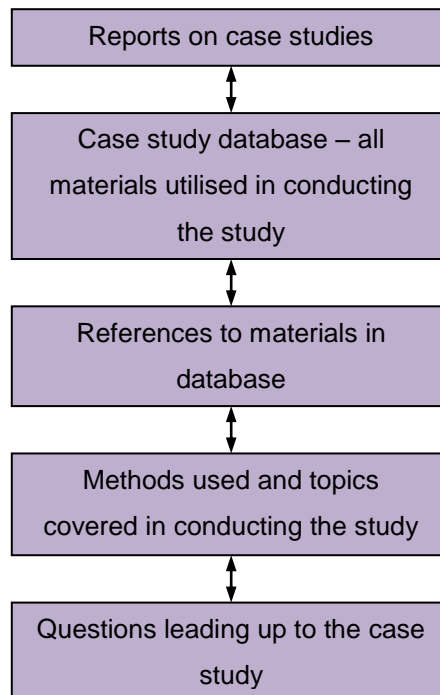


Figure 5. Chain of evidence in a case study project

(Yin, 2009, p. 123)

Babbie and Mouton (2001) listed the raw data to be kept in the database to form part of the chain of evidence as follows:

1. Raw data collected by the researcher through different methods
2. Products of data analysis and reduction
3. Products of cross analysis in the form of themes or patterns identified
4. Notes kept by the researcher on the process followed
5. All material related to purpose and development of study
6. Information related to the development of instruments for the study

The current database was established to allow for the replication of case studies in this study, and if necessary for similar studies in future, as proposed by Gibbert et al., (2008).

3.3 Research process

The potentially contentious nature of the methodology utilised implies that the researcher had to ensure that the process followed adheres to very high standards in order to ensure that the research is ultimately considered fruitful and worthwhile. The process to establish this was illustrated by Noor (2008) as the following:

1. Formulation of a theory
2. Selection of cases
3. Design and evaluation of research instruments
4. Conducting individual case studies
5. Data analysis and case capturing
6. Cross analysis of cases
7. Drawing of conclusions
8. Reviewing theory

These eight steps describe the entire process of the research project. When considering the methodology utilised in the project, steps 2 to 6 need to be described. The formulation of a theory falls with the literature study, which has been completed (in the form of the conceptual frameworks derived from the literature review). The conclusions from the study and review of the proposed theory are covered in the results of the study. The descriptions of these steps are provided in the following sections.

3.4 Methodology

One of the key advantages in applying case study research is that it does not limit the researcher in terms of data collection techniques. The researcher can utilise qualitative, quantitative or both methods to collect data for analysis (Dooley, 2002). Case study research typically utilises more than one type of data collection technique. The utilisation of more than one source of data is termed (methodological)

triangulation, whereby the different sources of data verify the data collected from each other source (Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009).

The current study lent itself strongly towards the utilisation of a methodology comprising both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The data collection tools are in the form of basic questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were chiefly used to collect descriptive information from management, shedding light on each targeted farm as organisation. Interviews were conducted with a selection of commercial farmers and the employees targeted in their developmental interventions.

The bulk of information collected in this study rested with qualitative techniques. Many of the employees targeted in developmental initiatives possess low levels of literacy, which would make the use of quantitative tools such as paper-based questionnaires problematic. To address this issue, the researcher conducted and recorded interviews with all participating respondents, based on a set interview schedule. A sample of cases were utilised in the research in order to ensure that results were more generalisable.

Yin (2009) proposed two methods of analysis of case study research results which could be deemed appropriate in this study: pattern matching and explanation building. Pattern matching is the observed emergence of patterns from various cases. Where these patterns align, one can then assume the research possesses greater internal validity. Explanation building is the formulation of patterns in order to find explanations for the observations in the cases. In this specific case, pattern matching was considered to be the most appropriate, as the central issue in the study is to study the developmental initiatives and the individual and organisational variables promoting success or failure in these initiatives. This implies that the patterns related to success or failure were identified and examined.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) acknowledged that case study research can have great value to the creation of knowledge and that it provides a reasonable tool for developing theories which can later be researched in more depth to confirm or refute their validity. In order to describe the methodology of this study, the framework provided by Noor (2008), is utilised.

3.4.1 Selection of cases

The researcher acknowledges the fact that in many cases validity and reliability of qualitative studies and especially case study based research projects is called into question. It is thus clear that the researcher is faced by the challenge of maximising such reliability and validity. In order to ensure that the results obtained from this study are considered to be reliable, the researcher selected several cases for consideration. Random selection of cases is typically not employed in this type of study. Each case is selected based on criteria central to the contextual and complexity parameters set out by the researcher (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008). Mabry (2008) also pointed out that convenience sampling is inevitable to a certain extent, due to the willingness of respondents to participate, and purposive selection criteria imposed.

When using multiple case studies in a research project, the purpose of the study is to replicate results either literally (selection predicts similar results) or theoretically (selection predicts varied results within a similar context) (Gibbert et al., 2008; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009). The purpose of this study is to gather as much information as possible on the reasons for the success or failure of skills development initiatives on farms. As such, the selected cases were similar in terms of basic contextual factors (e.g. type of employer, presence of skills development) yet each case presented unique factors which increased divergence from the others (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2009). The cases which were selected can be deemed to be typical cases (i.e. cases which are expected to, within contextual constraints, represent the general agricultural context in South Africa) (Mabry, 2008). This served to generate rich data across several cases which aided in understanding the conceptual framework of variables involved in training and development on farms.

The cases used in this study were not arbitrarily or randomly selected. Each case was evaluated in terms of its acceptability in this study against a framework of qualifying criteria (see Table 3, p. 65). Multiple cases were selected, in order to ensure the greatest degree of validity, reliability, and generalisability (within contextual constraints) possible were achieved in this study.

The eliminating factors considered in selection are deemed not to create undue bias in terms of the results of the study, but rather ensure that viable cases for pattern

identification are utilised. The aim of the study is to find an appropriate framework of skills development for use in the agricultural sector, not to confirm or reject a specific hypothesis. The rationale for setting the selection criteria follows.

Table 3

Criteria for case study selection

| Case selection criteria | Qualifying factor |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Skills development initiatives | Initiatives are present |
| Employer size | Medium to large employers (25+ employees) |
| Nature of labour relations | Sound labour relations |
| Employee designation | Permanent employees only |

3.4.1.1 Presence of skills development initiatives

The assumption can be made that in certain cases employers could refuse or neglect to invest in skills development. The complete lack of investment in skills development or empowerment by the employer could have a negative effect on growth and development of employees. A scenario such as this would have been inappropriate in the current study, as the intent is not to study the prevalence of skills development, but rather the underlying patterns inherent in effective frameworks of skills development (if such patterns exist).

3.4.1.2 Employer size

Smaller employers in the agricultural sector can be expected to invest less or less formally in their employees, due to possible financial constraints and a labour force of insufficient size to warrant larger scale training and development initiatives. In addition, smaller employers will most likely have fewer resources available to initiate ventures aiming at the empowerment of employees and their ultimate progression towards skilled farmers.

3.4.1.3 Sound labour relations

Employers struggling with militant and aggressive employees or conversely employees struggling with indifferent or prejudiced employers can be expected to

harbour various negative views regarding the other party and their actions. This could potentially be reflected in the views expressed during interview sessions and consequently result in emotionally tainted data. As such, employers with misgivings about their labour relations situations were eliminated. Where indifferent or prejudiced attitudes were encountered by the researcher among management prior to final case selection, inclusion of the particular case in this study was rejected.

3.4.1.4 Employee designation

Production on many farms is seasonal in nature, in that certain crops grow only during a designated period in the year. Where this is the case, many farmers rely on casual or seasonal labour to perform additional work which the core permanent labour force in each case does not have the time to complete. These tasks are mostly very basic in nature and require virtually no skills whatsoever. As a result, it can be expected that investment in the skills development of seasonal workers will be limited or non-existent. Skills development is ultimately an investment in the organisation's future operational capacity and the value to be gained from developing a casual worker would (from an organisational point of view) be negligible. The focus of this study thus rests with the skills development of permanent employees, as they form the core operating staff of each organisation.

3.4.2 Design and evaluation of research tools

As has been mentioned, a mixed method approach to data collection was used, utilising several sources of information. Three tools were developed to serve this purpose: a questionnaire aimed at gathering documentary and descriptive information regarding the specific farm and two interview schedules to collect the required information regarding the success of skills development on these farms from two different stakeholders (employers and employees). Critical questions to be posed in both interviews were identified from the literature review. The conceptual framework for the success of skills development given the relevant individual and organisational variables was central to the development of these questions. All the instruments were translated into Afrikaans, to accommodate ease of use on farms in the Western Cape.

3.4.2.1 Contextualising the farm organisation

The first stage of data collection requires the acquisition of descriptive information depicting the nature and structure of each farm as organisation by using a basic questionnaire. These questionnaires were completed by managerial employees in each case and collected information relating to: the size of the organisation, its management structure, financial performance and training and development expenditure, presence (or absence) of engagement and empowerment schemes or programmes among others (see Appendix A for full questionnaire). The information gathered here allowed the researcher to formulate an accurate description of the farm in terms of its organisational characteristics.

3.4.2.2 Stakeholder experience: employees' interview schedule

The employees who are directly affected by skills development initiatives can be considered to be a valuable source of information. The fact that in many cases, representatives from among labourers can be expected to be illiterate or find written instruments such as questionnaires difficult to interpret and complete accordingly implies that face-to-face interview was more useful. The implication is that the research is non-experimental in nature, as the focus is on observation of skills development on farms in the designated areas of South Africa.

Interviews were designed in a manner which promoted the collection of data related to the development of employees' skills on farms, by utilising a combination of open- and closed-ended questions, following a semi-structured approach based on the variables contained in the theoretical framework presented in the literature review. The purpose of open ended questions is to gain insight into the effectiveness of skills development as experienced by each individual respondent, allowing them the opportunity to describe their experience in their own words. This allowed the researcher to draw meaning from their statements and consider a broad perspective on skills development (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

A panel of four experts from the fields of Industrial Psychology and Agriculture was asked to perform a validation exercise on the interview schedule designed for employees. The purpose of the exercise was to determine whether the questions in the interview schedule were appropriate given the variables which were to be measured. The feedback which was obtained was very useful and pointed out that

given the educational level farm workers were expected to have, the language used in most questions may have been too complex in nature and that examples would be required to explain unfamiliar concepts to employees. Based on this feedback the questions in the schedule were rewritten in a more appropriate format and substantiating examples were given where appropriate. The researcher further noted that it could be necessary to provide verbal explanations during the course of the interview.

The interview used for collecting data from employees comprised five separate sections (see Appendix B for the full interview schedule). In the first section of the interview basic employee information was collected, including the employee's position and tenure on the farm as well as whether the employee resided on the farm.

The second section posed questions related to the employee's perception of individual variables that were identified in the literature review as having the potential to impact on training and development on farms. Table 4 (p. 70) presents an overview of the structure of this section of the interview in terms of: dimension, sub-dimension, and the number of questions related to each sub-dimension (number of open-ended, closed-ended and total questions). The third section of the interview posed questions related to the employee's perception of the organisational variables impacting on skills development. Table 5 (p. 71) presents an overview of the structure of this section of the interview in terms of: dimension, sub-dimension, and the number of questions related to each sub-dimension (number of open-ended, closed-ended and total questions).

The fourth section of this interview explored the employee's perception of the manner in which certain individual and organisational variables were interrelated. In each case one open-ended question probing the employee's perception of the interrelationship was posed. The perceived impact of the following individual variables on motivation to learn were assessed: learner readiness, locus of control, self-efficacy, and attitude to training. The perceived impact of the two organisational variables (training and development climate, and reinforcement systems) on motivation to learn was established. The following perceptions were also probed: attitude being influenced by motivation to learn, locus of control impacting on self-

efficacy, and the effect of labour relations on training and development climate. In the fifth (and final) section of the interview, employees are asked whether training and development is perceived to have helped them perform better at work and to motivate their answer.

3.4.2.3 Stakeholder perceptions: employers

Employers constitute a valuable source of information, as their direct involvement in the strategic objectives and design of skills development initiatives can be expected to have a direct impact on the effectiveness thereof. The interview covers factors such as the employer's motivation for embarking on skills development initiatives, the process followed in designing such exercises, the management practices of the employers and their perceptions on the need for skills development, and be based on variables identified and presented in the theoretical framework in the literature review.

In order to ensure that the interview structure is considered a valid platform for gathering data, the employer interview was validated in the same manner and by the same panel as the employee interview. In this case, the panel made far fewer suggestions for changes than in the employee interview however the suggestions which were made were incorporated into the interviews prior to these interviews being conducted. The interview for collecting information from employers (management) is also divided into five sections (see Appendix C for full interview schedule), along the same structure as was used in the employee interview. The first section dealt with basic organisational information, including (if known) the annual budget for skills development, the number of training and development programmes in place, and the number of permanent employees on the farm.

The second section was designed to determine what the employer's perception of the individual variables which impact on skills development was, an overview of which is presented in Table 4 (p.70). The third section of the interview posed questions related to the employer's perception of the organisational variables impacting on skills development; Table 5 (p.71) presents an overview thereof.

Table 4**Interview section B: perception of individual variables impacting skills development**

| Dimension | Sub-dimension | Employee Interview | | | Employer Interview | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| | | Open | Closed | Total | Open | Closed | Total |
| Ability to learn | Learner readiness | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Learning potential | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Cognitive engagement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Motivation to learn | Personal needs | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Job involvement and interest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Expectancy | 5 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Attitude to development | Resistance to change | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Scepticism | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Personality | Locus of control | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Perceived ability to learn | Self-efficacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | Learned helplessness | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Table 5
Interview section C: perception of organisational variables impacting skills development

| Dimension | Sub-dimension | Employee Interview | | | Employer Interview | | | Total |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|--------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | Open | Closed | Total | Open | Closed | Total | |
| Organisational strategy | NA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Labour relations | NA | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Organisational culture | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Organisational climate | General climate | 1 | 0 | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | Supervisor support | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Peer support | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Instructor support | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Organisational systems | Training and development systems | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| | Reward systems | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |

The fourth section determined what the employer's perception of interrelationships between (individual and organisational) variables was. In each case one open-ended question was used to determine this perception. The perceived effect of learner readiness, locus of control, self-efficacy, learned helplessness, training and development climate, reinforcement systems, and attitude to training and development on motivation to learn was addressed. The employer's perception of the impact of locus of control on self-efficacy, and labour relations on training and development climate was also evaluated. In the fifth (and final) section, the employer was asked to describe the various training and development initiatives which were performed in the organisation.

3.4.3 Conducting individual case studies

In each case, interviews are aimed at collecting information from two broad groups of people within the organisation: representatives of both the labour force and management. The researcher visited each of the six farms to perform the necessary research and maintained contact afterwards to collect as much of the requested data as possible.

In addition to interviews, some documentary information was also requested from management in order to clarify specific questions. Examples of these documents include policies, Workplace Skills Plans and Annual Training Reports and other documentation deemed relevant to create a clear and unambiguous case.

During the interview stage of the research process, it is crucial for the researcher to maintain, as far as possible, an objective outlook and interpretation of the individual cases. Care was taken that where such interpretation occurred, it was based in fact and not biased in favour of or against any party.

3.4.4 Case capturing and data analysis

Case studies typically generate large amounts of data which need to be analysed in order to identify central themes (Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009). In order to ensure that no information was lost in the process of conducting the individual case studies, interviews were recorded. Each case was summarised in terms of information gathered from interviews and other sources of evidence. Cases are typically reported in narrative form, yet in this case a more structured approach is taken, as Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) acknowledged that where multiple cases are used, unbroken

narration is not a feasible style for reporting data. All recordings of interviews are kept on record and included with the published document in order to enable the reader to verify the information collected and represented in the course of writing up each case. Interviews were not transcribed, as all the information contained therein is summarised and audio copies of the interviews are available.

Content analysis was performed on each case, to identify the central underlying themes in each case. Content analysis is deemed to be the appropriate tool through which to interpret data in this study, as it is especially sensitive to the study of a certain phenomenon through the analysis of language and meaning (both expressed and inferred) (Gibbert et al., 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mabry, 2008; Yin, 2009).

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) further highlight the value of content analysis when dealing with cases where limited previous research is available to support the hypotheses of the researcher, as it delves into the meaning of statements made by respondents in order to elicit underlying themes. This method is deemed particularly useful where open ended questions, requiring comprehensive responses from the respondent are used. In addition to the analysis of content of interviews, field notes and observations are also taken into account by the researcher in finalising the report on each case.

The content analysis is represented in table format in Chapter 4. In each case the researcher used the information collected to give a descriptive overview of the case in question, compile a comprehensive representation (included in the appendices), and draw conclusions to compare across cases. This thus represents the findings of each case.

3.4.5 Analysis of data: cross analysis of cases

To draw conclusions with regard to the generalisability of themes unearthed through content analysis, cross analyses were performed on all said themes across all the relevant cases. This assists in drawing more robust conclusions from the information gathered and to generate a clear conceptual theory for further study in this field. This type of cross analysis was termed “cross-case synthesis” by Yin (2009, p. 156). According to Baxter and Jack (2008), Gibbert et al. (2008), and Yin (2009) this method of data analysis is particularly effective in multiple case study projects, as it

allows researchers to collect and compare various patterns across cases and from there generate working theories.

In this study, the cross analysis of cases is represented in an integration of findings by means of data collection (i.e. background information for, interviews, and other sources of information) and a review of the conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter 2. In addition to this, additional possible variables, relationships and observations deemed relevant are presented in the Discussion section of Chapter 4. This should serve to give an indication of the way in which the three frameworks presented in Chapter 2 (individual, organisational and integrated variables) manifest and operate across the six cases.

3.5 Conclusion: Chapter 3

This chapter indicated that the research method used in the study is that of multiple case studies. The motivation to use this method was described and the various challenges and potential pitfalls of case studies were discussed. Appropriate strategies to overcome the challenges of the method were explained.

Furthermore, this chapter described the process followed in selecting cases, the different tools used for data collection, how interviews were validated, and the method according to which the research was conducted. The analysis of the case studies by means of cross analysis was discussed. The following chapter presents the findings and content analysis from each case, based on the various sources of information used by the researcher, as well as the findings from the cross analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters a conceptual framework of variables which could impact on the effectiveness of skills development on farms was developed together with the presentation of the research methodology which was followed. In this chapter, each of the six cases investigated are reported as individual case studies, where the information obtained from the various sources (background information form as per Appendix A, statutory reports, policy documents and other conversations with management and administrative staff on the farm) is collated in a descriptive manner. Each case is organised as follows: an overview of the organisation is given, followed by an overview of the training and development programmes presented on each farm, based on descriptions provided by management and administrative staff.

The results of interviews conducted with managers and employees are presented in Table 6 (individual variables) (p. 85) and Table 7 (organisational variables) (p. 91). These tables summarise the six cases according to the conceptual framework of variables (refer to Figure 4, p. 52). As discussed in Chapter 3, the same method of collecting data was followed in all six cases: interviews were conducted with the relevant manager(s) and two employees (see Appendix B for the employee interview schedule and Appendix C for the employer interview schedule). The variables (and relevant interrelationships) were presented case by case in an amalgamated narrative report, as per employer and employee interviews. These reports of responses are presented in Appendix D with no interpretation or analysis. Following the case presentations and summary tables, the data obtained was compared across cases and considered in terms of the relevant literature. The cross analysis served to determine which patterns could be established between cases and ultimately presents the findings of the research in terms of the framework of variables (refer to Figure 4, p. 52).

4.2 Case study 1: Rooibos farm 1, Clanwilliam

This farm is located approximately 20 km outside Clanwilliam in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was rooibos tea and secondary crop was potatoes.

It was owned by a close corporation with family members as owners of the corporation.

The farm employed forty permanent workers and the number of seasonal workers varied as per seasonal labour demands. There were five separable hierarchical levels: the owner, the farm managers, team leaders, permanent workers and seasonal workers. The total annual remuneration of employees came to approximately R 2.5 million, and as a result approximately R 25 000 in Skills Development Levies was paid each year. The training budget came to approximately R 50 000 in 2012. Included in this budget were all external training events (i.e. not in-house or on-the-job training) performed in the applicable financial year. This farm made use of a human resource management consultant to ensure compliance with statutory reports and additional labour related issues.

Management submitted an Annual Training Report and Workplace Skills Plan to the AgriSETA annually, as per statutory requirements and in doing so claimed back a portion of Skills Development Levies paid each year. The farm did not have a Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment certificate at the time of data collection. There were no formal training and development policies in place and the Workplace Skills Plan was used as a guideline for implementing training. At the time of data collection no Employment Equity report could be acquired due to difficulty in accessing the relevant government database, although this report was duly submitted and accepted by the Department of Labour.

The manager had been employed for one year, the first employee for more than twenty years and the second employee for seventeen years. The manager and both the employees who were interviewed lived on the farm. The type of training presented to employees was generally functional and work-related. Even this rudimentary level of training had a positive impact on employees, as both the employees interviewed indicated that they were aware of personal growth and skills development as well as improved working conditions resulting from training and development exercises.

Additional programmes aimed at the general development of farm workers were in place and seemingly functioning well. A group of employees have formed a cooperative organisation as an empowerment initiative launched by the employer,

whereby they leased land from their employer and cultivated rooibos tea. This small farmer cooperative was Fairtrade accredited and completely autonomous in terms of operations and strategy. The land was being leased to the cooperative at a preferential rate and the employer provided guidance and advice when this was requested by the board members of the cooperative.

An indirect effect of the establishment of the cooperative has been the development of managerial skills among the employees serving as board members. In addition to this, the cooperative used profits to benefit the community on the farm. A social worker has been employed by the cooperative on a full time basis to assist with issues in the community such as alcohol abuse, interpersonal conflict and family matters. This was seen as a long term initiative given the fact that many of the issues in the community were seen to be deeply settled and would likely take some time to address.

4.3 Case study 2: Rooibos farm 2, Clanwilliam

This farm was privately owned and is located approximately 20 km outside Clanwilliam in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was rooibos tea and secondary crop was potatoes.

They employed 50 permanent workers and the number of seasonal workers varied as per labour demands. The total annual remuneration of employees came to approximately R 1.3 million, and as a result approximately R 13 000 in Skills Development Levies was paid each year. The training budget on the farm came to approximately R 26 000 in 2012. Included in this budget were all external training events (i.e. not in-house or on-the-job training) performed in the applicable financial year.

The farm would have started submitting an Annual Training Report and Workplace Skills Plan to AgriSETA annually from 2013, as per statutory requirements and in doing so have been able to claim back a portion of Skills Development Levies paid each year. No broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment certificate was available at the time of data collection. There were no formal training and development policies and at the time of data collection no Employment Equity report could be

accessed, although this report was duly submitted to, and accepted by the Department of Labour.

Interviews were conducted with the farm owner and two permanent workers (one tractor and machine operator, and one supervisor). The first employee had been employed for six years and the second employee for thirteen years. The owner and both the employees who were interviewed resided on the farm. As was the case on the first farm, training was perceived to have had positive results in employees' lives, even though it was presented at a basic and functional level. In addition to work related training, employees also received training specifically aimed at improving social conditions, such as an HIV/AIDS course.

At the time of the interview, management was preparing for the establishment of a cooperative business of which employees would be owners and managers. The establishment of this entity would have required training to be provided to those employees who were nominated to manage it. These employees would have needed to build different skills from those used in their work roles on the farm, as the new entity would have been independent from farm management. Developments such as this could potentially have assisted employees to develop higher levels of skills, which would not otherwise have been possible.

4.4 Case study 3: Fruit farm, Citrusdal

This farm is located approximately 20 km outside Citrusdal in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was citrus fruit and secondary crop was soft fruit. This farm was a privately owned entity.

The farm employed 165 permanent workers and the number of seasonal workers varied as per labour demands. There were four separable hierarchical levels: owner, managers, supervisors and workers. The total annual remuneration of employees came to approximately R 11.8 million, and as a result approximately R 118 000 in Skills Development Levies was paid each year. The farm had no fixed annual training budget and training was presented and paid as and when required.

The farm made use of an external consultant to assist with the annual submission of statutory reports. Annual Training Report and Workplace Skills Plan were submitted

to AgriSETA in 2012, as per statutory requirements. The farm did not have a Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment certificate at the time of data collection. There were no formal training and development policies on the farm, apart from the farm's Employment Equity Policy. The Workplace Skills Plan, Annual Training Report, as well as the Employment Equity Report could not be accessed at the time of data collection.

Interviews were conducted with the farm owner and two permanent workers (both supervisors / team leaders). The first employee had been employed there for eight years and the second employee for thirteen years. Both employees started working as general workers when they finished school. The owner and both the employees who were interviewed resided on the farm.

Training presented to employees was mostly basic and work related, as a result of production demands and limited additional (non-critical) training programmes. When such training was available, supervisors were sent to attend basic management skills courses. The farm also had a crèche and the employees of the crèche had all attended courses to register as teachers. Even though training was not presented at an advanced level, both employees indicated that they believed that it resulted in several personal benefits and allowed them to perform better at work.

The one employee maintained a very positive attitude to training throughout the interview and believed that the training he had received at work had allowed him to grow substantially in his eight years of employment. He believed that he had achieved more than any other employee as a result of his keen interest in developing his own skills. He also believed that his colleagues respected him, and considered the fact that they selected him to serve as a director of the employees' trust to be an illustration of this. The other employee indicated that training had allowed her to acquire new insights into her work which resulted in the development of an interest therein which she did not possess when she started working there 13 years ago.

In addition to initiatives such as the crèche on the farm, the employer created a trust of which only employees were trustees. The employer donated one farm to the trust, to be managed as the trustees saw fit, with the goal to allow them to develop new skills and become more empowered. This decision was not motivated by B-BBEE goals and the farm was not B-BBEE certified. The trust was managed by directors

selected by the employees from among their colleagues. According to the employer all the directors received training in order to help them manage this trust effectively (e.g. conflict resolution, financial management, statutory requirements). The directors of the trust leased the land to a third party and used the profits to the benefit of the employees of the farm.

4.5 Case study 4: Wine farm 1, Franschhoek

This farm is located approximately 15 km outside Franschhoek in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was wine grapes. Livestock were also raised and fynbos cultivated where land was not used for production purposes. This farm was owned by a private company.

The farm employed 123 permanent workers and the number of seasonal workers varied as per labour demands. There were three separable hierarchical levels: general managerial and administrative staff, team leaders and general labourers. The total annual remuneration of employees and budgetary information related to training and development was not made available by management.

The human resource manager submitted annual statutory reports. Annual Training Reports and Workplace Skills Plans were submitted to AgriSETA every year, as per statutory requirements. The farm did not have a Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment certificate at the time of data collection. There was no formal training and development policy at the time of data collection, apart from the farm's Employment Equity Policy. An Employment Equity Report was also submitted by management annually, as per statutory requirements.

Interviews were conducted with the farm's human resource manager and two permanent workers (one brand ambassador and one cellar assistant). The first employee had been employed there for seven years and the second for one and a half years. None of the respondents lived on the farm. Additional information was also collected from discussions with top management and the permanently employed social worker.

From the respective interviews it could be gathered that skills development was very important to both management and employees on this farm. The skills development

programmes presented were not limited to functional, work-related training. Management provided employees with among others work-related training, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), social skills training, structured learnerships and statutory training.

Management had established two trust funds, one to invest in the development and empowerment of the local community, and the other to empower and uplift employees on the farm. This second trust was a part owner of one of the farms in the organisation and received funding from the farm's wine sales. These funds were used to drive several projects in the community on the farm including the establishment and management of a crèche for employees' young children, the provision of funding for better primary and secondary education for employees' children, cover of a large proportion of employees' medical expenses and the establishment of healthy recreational activities such as sports teams.

The farm employed a social worker on a permanent basis to facilitate the various social investment projects of the trust. Her role was to address social issues in the community and provide support to those employees who may have needed it. She was also responsible for facilitating investment in the development of employees' children and assisted these children to attend better schools and source opportunities for tertiary education. The social worker was also involved in the facilitation of ABET courses.

4.6 Case study 5: Wine farm 2, Paarl

This farm is located approximately 5 km outside Paarl in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was wine grapes and cattle bred secondarily. This farm was under corporate ownership.

The farm employed 26 permanent employees and the number of seasonal workers varied as per labour demands. There were three separable hierarchical levels: farm manager, assistant manager and farm workers. Remuneration and other data were not available at the time of data collection as this information was collected and managed by the corporate management team. Managers could consequently not provide access to the requested information. The training budget is not fixed and

management submitted requests for training approval from corporate management when it was deemed necessary.

The corporate management team submitted annual statutory reports. Although the corporate Annual Training Report and Workplace Skills Plan and Employment Equity reports were submitted in 2012, as per statutory requirements, these reports could not be obtained. The farm's Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment status was linked to that of the corporate owner and consequently a certificate could not be obtained. There were no formal training and development policies.

Interviews were conducted with the farm's manager and assistant manager and two permanent workers (both general workers). The first employee had been employed there for seventeen years and the second for eighteen years. The managers and both the employees lived on the farm. The assistant manager had grown up on the farm.

Training provided to employees on this farm was generally related to operational and statutory requirements and was typically aimed at ensuring that employees could perform their work in a manner that was effective and safe. Employees were also given the opportunity to attend ABET courses, aimed at reducing illiteracy. Several initiatives were also aimed at community development: employees received training on personal financial management, HIV / AIDS, and interpersonal communication in the home. Both employees found training to have been beneficial and enriching and believed that the new skills they acquired as a result thereof would have served themselves and the organisation well.

Management expressed a desire to implement more training aimed at community development, such as training on value systems and ethics. The managers believed that training of this nature could help reduce social problems such as alcohol abuse and domestic violence. The wellbeing of the community was also considered to be operationally relevant, as employees lived on the farm and their private lives were not easily separated from their working lives.

4.7 Case study 6: Wine farm 3, Paarl

This farm is located approximately 15 km outside Paarl in the Western Cape. The primary crop produced here was wine grapes and cattle bred secondarily. This farm was under corporate ownership.

The farm employed 61 permanent employees and the number of seasonal workers varied as per labour demands. There are 4 separable hierarchical levels on the farm: manager, assistant managers, supervisors and workers. Management could not grant access to remuneration and other data as this was collected and managed by the corporate management team. Training was not provided based on a fixed budget: management submitted requests for training approval from corporate management when necessary.

As was the case with the other corporately owned farm, the corporate management team submitted annual statutory reports. The corporate Annual Training Report and Workplace Skills Plan and Employment Equity reports were submitted in 2012, as per statutory requirements (however, as in the previous case these reports could not be obtained). As with the previous case, this farm's Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment status was linked to that of the corporate owner. No certificate could therefore be obtained. There were no formal training and development policies in place.

Interviews were conducted with the farm's manager and two permanent workers (one supervisor and one general worker). The first employee had been employed there for twenty-eight years and the second for fourteen years. The manager and both the employees lived on the farm.

The most important training and development projects were directed at operational requirements and employees' personal development. Training aimed at operational requirements included various aspects of normal daily activities as well as statutory aspects such as health and safety issues and machine operating licences. Training aimed at personal development included ABET training which was made available to all interested employees as well as other projects such as HIV / AIDS education, personal financial management, and the impact of alcohol abuse in the family. Both employees expressed the belief that skills development was valuable in their working and personal lives.

4.8 Case study interview results

The interviews conducted with managers and employees provided a wealth of information. Their responses are summarised in Table 6 (individual variables) (p. 85) and Table 7 (organisational variables) (p. 91). Many variables were assessed based on employees' self-reported perceptions (e.g. locus of control). It should be noted that results based on such self-reports were interpreted with caution, due to the lack of validity and reliability involved in such self-report measures as opposed to more objective assessment (e.g. psychometric assessments).

4.9 Discussion

When one considers the six cases in isolation, it is clear that each represented a microcosm of existence in which the employer and employees coexisted in a small community. This community was the farm: the employees and their employer (or manager) lived in close physical proximity to one another and were exposed to each other's way of life. This set the contextual scene in which the investigation was performed. The six farms represented a broad cross section of farms in the Western Cape, in terms of: ownership structure, management control, labour force size, and farm operations scope and size.

Each case was unique in terms of the individual, organisational and environmental variables identified in Chapter 2, yet many similar patterns could be identified between cases. The following sections provide an overview of the findings across the six cases, in light of the literature review.

4.9.1 Individual variables impacting on skills development

The various respondents' interview responses were compared across the six cases and between management and employees. This allowed several findings to be made regarding the individual variables included in the framework of variables (Figure 4, p. 52). These findings are presented in the following sections.

4.9.1.1 Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Learning can be considered to be a process which requires an individual ability to achieve. This ability is dependent on unique characteristic of each learner, such as learner readiness, learning potential and cognitive engagement.

Table 6

Summary table of findings on individual variables

| IR ¹ | R ² | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 | Case 5 | Case 6 |
|----------------------------|----------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Readiness – Ability | | | | | | | |
| ER ² | | Effect observed; Informally assessed (performance evaluation); Training adapted to readiness | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment – sufficiently skilled employees received additional training | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment of readiness – ER perception; | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment of readiness (manager perception) but formal skills audits planned for the future | Positive effect observed; No formal evaluation of readiness, but past success and progress used as T&D selection criteria | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment based on EEs' interests, capacity, attitude and previous education |
| EE ¹ | 1 | Low education compromised development; | Basic education, and training improved readiness (both) | Completion of Gr. 12, and training thus far has ensured high level of readiness (both) | Positive effect observed (both); Training led to extensive growth in work roles from basic to skilled (both) | Very low level of education (illiterate) – low readiness made training difficult | Basic education (both); Education and training promoted readiness (both) |
| EE ² | 2 | Training generally improved readiness (both ⁵) | | Wished to pursue tertiary education, but did not have the opportunity | | Basic level of education; High readiness due to personal investment in skills | Attending ABET: improving readiness for further training |
| Potential – Ability | | | | | | | |
| ER | | Effect observed; Informally assessed; Informed future skills development plans | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment based on perceived EE interest, skill and aptitude | Positive effect observed; Informal assessment – performance in T&D ⁶ | Effect observed; No current measurement in place but investing in ABET to improve potential | Effect observed; No formal evaluation of potential, but long term employment of EEs allowed ER to informally evaluate potential | Positive effect observed; Formal psychometric measurement had been used in the past, but not regularly or recently; ABET improved potential |
| EE ¹ | 1 | Strong learning potential despite limited formal education (both); | Strategy for learning: drawing comparisons between training content and work; | High level of learning potential: learned through application of material and mastered all skills presented (both) | Low literacy negatively affected potential and readiness | ER to informally evaluate potential | ER to informally evaluate potential |
| EE ² | 2 | Social learning boosted potential (both) | Strong learning potential (both) | | Possessed high level of learning potential: rapid learning through effective engagement in T&D (both) | Possessed potential, but limited by educational level (both); Could usually master all new concepts (both) | Possessed strong potential (both); Made use of social learning and task repetition to learn (both); |

Footnotes

1. 'IR' refers to interrelationships as presented in the framework of variables
2. 'R' refers to the respondent
3. 'ER' refers to the employer or manager(s) interviewed in each case
4. 'EE' refers to the employee
5. 'Both' refers to a statement / observation made by both employees
6. 'T&D' refers to training and development

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Cognitive Engagement – Ability | <p>ER Effect observed: No attempt to improve – responsibility of trainer</p> <p>Positive effect observed, but outside management control – instructor was responsible</p> <p>Positive effect observed; Responsibility of instructors: monitor and stimulate cognitive engagement and give feedback to ER</p> <p>Positive effect observed; EEs are individually prepared for training through communicating personal benefits of T&D</p> <p>Positive effect observed; EEs are informed of: • Expected career path • EE role during and after training Actively encouraged EEs to internalise T&D content</p> <p>Positive effect observed; No direct attempt to stimulate cognitive engagement: ABET indirectly improved it, through greater competencies</p> |
| Readiness – Motivation | <p>EE 1 Several strategies used to remain engaged in training (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Questions for clarification • Taking notes <p>High cognitive engagement (both); Strategy for engagement (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visualising practical application • Practicing content • Questions for clarification • Deriving enjoyment from learning <p>Generally high cognitive engagement: • Asked questions for clarification Application of training content at work</p> <p>Generally cognitively engaged in material and invested their attention during T&D (both)</p> <p>ER Unaware of effect</p> <p>No relation between readiness and motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed; Younger EEs had greater readiness and motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed; expected clearer impression of effect after ABET</p> <p>Only selected EEs with appropriate level of readiness for training: low readiness would compromise motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: education level and training language impacted readiness and motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> |
| Personal Needs – Motivation | <p>EE 2 No effect observed</p> <p>Verbal communication of personal benefits of training, including wage increase and promotion opportunities (over the longer term)</p> <p>Training facilitated growth in work role – positive motivational effect; T&D improved performance and employment security (both)</p> <p>Training serves employment security and work performance needs (both); Some training improved life at home – serving personal needs</p> <p>Unaware of effect of training on satisfying personal needs</p> <p>Improve stress management – focus on important issues</p> <p>Performance assessment included individual development needs assessment – promoted motivational effect</p> <p>Education generally and T&D on the farm satisfied financial and employment security, and general personal needs at work (both);</p> <p>T&D was beneficial in personal lives: greater work performance and quality of life resulted from it (both); Internal and external education and training provided employment and financial security</p> <p>Secondary education provided better work performance and training at work improved performance but not security</p> <p>T&D on the farm allowed growth from security guard to brand ambassador: higher order needs of self-esteem and –actualisation realised</p> <p>Non-material benefits of training verbally communicated; EEs took ownership of work which improved performance</p> <p>Training assisted satisfaction of personal needs (both); T&D promoted financial and employment security (both); Training success resulted in a feeling of happiness</p> <p>EEs were generally motivated to participate in T&D; Effect of training on needs explained (growth, financial and employment security)</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both); T&D generally assisted in securing personal needs (financial and employment security) (both); Effect dependent on specific programme being presented</p> |

| Involvement and Interest – Motivation | | | Expectancy – Motivation | Motivation – Attitude |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| ER | <p>Involvement stimulated performance at work and in training;</p> <p>Job involvement affected selection of employees for training</p> | <p>Perceived interest and involvement used as indicator for training selection;</p> <p>EE interest critical in selecting training for individuals</p> | <p>Expected outcomes being met improved motivation (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased earnings • Manageable workload • Improved position • Respect from peers; <p>Utility in training through skills transfer to families (both);</p> <p>Utility stimulated motivation (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Training stimulated involvement and interest – positive impact on motivation and growth in work roles (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed (both);</p> <p>High interest and involvement in work which grew with additional training (both)</p> | <p>Realised expectations improved motivation (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills growth • Improved performance; • Work related utility positively affected motivation (both) | <p>Positive effect observed</p> |
| EE 2 | <p>Initially the farm was not an ideal employment option: hoped for more prestigious work;</p> <p>Training led to an interest in work</p> | <p>Strong positive effect observed (both);</p> <p>"In love" with his work and committed to the farm;</p> <p>Training improved job involvement</p> | <p>Expectation from training: application at work and improved work performance (both);</p> <p>Training utility served motivation and was found in (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal growth • Career development • Improved readiness; • Aware of communication of purpose and utility of training <p>Unsure of purpose or expected outcomes of training and consequent motivational effect</p> | <p>Positive effect observed</p> |
| ER | <p>Basic goal of training verbally communicated – not personal or organisational utility</p> | <p>Utility and purpose of training explained to individual EEs after training;</p> <p>Limited communication of training outcomes</p> | <p>All potential outcomes of training (at farm, individual and community level) were communicated to employees;</p> <p>Feedback was obtained from EEs on their experience of training during last session of each exercise</p> | <p>Utility verbally communicated to EEs;</p> <p>Managers regularly informed EEs of the possible outcomes they could expect from T&D</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Involved improved training performance directly;</p> <p>Training performance was indicator of work performance; interest in work, and in training positively related</p> | <p>Important positive effect observed, also direct effect on effectiveness;</p> <p>T&D promoted involvement and interest in work</p> | <p>Expected feedback from management on performance in training (both) – improved motivation if realised;</p> <p>Training had personal utility (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal growth • Improved performance • Eased their work • Aware of communication of T&D purpose and outcomes (both) | <p>Expected promotion over time</p> |
| EE 2 | | | <p>Corporate HR manager generally communicated opportunities and utility of training to EEs;</p> <p>Communication of potential T&D outcomes was insufficient</p> | <p>Positive effect observed where expectations were met (both);</p> <p>Perceived utility stimulated motivation and was found in (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased performance • Improved attitudes • Growth in knowledge, skills and abilities; <p>Expected training applicable to work and increased responsibility upon completion</p> |
| ER | | | | <p>Positive reciprocal relationship observed</p> |
| EE 1 | | | | <p>Highly motivated EEs also displayed more positive general attitudes to T&D</p> |
| EE 2 | | | | <p>Positive reciprocal relationship observed (both)</p> |

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|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>ER No resistance observed; Training is good and enjoyable</p> <p>EE 1 Training needed for change – change was positive (both); No fear of change (both)</p> <p>EE 2</p> | <p>Phenomenon was observed – uncommon; In one EE's case ER provided holistic overview of personal T&D benefits to overcome resistance</p> <p>Change related to training was positive (both); Resistance generally uncommon (both)</p> <p>Positive general attitude; Training is "a day of paid leave" – negative impact possible if training not taken seriously</p> <p>ER vision for T&D (continuous development) recognised and embraced</p> <p>Expressed positive attitude to T&D (both);</p> | <p>General EE attitude to training was very positive; No resistance observed in the past</p> <p>Training enabled positive change to happen, thus no resistance thereto (both)</p> <p>Negative events sometimes compromised opportunities for positive change</p> <p>No scepticism observed in the past; General trend of growing positive attitudes to T&D</p> <p>Scepticism was not an issue (both); All EEs had positive attitudes to T&D (both); Employer had positive motive for T&D: improving personal and farm performance (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control improved training performance; EEs generally had internal locus of control</p> | <p>Effect observed: EEs resisted some forms of training, especially when T&D was not voluntary; Attempting to change through better communicating utility</p> <p>No resistance to change resulting for training; embracing the growth (both)</p> <p>Progressively more positive attitude to T&D, but still not positive enough; Some EEs expressed fear of unknown and change (ABET cited as part of solution)</p> <p>No scepticism expressed: T&D goal was improved performance and EE personal growth (both); Strong positive attitudes to T&D (both)</p> <p>External locus of control prevalent among EEs, but this was slowly changing; Internal locus of control allowed greater success in T&D; Directed managerial efforts to increase internal control perceptions among EEs (through coaching and T&D investment)</p> <p>Possess internal locus of control (both); Recognised strong impact of external forces on T&D success, but failure would be own fault;</p> <p>Responsible for both success and failure in training</p> | <p>Never encountered resistance to training or changes resulting from it: EEs often requested additional training</p> <p>Never encountered resistance to training</p> <p>Training enabled positive change – no resistance thereto (both)</p> <p>Generally very positive attitude to T&D with no hint of scepticism; EEs perceived challenge of T&D as a positive experience</p> <p>Very positive attitude to T&D (both); No mistrust in ER agenda for provision of training</p> <p>Strong positive attitudes to T&D (both)</p> <p>EEs generally had internal locus of control – positive effect on performance in training observed</p> <p>Possess internal locus of control; personally had control over success or failure in training (both); Recognised external factor may have an impact as well</p> <p>EEs were very eager to learn, very positive general attitude to T&D – illustrated in willingness to do ABET; No scepticism encountered before</p> <p>No scepticism expressed (both); Positive attitude attributed to potential personal growth from training (both); ER goal with training: improved performance (both)</p> <p>EEs generally possessed internal locus of control which improved performance in training</p> <p>Possess internal locus of control (both); In some cases external factors had an effect on success, e.g. language used by instructor in training (both)</p> |
| <p>Resistance to Change – Attitude</p> | <p>Scepticism – Attitude</p> | <p>Effectiveness</p> | <p>Locus of control – Effectiveness</p> | |

| Locus of control – Motivation | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ER | <p>EEs motivated when seeing colleagues assigned better / more rewarding tasks – improved motivation; Internal control over success – intrinsic motivation to learn</p> <p>EE 1 Limited education was an obstacle, but control over success was internal and increased motivation (both)</p> <p>EE 2</p> |
| ER | <p>Positive effect observed: locus of control moderated growth from training – internal allowed greater growth and greater motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed: Personal growth of EEs with internal locus of control was visible and served to motivate peers to assume similar control beliefs</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control positively impacted motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control improved performance and motivation (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: locus of control moderated growth from training – internal allowed greater growth and greater motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control improved performance and motivation (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control positively impacted motivation</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control improved performance and motivation (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: internal locus of control positively impacted motivation</p> |
| ER | <p>External locus of control / perceived low value of training – decline in self-efficacy; Declining self-efficacy could lead to learned helplessness</p> <p>EE 1 Previous record of success in training improved self-efficacy and motivation (both)</p> <p>EE 2</p> |
| ER | <p>Intuitive: effect exists, but could not relate a specific case</p> <p>Positive effect observed: perceived internal control improved self-efficacy (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: EEs with internal locus of control had greater confidence in abilities</p> <p>Positive effect observed: external locus of control had a negative impact on performance and self-efficacy</p> |
| ER | <p>Lack of self-efficacy – lower ability; No measurable training goals communicated; Successful completion was only real goal and training often informally assessed;</p> <p>EE 1 Positive effect observed (both); High self-efficacy beliefs improved ability (both)</p> <p>EE 2</p> |
| ER | <p>Goal-setting was instructor responsibility – assessment of achievement made possible; Such assessment is not performed and little feedback to EEs on performance during training</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs (both)</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs improved ability (both)</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs led to better performance in T&D and work (both)</p> <p>Would be successful in any T&D exercise</p> |
| ER | <p>General goals were set for EEs in T&D, but no specific goals yet; Success in T&D was evaluated and regular, meaningful feedback provided</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs (both); Generally confident, but intimidated by tests and exams</p> <p>Would be successful in any T&D exercise</p> |
| ER | <p>Purpose and goals were verbally presented to employees; Success in training was evaluated, but feedback could be improved</p> <p>Personal goal setting stimulated self-efficacy; Generally successful in past training (both); Positive effect observed (both)</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs (both); Generally confident, but intimidated by tests and exams</p> <p>Would be successful in any T&D exercise</p> |
| ER | <p>Formal goal setting was not employed; Skill levels monitored and applied in different work roles – regular performance feedback given</p> <p>Individualised goal setting based on skills required for different positions – EEs aware of skills to develop; Feedback on goal achievement was insufficient</p> <p>High self-efficacy beliefs: generally successful in T&D in the past (both)</p> |

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|-------------|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| ER | <p>Negative effect observed; Common learned helplessness (no specific example) – Employment of full-time social worker; Social worker provided assistance and counselling – ideal to improve EEs' quality of life</p> | <p>ER was not aware of any example of learned helplessness;</p> | <p>Common phenomenon in agriculture in SA; Many EEs completed school and had potential to perform better work; Farm provided comfort zone and EEs stagnated in their jobs and lost the motivation to develop their careers; Internal recruitment mitigated this, but was insufficient as farm growth was slow and EE turnover was low (little room for succession)</p> | <p>Common phenomenon in agriculture in SA, but not specifically encountered here; Extensive investment by management in community development, improving value systems promoted personal growth</p> | <p>Not generally encountered but recognised in agriculture in SA; Management strived to create a climate free of helplessness beliefs; Training at appropriate level, given individual readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive to possible literacy issues (e.g. readiness issues) • Provided opportunities for growth at own pace • Individual coaching | <p>Learned helplessness was observed at times – actual (opposed to perceived) capacity problems were more prevalent; Attempted to correct such perceptions through consultation and coaching</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Capable of changing working conditions (no learned helplessness) – improved motivation (both)</p> | <p>Training was a means to positively change working conditions (both); Possess control over change: taking responsibility for it</p> | <p>No perception of learned helplessness; capable of changing working conditions (both); Already made positive changes on farm by challenging inefficient practices</p> | <p>No perception of learned helplessness; training was a means to create positive change (both); Currently satisfied with state of career</p> | <p>No perception of helplessness; training seen as means to achieve positive changes at work (both)</p> | <p>No perception of helplessness; training seen as means to achieve positive changes at work (both)</p> |
| EE 2 | <p>No personal control over change at work – new tasks were taxing to master</p> | <p>No personal control over change at work – new tasks were taxing to master</p> | <p>Strong relationships with EEs and management eased challenges at work</p> | <p>Ambition: wishes to keep growing and felt empowered</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: self-efficacy improved motivation and performance</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: self-efficacy improved motivation and performance</p> |
| ER | <p>Important positive effect observed</p> | <p>Effect observed; Informal nature of training improved confidence – no "pass or fail" system; Fear of failure / lack of confidence compromised motivation</p> | <p>Positive effect observed</p> | <p>Critical positive effect observed; Management perceptions of EE efficacy also affected motivation</p> | <p>No specific effect observed: all EEs were motivated to perform in training, even if confidence was lacking</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: all EEs were motivated to perform in training, even if confidence was lacking</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Important positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> |
| EE 2 | <p>Negative effect observed; EE capacity to positively change work environment had no effect on motivation;</p> | <p>No effect observed, but perception of empowerment (as opposed to helplessness) stimulated motivation as well as open (bottom-up) communication</p> | <p>Positive effect observe in the absence of learned helplessness behaviour</p> | <p>Positive effect observed where EEs did not display helplessness related behaviour</p> | <p>Awareness of positive changes in peers' working lives resulting from training – motivation improved when EEs had control over conditions</p> | <p>Aware of negative effect: EEs could reach a state where no value or potential perceived to exist in T&D</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Capacity to change conditions stimulated motivation (both)</p> | <p>Positive changes from training stimulated motivation (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed from perceived capacity to create changes (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: absence of helplessness allowed greater motivation (both)</p> | <p>Absence of helplessness beliefs led to positive effect on motivation</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: absence of helplessness allowed greater motivation (both); Capacity to make positive changes through training improved perceptions of utility (both)</p> |
| EE 2 | <p>Capacity to change conditions stimulated motivation (both)</p> | <p>Positive changes from training stimulated motivation (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed from perceived capacity to create changes (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: absence of helplessness allowed greater motivation (both)</p> | <p>Absence of helplessness beliefs led to positive effect on motivation</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: absence of helplessness allowed greater motivation (both); Capacity to make positive changes through training improved perceptions of utility (both)</p> |

Table 7
Summary table of findings on organisational variables

| IR | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 | Case 5 | Case 6 |
|-------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| ER | <p>Informal T&D strategy:</p> <p>General T&D mission: build core staff skilled in all roles on the farm;</p> <p>No TNA¹ performed, needs addressed ad hoc;</p> <p>Aware of need for formal strategy;</p> <p>Subjective evaluation of T&D effect: EEs' attitude, behaviour and skills;</p> <p>T&D also linked to community development</p> | <p>Informal T&D strategy – formal goals only set for statutory (health and safety) and production certification (UTZ² and Fairtrade) requirements;</p> <p>Availability of training was limited – affected planning and provision;</p> <p>Cooperative EE business entity presents additional training needs;</p> <p>No formal needs analysis; Indirect evaluation: EE knowledge and performance growth</p> | <p>Central strategic goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal development of EEs • Compliance with all statutory and certification requirements <p>Limited training providers created many problems in T&D;</p> <p>Limited needs analyses: availability of courses, seasonal timing of courses and strategic value were considered;</p> <p>T&D policy was being developed;</p> <p>Informal evaluation of T&D: productivity gains and EE attitude and behaviour</p> | <p>Statutory reports (Workplace Skills plan and Annual Training Report) used as guideline for T&D strategy;</p> <p>Strategy allowed for variability in needs according to dynamic environment on the farm;</p> <p>Informal goals being set for individual development:</p> <p>individual training plans being developed for all EEs;</p> <p>Training needs derived from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory reports • Farm growth projections • Informal assessment of EE career and training paths; <p>Training needs analysis process was being formalised;</p> <p>No formal strategy in place, but moving towards it with needs analyses, training plans, policies and provision process;</p> <p>Training evaluated based on perceived growth, progress, and utility of exercises</p> | <p>No formal farm-level T&D strategy, but corporate owner's strategy and sustainable operation served as guideline;</p> <p>Training needs determined based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual needs • Operational needs • Succession planning; <p>Training planning based on available budget, needs identified, corporate approval, and ad hoc training where required;</p> <p>T&D success evaluation was informal: based on EE performance improvements</p> | <p>No formal T&D strategy in place;</p> <p>Strategic goals for T&D were mostly vague;</p> <p>Two broad goals: social development and operational sustainability;</p> <p>No formal TNA performed, needs mostly determined based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills required in each position • Succession planning • Availability of training • Feasibility of training (seasonal labour intensity); <p>Selection of training programmes based on supervisor consultations and statutory requirements;</p> <p>Informal assessment of T&D success based on perceived value contribution</p> |
| EE 1 | <p>Only one perceived goal of T&D: improved performance (both);</p> | <p>Core goal of T&D: personal and performance growth (both);</p> | <p>Core goals of training: more productive and healthy work environment (both);</p> | <p>T&D was managed in a way that empowered EEs;</p> | <p>No formal farm-level T&D strategy, but corporate owner's strategy and sustainable operation served as guideline;</p> | <p>Strategic goal of training: improving performance at work and working conditions (both);</p> |
| EE 2 | <p>T&D benefits (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm: performance • EEs: Growth and development • Community: continuous development | <p>T&D benefits (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEs: growth • Farm: performance <p>Community: skills transfer to family</p> | <p>T&D benefits (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEs: growth and development • Farm: performance • Community: skills transfer to families and consequent empowerment | <p>T&D benefited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEs: performance • Farm: performance <p>Community: skills transfer and positive attitudes</p> | <p>Growth witnessed on three levels (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEs: skills and performance capacity • Farm: improved quality of work and productivity • Community: improved literacy (through ABET courses) and knowledge transfer to families of EEs | <p>Positive impacts observed on (both):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EEs: skills growth • Farm: operational performance • Community: improved EE relationships and living conditions |

Footnotes

1. 'TNA' refers to training needs analyses
2. UTZ is a food production certification

| Labour relations – Skills development effectiveness | |
|--|--|
| <p>ER No observed direct effect – training outsourced, thus little contact between ER and EEs; Reasonably good labour relations; Divisions among employees: cooperative and militant attitudes; Formalised communication structures – little informal vertical communication; Poor communication from EEs led to breakdowns in trust and expectation of poor performance;</p> | <p>Direct effect observed: breakdown in relations would compromise T&D effectiveness; Healthy labour relations; Very open communication: ER was available to any concerns from EEs – enabled high degree of mutual trust between ER and EEs</p> <p>Direct effect observed: poor relations compromised effectiveness of T&D, acquisition of another farm with very poor relations cited as example (relations did not change and training was much less effective); Labour relations generally sound; EEs wanted contact with top management: open-door policy instated; Openness of communication and EE tenure built strong mutual trust</p> <p>Direct effect observed: Increasingly positive relations existing: social worker employed to assist with EE issues; Management goal was to correct behaviour, not to punish EEs; Generally open and clear communication structures; Mutual trust was a general (but not universal) phenomenon; T&D could have reciprocal effect on labour relations</p> <p>Direct effect observed: Labour relations were sound; Vertical communication was open: formal and informal channels were well established; Regular meetings were held with the representative trade union on the farm; Mutual trust existed: EEs were comfortable approaching management with issues they experienced at work</p> <p>Limited effect observed: instances where shop stewards created negative attitudes to T&D through intimidation; Relations were generally positive, but not consistently so: EEs saw themselves as victims of management at times; Very formal communication process: vertical communications followed chain of command; Mutual trust existed, but this was not universal; moderated by EE attitude and reliability</p> |
| <p>EE 1 Part of labour force were union members – neither EE was a member; Happy with vertical communication; Positive nature of T&D did not rely on labour relations</p> | <p>Direct effect observed (both); Labour relations were sound (both); Not a union member (both); Vertical communication was free and open (both); No need for the assistance of a trade union; EEs of the farm “were a family”; Trust and commitment improved motivation for T&D</p> <p>Failed to see the point of labour unions on a farm like this; Clear vertical communication promoted T&D – effect on success</p> <p>Member of a union, wanted protection (not willing to elaborate); Negative effect observed in case of poor relations</p> |
| <p>EE 2 Poor communication; Poor relations would compromise T&D</p> | <p>Direct effect observed: result of strong communication and trust between EEs and management (both); Member of a union (both); Labour relations generally good (both); Mutual trust</p> <p>No perceived benefit from membership: quality of representation insufficient</p> <p>Union could assist with problems at work as they arose</p> |
| <p>Labour relations – Organisational climate</p> | |
| <p>ER Effect observed: Good relations allowed better communication of intent to develop EEs</p> | <p>Effect observed: poor relations would result in negative climate</p> <p>Effect observed: EEs were motivated for T&D despite labour relations issues which may arise</p> <p>Positive effect observed: result of sound labour relations; Poor relations could lead to negative EE attitudes to T&D</p> |
| <p>EE 1 Good communication and relations improved T&D climate</p> | <p>Direct effect observed (both); Labour relations defined and ER, if relations were poor purpose of T&D may not have been understood / accepted by all employees (both)</p> <p>Effect observed (both); Poor relations would compromise climate for T&D</p> |
| <p>EE 2 No effect observed</p> | <p>Strong current relations ensured a conducive climate for T&D</p> <p>Sound labour relations improved attitude to T&D</p> <p>Potential effect observed: poor relations could lead to negative attitude and a climate not conducive to effective T&D; Positive effect observed</p> |

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| <p>Organisational culture – Effectiveness</p> | <p>ER Continuous development was part of the farm's core values – regular training improved performance; Not clearly communicated to employees – informally discussed with foremen</p> <p>EE 1 T&D was very important to EEs (both); Training was regular and expanded skills</p> <p>EE 2 Training was repetitive; Not sure if management saw it as important</p> | <p>Continuous development was a core value – clearly communicated to EEs by explaining current and future benefits of T&D; T&D as strategic issue: role of farm worker changed dramatically, requires higher skills than 20 years ago</p> <p>T&D was of great importance to EEs and management (both)</p> <p>Training was regular and built on established skills (both)</p> | <p>Continuous development was a core value: motivated EEs in work and allowed them to develop skills; Consequently extensive investment in T&D</p> <p>T&D was presented regularly, built on existing skills and introduced new ones (both); T&D was a core value of EEs and management as it allowed personal and organisational growth (both)</p> | <p>Strong need for T&D witnessed – high measure of investment; Continuous development was a core value of the farm and EEs were aware of it and felt comfortable approaching management to request additional T&D</p> <p>All EEs received regular training aimed at continuous growth and development (both); T&D was a core value of the farm and personally embraced (both)</p> | <p>T&D was essential for continued performance growth; T&D formed part of farm value system, but this was not communicated to EEs</p> <p>Training was not regular, but built on previously established skills; Training was important to EEs involved in their work</p> <p>Training presented regularly and built on previous skills; Training was an important issue to EEs and management</p> | <p>Strong ER support for continuous T&D; Continuous T&D was an organisational value – communicated to all EEs; Success of the farm's products are communicated to EEs and their input therein recognised</p> <p>Training was an important value to EEs and management (both); Training was regular and ensured progressive skills growth (both)</p> |
| <p>Supervisor support – Organisational climate</p> | <p>ER No real support provided during training</p> <p>EE 1 No specific support cited (both)</p> <p>EE 2</p> | <p>Support was provided: encouraged EEs in training and demonstrated confidence in their abilities – positive effect on performance observed</p> <p>Climate generally conducive to training due to positive stakeholder interaction (both); Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>High measure of support provided; Coaching provided in many cases; EEs were encouraged to seek good employment opportunities</p> <p>Environment generally conducive to effective T&D (both); Positive effect observed: high measure of support (both)</p> | <p>Extensive and very strong support provided to EEs in training</p> <p>Environment generally conducive to effective T&D (both); Positive effect observed: high support, open communication and extensive on-the-job training</p> | <p>Support was provided: EEs were assisted when struggling with training and ERs listened to feedback</p> <p>Environment was generally conducive to effective T&D: EEs strived for mutual development and assisted each other in achieving success in T&D (both); Positive effect observed: high degree of support – assistance with content (both)</p> | <p>Support and information regularly provided</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> |
| <p>Peer support – Organisational climate</p> | <p>ER Unaware of effect</p> <p>EE 1 Support improved T&D effectiveness (both); Mostly worked alone – unaware of effect on climate</p> <p>EE 2 Strong peer support had direct effect on effective development – created conducive climate</p> | <p>Unaware of effect</p> <p>Positive effect observed; Usually received positive support from peers (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: EEs worked well together, encouraged, and helped each other</p> <p>Generally positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Assumed positive peer support existed</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both)</p> | <p>Positive effect observed: generally provided high measure of support</p> <p>Positive effect observed: high degree of support received (both)</p> | <p>EEs generally supported one another but cases existed where some were jealous of others' opportunities</p> <p>Positive effect observed – peers created a positive environment in which to learn (both)</p> |

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| ER | Unaware of effect | Unaware of specific support but trusted professionalism of instructors and assumed support was provided | Positive effect observed; Instructor support was critical to EE development | Positive effect observed; Instructors had critical supporting role in T&D; Levels of support varied across instructors | No effect observed: instructors presented material and left without providing additional support | High measure of support provided – EEs asked for feedback on instructor support and performance |
| EE 1 | Support improved T&D effectiveness (both) | Positive effect observed (both); Instructors were generally supportive in training | Positive effect observed; support in understanding content and making T&D enjoyable (both) | Unsure of measure of support received: instructors presented material then left | Positive effect observed: ensured EEs understood all content of training (both) | Positive effect observed (both) |
| EE 2 | | | | Sufficient support provided, improving performance | | |
| ER | Aware of potential effect; Support could improve confidence and willingness to learn | Positive effect observed | Positive effect observed | Positive effect observed | Positive potential and actual effects observed | Positive effect observed |
| EE 1 | Aware of potential positive effect (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) |
| EE 2 | | | | | | |
| ER | Aware of positive and negative effect: support improves motivation, but some EEs try to inhibit training to stop differences in achievement | Unaware of effect | Positive or negative effect observed: message dependent | Positive effect observed | Positive potential and actual effects observed | Positive effect observed |
| EE 1 | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive or negative effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) |
| EE 2 | | | | | | |
| ER | Essential effect observed; Directly involved with EEs in training and needed to motivate them to perform | Positive effect observed | Positive effect observed | Positive effect observed | Positive potential effect expected | Positive effect observed |
| EE 1 | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) | Positive effect observed (both) |
| EE 2 | | | Instructor made T&D pleasant, applicable and interesting, stimulating motivation | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p>T&D systems – Organisational systems</p> | <p>ER Predominantly informal training, making use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-the-job training Off-the-job training Coaching: encouraging employees to enrol for training; </p> <p>Several methods were used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-the-job training (external providers) with complementary on-the-job training Coaching from management during all training (encouragement and assisting with learning material issues) </p> <p>Only informal training presented: utility vs. cost of formal education; Several methods and approaches employed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-the-job training Off-the-job training Informal regular coaching Multimedia tools – instructional videos in Xhosa for seasonal EEs </p> <p>Currently only informal training being presented, using various methods and approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-the-job training Off-the-job training (soft, work, and life skills) Extensive coaching Instructors used several tools for training (multimedia and practical application) Management considering the provision of formal education to high potential EEs </p> <p>Only informal training was offered: Several methods and approaches used in T&D: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-the-job training (insufficiently logged by ER) Off-the-job training Daily individual coaching Instructors sometimes used multimedia tools in training </p> <p>Only informal training was presented; Several methods and approaches to T&D used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-the-job training Off-the-job training Informal coaching; Actively involved in providing ABET – provided much material and personal support from management</p> | <p>EE 1 EEs aware of selection method, future T&D opportunities, and different T&D methods (both)</p> <p>EE 2 Methods and approaches improved effectiveness (both)</p> <p>ER Successful completion of training noted in performance evaluation for wage increases / promotion; Verbal recognition given for success in training; Unfamiliar with training content – unable to verify application of skills; Regular feedback on work practices given</p> <p>Mostly verbal recognition for success: certificates awarded and handed out to EEs; Certain training types were clearly linked to greater remuneration due to operational capacity increases; Active encouragement to use new skills; Very regular (mostly corrective) feedback given to EEs in work</p> <p>Aware of recognition, and remuneration increases over time resulting from T&D (both); High intrinsic value in T&D (both); Received extensive feedback from management: open, friendly and helpful (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed</p> | <p>EE 1 No recognition (verbal or otherwise) for success in training – lack of recognition did not negatively impact views on training (both); Regular feedback provided by management</p> <p>No regular feedback received</p> <p>Positive potential effect observed; Insufficient communication of T&D goals and utility – greater communication would improve motivation</p> <p>Lack of recognition, but potential positive effect existed, should it be provided (both)</p> | <p>EE 1 EEs could request T&D in addition to that required by management (both); Aware of all methods and approaches and positive effect on performance (both);</p> <p>Recognition for success in T&D given at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal recognition Ceremonial distribution of certificates Mentioned in newsletter with photograph EEs were actively encouraged to apply new skills at work; Extensive positive and negative feedback provided on application of new skills</p> <p>Aware of recognition of success in training (both); Intrinsic reward of growth and development also recognised (both); Positive and negative feedback received regularly (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed; Recognition generated passion for learning among EEs</p> <p>Positive effect of recognition observed (both)</p> <p>Positive effect observed: recognition established motivation (both)</p> | <p>Reward systems – Organisational systems</p> <p>EE 1 No formal recognition / reward system for T&D success in place; Certificates ceremonially distributed; EEs actively encouraged to utilise new skills and assisted in doing this where possible</p> <p>Aware of informal recognition and feedback on application of training content in work (both)</p> <p>Received regular positive feedback on application of skills – helped correct mistakes</p> <p>Positive effect observed: higher motivation where some recognition for success was given</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both) Acquisition of new knowledge was intrinsically motivating</p> | <p>Reward systems – Motivation to learn</p> <p>Positive effect observed: higher motivation where some recognition for success was given</p> <p>Positive effect observed (both) Acquisition of new knowledge was intrinsically motivating</p> |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|

Learner readiness: The formal education levels of employees across cases ranged from very low (some primary school education) to relatively high (successful completion of Grade 12). As expected the levels of education had a strong impact on individual readiness to learn: lower education levels resulted in lower levels of readiness. This was especially true in the case of one employee who was illiterate: he found training which relied on written material much more complex than other employees. All employees in the study indicated that previous formal education, as well as informal training received at work, allowed them to build their individual readiness to learn. This supports the premise that learner readiness progressively improves with additional training, allowing for more complex abilities to be acquired (Bhatti et al., 2013).

Managers on all six farms attempted to match training to individual levels of readiness. Learner readiness was informally assessed in all cases, based on management perceptions. This assessment was aided in some cases by taking individual education and training levels into account. In one case the manager planned on formalising this assessment by performing skills audits. Fit between learner readiness and training levels could thus represent an important issue in ensuring effective transfer of training. This further endorses the conceptualisation of learner readiness and its effects on learner ability as per Bhatti et al. (2013).

Managers generally observed a positive effect on motivation to learn and skills transfer where employees had greater levels of readiness to learn. One manager was unaware whether such an effect existed and another did not believe that motivation was affected by readiness. All but one of the employees considered readiness to have a motivational effect (or a lack thereof to be demotivating). These perceptions generally affirm the argument that motivation to learn, and transfer training is affected by individual readiness to learn (Bhatti et al., 2013; Holton et al., 2000; Nunes, 2003). One of the managers also remarked that younger employees had greater readiness and motivation to learn.

One of the employees expressed the perception that the agricultural sector was not a prestigious working context, as there were limited growth opportunities. This particular employee had completed Grade 12 and had a desire to pursue tertiary studies. Such studies were unfortunately not possible, given the lack of financial

resources. In her case, there could be a (perceived) misalignment between readiness and the level of training provided on the farm. The question thus arises: can the high perceived levels of readiness within the context of limited opportunity for growth, lead to or result in demotivation?

Learning potential: The employees all believed that they had high learning potential. Most of them indicated some measure of learning competencies (such as learning through repetition, social learning, and practical application of learning material) which had been developed over time, thus supporting the views of Silzer and Church (2009) and Taylor (1994) who indicated that learning potential could affect individual ability to learn by promoting or restricting individual learning capacity in terms of learned processes of engaging in development. The nature of work on farms required development of practical skills, rather than complex tasks, which may imply that at the basic labour level the development of such learning competencies could be more important than fluid intelligence, as defined by Taylor (1994).

The importance of learning potential in individual ability to learn was recognised by all the managers and they made use of informal means to assess the learning potential of employees, further supporting the view that learning potential and ability are related (Silzer & Church, 2009; Taylor, 1994). The assessment of potential focussed on employee performance in training and at work. Two of the managers cited the provision of ABET courses on their farms to promote learning potential among their employees as they improve employee literacy levels and enable them to participate in more complex training. As expected, formal measurements of learning potential were very rarely used: only one of the managers indicated that formal assessments had been used at some time in the past.

Cognitive engagement: The employees all perceived themselves to invest high levels of cognitive engagement in training. This perception may not represent a reliable indication of such engagement, hence the employees were asked what strategies they employ to ensure they remain engaged and ensure effective learning. Most of them gave examples of positive behaviours, which can be considered to manifest as investments of time, effort, attention (or focus), and persistence, thus affirming the premise that the measure of cognitive engagement invested by a trainee can be measured according to the effort, time, and attention invested in a

training context as postulated by numerous authors (Burger, 2012; Greene et al., 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Taylor, 1994). These investment behaviours were: active listening, asking questions for clarification when needed, taking notes, and practicing new content or visualising application.

The managers also generally perceived these manifestations of cognitive engagement as having a positive impact on employees' ability to learn, further supporting the findings of Greene et al., (2004), and Pintrich and De Groot (1990). Only two managers made a concerted effort to motivate employees to improve cognitive engagement through encouragement and attempts to stimulate motivation. One manager believed ABET courses to indirectly stimulate cognitive engagement while three considered the stimulation of employees' cognitive engagement to be the responsibility of instructors during training.

4.9.1.2 Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Motivation plays an important role in the effectiveness of training and development in organisations. This motivation is crucial in ensuring success in training and development exercises, due to its central role in the acquisition and transfer of new knowledge, skills, and abilities (Colquitt et al., 2000; Nunes, 2003; Tharenou, 2001).

In the all cases, managers and employees themselves reported that motivation to learn impacted on employees' attitude to training and development. Three of the managers and four of the employees also perceived a positive reciprocal relationship to exist between motivation and attitude. This served to illustrate the expectation of the existence of an interactive relationship as determined by the findings of Noe and Schmitt (1986), Rowold (2007), and Warr and Bunce (1995).

Three key motivational variables which could be applicable in the agricultural context were identified as having the potential to affect employees' motivation to learn: the personal needs, levels of job involvement and interest in training subjects, and the expectancies of the employee. The following paragraphs present the research findings on these three variables across the cases.

Personal needs: Motivation is affected by personal needs, which can be related to work needs in the skills development context where training and development can

serve both personal and work related needs (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Gibson et al., 2009; Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

The measure of communication of potential personal benefits to employees varied considerably over the different cases. In four cases, managers verbally communicated these benefits to employees, in one there was an active attempt to communicate the effect of training on personal needs during the employees' performance review, and in the last case no mention was made thereof. The managers who provided such information shared varying types of information: two managers specifically informed employees of the future effect of training on their careers (and earnings), one pertinently avoided sharing this information (trying to avoid the creation of unrealistic expectations), one was vague regarding the potential benefits, and another provided information more related to developmental needs. In all of the cases training was presented to employees, which was more directly associated with their personal needs, than with work related needs (e.g. ABET courses which allowed employees to build basic literacy and numeracy skills).

Training and development on these farms can thus be considered to have served the personal needs of employees, which could have enabled them to be more motivated to engage in training and development as per the arguments of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009), Baker and Aldrich (1996), Garavan et al. (2001), and Noe and Schmitt (1986), emphasising the motivational potential of improving upon the fulfilment of basic personal needs. When questioned on the way in which training could serve personal needs, three employees mentioned that training aided performance at work supporting the premise of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009), Gibson et al. (2009), as well as Noe and Schmitt (1986) that work and personal needs can be related. Ten of the employees indicated that the (internal as well as external) training they received had improved their employment and financial security, demonstrating the arguments of Aggarwal and Bhargava (2009), Baker and Aldrich (1996), Garavan et al. (2001), and Noe and Schmitt (1986), that promotion of these factors would have a positive impact on motivation to engage in further training and development.

Only one employee was not aware of training having an impact on personal needs. The remaining employee indicated that training received on the farm did not promote

employment security, but that having finished high school did. Three employees cited additional ways in which personal needs were served: by improving life at home (easing domestic tasks), by allowing them to provide help in the community, and by leading to higher order needs of self-esteem and self-actualisation through career growth.

Job involvement and interest in the subject: Job involvement and interest in training content can affect training effectiveness directly through increased performance in achieving learning goals and indirectly through stimulating motivation to learn and transfer skills (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Blume et al., 2010; Colquitt et al., 2000; Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Noe & Schmitt, 1986). All the employees indicated that they had high levels of job involvement and interest in training subject matters, which were positively related to their motivation to learn, according to the results of Blume et al. (2010), and Colquitt et al. (2000). One employee in particular indicated that he was “in love with his work” and displayed a remarkably positive attitude to training and development throughout the course of the interview.

Further emphasis of the motivational effect of job involvement and interest in training content (Blume et al., 2010; Coquitt et al., 2000) was found at the hand of all six managers’ perception that motivation increased with higher levels of job involvement and subject interest. Two managers specifically indicated that they took the apparent involvement and interest of employees into account when selecting them for training programmes. In addition to this, five of managers found that employees’ involvement and interest had direct positive effects on their performance in training.

Nine of the employees and one of the employers regarded the participation in training and development to also have a positive impact on their levels of job involvement and subject interest. This could indicate further confirmation of the link between involvement and interest, and training performance and motivation. The question thus arises: to what extent will training provision stimulate employees’ interest in further training and their involvement in their jobs?

Expectancy in skills development: The expectancy, instrumentality, and valence inherent in training could impact individual motivation to learn and transfer skills (Elangovan & Karakowski, 1999; Gegenfurthner et al., 2009; Tharenou, 2011; Zaniboni et al., 2011). All of the employees indicated that they had certain

reasonable expectations (e.g. increased earnings, improved work performance, increased responsibility, and personal growth) upon successful completion of training and that if these expectations were met they would be more motivated to engage in further training and development. This endorsed the findings of Zaniboni et al. (2011), Tharenou (2001), and Elangovan and Karakowski (1999) regarding the importance of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence in determining motivation to learn.

The level of communication regarding training and development goals and outcomes varied across cases: three managers provided detailed information on possible outcomes of training to employees while three provided limited information only. Such communication could shape the expectations of employees and thus be linked to their motivation. The employees of the managers who provided detailed information on training outcomes were all aware of this communication. This awareness in itself does not explicitly lend support to the arguments of Elangovan and Karakowski (1999), Tharenou (2011), and Zaniboni et al. (2011) that motivational effects of expectancy, valence, and instrumentality will be realised through managers' communication of possible training outcomes and utility. The effect theorised here may however exist and could be researched in future.

All of the employees' saw the utility of the training and development they received in their work and personal lives and the stimulating effect this had on motivation to learn as per the arguments of Gegenfurtner et al. (2009), Grossman and Salas (2011), and Zaniboni et al. (2009). Four of the managers attempted to motivate employees by illustrating the potential utility of the training provided on their farms, which could possibly have provided further support for the argument linking perceived utility to motivation to learn.

4.9.1.3 Attitude to learning and skills development

The attitude of employees toward training and development could have a positive or negative impact on the effectiveness of training and development on farms. Positive attitudes can have a positive effect on employees' motivation to learn and performance in training and development, while negative attitudes (such as resistance to change and scepticism) could compromise their performance in training

(Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Nishii et al., 2008; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Pocock, 2009; Rowold, 2007).

Resistance to change: Skills development in organisations represents an attempt to modify employee behaviour (i.e. change it to suit organisational goals), which can be met with resistance, and consequently reduce the effectiveness of such exercises (Pocock, 2009; Stanley et al., 2005; Weick & Quinn, 1999). None of the employees displayed an attitude which could be indicative of resistance to change as they all believed that the changes which resulted from training and development were positive. They apparently embraced this change and the opportunity to develop their skills. This clear lack of resistance may be indicative of the larger South African agricultural sector yearning for positive change at the hand of training and development.

Only two of the managers had encountered resistance to training and development in the past, but this was considered to be an uncommon issue. The one manager indicated that such resistance could sometimes be seen when training was not on a voluntary basis. This could suggest that lower level employees that are subjected to mandatory training could potentially hold lower motivational levels than employees undergoing voluntary training. The arguments of Pocock (2009), Stanley et al. (2005), and Weick & Quinn (1999) that skills development, as change initiative, could be met with resistance (especially in the event where employees received low levels of remuneration) were thus only marginally supported.

Scepticism: Employees could become sceptical of the goals and purpose of training, if they perceive the employer to have some ulterior motive in presenting it or mutual trust between the parties is lacking. This could then negatively impact on the effectiveness of training exercises (Innocenti et al., 2011; Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Nishii et al., 2008; Pidgeon et al., 2007).

None of the twelve employees indicated scepticism regarding employer goals for training and development. Six of the employees pertinently stated that their personal development constituted one of the goals of skills development, illustrating a perception that managers' motives were pure in the provision of training. All of the employees also illustrated positive general attitudes to training and development. None of the managers had encountered scepticism about training motives among

their employees. They indicated that employees generally had positive attitudes to training and development and three of them affirmed that this positive attitude was a growing trend.

No specific support was found for the manifestation or effect of scepticism on training effectiveness (Innocenti et al., 2011; Newstrom & Lengnick-Hall, 1991; Nishii et al., 2008; Pidgeon et al., 2007). The possible existence of the effect cannot be rejected, as it may simply be an uncommon phenomenon

4.9.1.4 Personality: the impact of locus of control

The locus of control of employees can impact on the effectiveness of training and development exercises. This effect can manifest directly in terms of individual efforts and performance (Fouarge et al., 2013; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Weissbein et al., 2011) or indirectly in terms of individual motivation and self-efficacy (Baumgartel et al., 1984; Colquitt et al., 2000; Fouarge et al., 2013; Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Weissbein et al., 2011).

All twelve employees perceived themselves to possess internal locus of control, however nine of the twelve attributed some measure of control over their success in training to external forces. Managerial perceptions of the manifestation employee behaviours indicative of internal locus of control varied across cases: two managers believed employees generally had an external locus of control while four stated that employees generally displayed behaviours which would signal an internal locus of control. Five of the managers also reported seeing evidence that an internal locus of control was positively related to performance in training and development exercises. These findings affirm the notion that locus of control can have a direct impact on employees' performance in training and therefore on training effectiveness (Fouarge et al., 2013; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Huang et al., 2011). Another noteworthy observation that emerged was that in three of the cases the managers expressed the belief that training and development aided in the stimulation of internal locus of control perceptions on employees' part. This would suggest that an additional research question can emerge in determining whether employees' locus of control can be shaped to some degree by the provision of more regular and higher quality training.

Eleven of the employees experienced higher levels of motivation to learn when they perceived their success in training to be within their own control. Only one employee indicated that there was no relationship between perceived control and motivation. This could support the argument of Baumgartel et al. (1984), Colquitt et al. (2000), and Fouarge et al. (2013) that employees' locus of control can have an impact on their motivation to learn. Further affirmation of their argument could be found in that all of the managers perceived employees with apparent internal locus of control to be more motivated to engage in training and development. In addition to this, two of the managers indicated that employees who witnessed their colleagues' performance, success, and behaviours indicative of internal locus of control also became more motivated to engage in further training, thus extending the reach of the motivational effect.

All twelve employees believed that internal perceptions of control over success in training and development improved their self-efficacy related thereto. Managers had varied perspectives on the effect of locus of control on self-efficacy: three believed that internal locus of control was related to higher measures of self-efficacy, two perceived external locus of control to have a negative effect on self-efficacy, and one considered the relationship to exist (but could not cite a specific supporting case). These perceptions demonstrated the findings of Colquitt et al. (2000), Noe (1986), Noe & Schmitt (1986), and Weissbein et al. (2011) that perceived control over success in training could promote self-efficacy.

4.9.1.5 Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

The perceptions which employees harbour of their own abilities to learn, or to change their circumstances, can impact on the extent to which they achieve success in training and development (Feinberg et al., 1982; Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Smith et al., 2008). Self-efficacy and learned helplessness are two particular elements of such perceptions of individual abilities which were identified as having the potential to affect these perceptions, especially in the South African agricultural context. The results found in terms of these elements are presented in the following paragraphs.

Self-efficacy: All of the employees believed a positive relationship existed between their perceived high levels of self-efficacy and ability to learn, providing initial support to the direct effect previously observed between self-efficacy and performance in

training as indicated by Smith et al. (2008), and Sookhai and Budworth (2010). The managers did not set specific, measurable training goals for employees against which to measure their success, but did provide regular feedback on employees' perceived general performance in training. This suggested that an opportunity existed to improve employees' self-efficacy through goal setting and thus has the potential to endorse the findings of Schunk and Pajares (2010), Zimmerman (2000), and Zimmerman et al. (1992) that setting and achieving personal goals increased self-efficacy.

When asked about the effect of self-efficacy on motivation to learn, all of the employees and five of the managers reported that a positive relationship existed. The remaining manager did not witness such a relationship, as he believed all employees were motivated to perform in training, regardless of their confidence in their abilities to do so. This view supported the argument that higher self-efficacy would stimulate motivation to learn (Smith et al., 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). One manager believed that the informal nature of training on farms allowed employees to develop higher self-efficacy: no "pass or fail system" meant that employees were not exposed to failure in learning basic skills development, thus promoting the perception of learning efficacy. Another manager indicated that managerial perceptions of employees also affected employees' actual self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can thus be considered to represent a complex variable in the theoretical framework of variables.

Learned helplessness: Four of the managers specifically recognised learned helplessness among employees as a common phenomenon in the agricultural sector in South Africa. On five of the farms, managers were making active attempts to counteract potential perceptions of helplessness: managers invested in the community (e.g. through promotion of healthy value systems and employing social workers), by providing (informal) coaching to employees and investing in internal development and recruitment of talent. The awareness of the manifestation, and recognition of the potential impact of learned helplessness demonstrate the arguments of Olson and Schober (1993), and Skinner et al. (2009) that such beliefs could compromise employees' performance in training and development (in spite of low incidence rates being reported in these six cases).

Only one of the employees believed that change on the farm was generally completely outside employees' control. The other employees did not indicate any trace of learned helplessness beliefs, in spite of low education levels. All of the employees also believed that training represented a means to achieve positive change in the workplace. This perception also served to motivate them to engage in further training and development. Specific support for the demotivating and direct effects of learned helplessness as indicated by Feinberg et al. (1986), Olson and Schober (1993), and Skinner et al. (2009) was not found among employees. Five of the managers indicated that learned helplessness and motivation to learn seemed to be negatively related. Of these five, three indicated that the absence of learned helplessness allowed greater motivation to manifest in employees. This serves to support the argument of Feinberg et al. (1986), and Skinner et al. (2009) that learned helplessness can negatively impact on motivation to learn. During all the employee interviews the general lack of helplessness beliefs was unmistakable. Employees instead illustrated a sense of empowerment emerging as a result of the training and development they received.

4.9.2 Organisational variables impacting on skills development

The various respondents' interview responses were compared across the six cases and between management and employees. This allowed for several findings regarding the organisational variables included in the framework of variables (Figure 4, p. 52). These findings are presented in the following sections.

4.9.2.1 Farm strategy and skills development

The managerial strategy employed in organisations can shape the nature of training and development and have an impact on its effectiveness. Training must serve organisational strategic goals in order to be deemed effective (Tharenou et al., 2007). In all six cases, the strategic goals for training and development were vague and not formalised but included goals related to statutory requirements, production certification, universal employee development, and operational sustainability. The two farms under corporate ownership also indicated that the corporate owner's strategy shaped their training and development strategy. The implication of such informal goal setting is that the effectiveness of training and development may be difficult to measure.

Training needs analyses are required to ensure that strategic goals are effectively served by the training presented by employers (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Erasmus, et al., 2010; Price, 2008). All of the managers indicated that training needs analyses were an informal process. A number of factors were used by farmers to determine training needs: the availability of courses on offer, operational needs, and succession planning were among those mentioned. Two of the managers cited the limited availability of training providers as a serious concern in satisfying training needs, as the limited access could have a compromising effect on skills development. The two farms in question were located quite far from urban centres, which may account for some measure of the shortage of (local) training providers. Difficulty in sourcing training could represent a serious obstacle to the effectiveness of skills development and may warrant further investigation.

Having a formalised strategy and planning for training and development over the long term could improve the effectiveness of training and development on farms (Baker & Leidecker, 2001; Torraco & Swanson, 1995; Way & Johnson, 2005). The informal strategy and needs analyses led to most of the managers not having formalised plans for development. These plans were based on statutory requirements, ad hoc training needs and budgetary constraints. Most of the managers recognised the lack of these plans and in two of the cases steps were being taken to make the process more formal and structured. Lack of formality also manifested in the evaluation of the success of skills development, thus reflecting the difficulty in measuring training effectiveness without formal goals and structures and potentially degrading the effectiveness of training exercises.

From the employer interviews it was clear that managerial practices related to training and development in the agricultural sector seem to be generally informal. This represents an area for improvement across all six cases, which was also acknowledged by some of the managers.

Ten of the employees perceived the strategic goal of training and development exercises to be the improvement of their work performance. The remaining two believed that employee empowerment was the central strategic goal of training. In addition to this, employees were asked whether training benefitted the farm, its employees, and the local community. In all instances the indicated that this was the

case. Farms benefitted in terms of higher employee performance, employees benefitted in terms of personal and performance growth and development, and communities benefitted from the wider transfer of skills (e.g. to employees' direct family).

4.9.2.2 Labour relations

Four of the managers indicated that labour relations directly impacted on the success of training and development. The same four managers indicated that communication structures on their farms were very open on both formal as well as informal levels. Of the remaining two managers, one did not observe any relationship between labour relations and skills development and the other only perceived a limited effect. These managers indicated that vertical communication was very formal and typically only followed hierarchical paths. This affirms the argument that the degree of openness of communication between managers and the effectiveness of training and development on farms was positively related (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Price, 2008). What seems to lend further support to this argument is the fact that all of the managers perceived mutual trust to exist on their farms, but to varying degrees. The two managers who reported strict formal communication processes, also seemed to have lower levels of mutual trust on their farms. The positive perceptions of labour relations noted by the managers may also be ascribed to paternalistic perceptions.

The pattern of labour relations, communications, and trust across cases was further reinforced in that seven of the employees on the four farms with open communications structures reported that labour relations were sound and mutual trust between management and employees existed. The remaining employees had varied experiences of labour relations: two believed that labour relations were inconsistent; one perceived communication between management and employees as very poor, and the last indicated a need for protection which could be provided by a labour union (but was unwilling to elaborate on this). Ten of the employees perceived a positive relationship to exist between labour relations and skills development effectiveness (the remaining two were unaware of such a relationship), lending further support to the arguments of Aguinis and Kraiger (2009), Finnemore (2006), and Price (2008) that the strength and quality of labour relations could by extension have a direct impact on the effectiveness of skills development.

Labour relations also had the potential to affect the general climate in which training was performed – positive labour relations could enable a positive climate for learning and thus stimulate performance in training and development exercises (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2009; Choudhury, 2011; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Innocenti et al., 2011; Sookhai & Budworth, 2010). Of all the respondents, only one manager and one employee did not perceive labour relations to affect the climate in which training took place. The rest of the respondents all endorsed the argument that the quality of labour relations was positively related to the training and development climate.

4.9.2.3 Organisational culture

Learning organisations have as core value the continuous development of employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Fard et al., 2009; Mohanty & Kar, 2012). The managers all demonstrated the belief that continuous training and development constituted a core value on their respective farms. All of the employees also indicated that they perceived training and development as being a very important issue to employees, while all but one perceived it to be very important to managers as well. This would suggest that the farms in this study can be classified as learning organisations and thus allude to the arguments of Fard et al. (2009), and Mohanty and Kar (2012) that such organisations promote more effective learning. Further support for this finding could be found in that all but one of the employees believed the training they received was provided on a regular basis and was conducive to the expansion of their existing knowledge, skills, and abilities.

4.9.2.4 Organisational climate

Eight of the employees indicated that the climate in which training and development took place was generally positive. In addition to labour relations, the support provided by employees' supervisors, peers, and instructors were identified as aspects which could affect the climate in which training is conducted and the motivation of employees to participate therein, as per the arguments of Chiaburu et al. (2010), Cromwell and Kolb (2004), Salas et al. (2012), and Tharenou (2011). The results regarding support from these parties are presented in the following paragraphs.

Supervisor support: Five of the managers provided support to employees during the training. This support came in the form of encouragement, informal coaching,

assistance with material and information on training programmes. The employees on these five farms were all aware of the support provided by management. All of these respondents indicated that this support served to improve the climate in which training was performed and the success thereof, thus affirming the findings of Chiaburu et al. (2010), Cromwell and Kolb (2004), and Salas et al. (2012) that supervisor support facilitated the transfer of learning and performance in training exercises. In addition to this, these respondents indicated that a positive relationship existed between this support and employees' motivation to learn. The remaining three respondents indicated that this effect could potentially exist, but that it was not observed on the particular farm. This further accedes to the findings of Chiaburu et al. (2010) and Tharenou (2001) that supervisor support improved motivation to learn.

Peer support: All but one of the employees indicated that their peers provided them with support and that this support promoted a climate conducive to training and development and improved their performance therein. Three of the managers perceived this support to have positive effects on the skills development climate, although one indicated that employees could also be jealous of their colleagues' performance and may then try to compromise this performance. Another manager assumed that employees were supportive of one another, while the remaining two were unaware of the effect such support could have. This generally illustrated the findings of Cromwell and Kolb (2004), and Tharenou (2001) that peer support could positively impact on employee performance in training exercises. Three managers and ten employees observed peer support to positively impact on employees' motivation to learn. Two managers and two employees believed that interactions with peers could lead to positive and negative effects on motivation to learn while the remaining manager was unaware of any such effect. This generally endorsed the findings of Bergman (1993) and Cromwell and Kolb (2004) that peer support could positively impact on employee performance in training, as well as the findings of Román et al. (2008) that peer interactions could have a positive or negative effect on this performance.

Instructor support: Eleven of the employees found that instructors provided them with high measures of support during training. The remaining one stated that instructors merely presented their material and then left, thus not providing much support. Four of the managers believed instructors provided essential positive

support to employees during training, one disagreed with this view, and the other was unaware of any effect. The argument that instructors provide instrumental support in promoting a training and development climate conducive to success (Muth, 2008; Salas et al., 2012) was thus generally supported. All of the respondents indicated that the support provided by instructors contributed to employees' motivation to learn, therefore affirming the findings of Tharenou (2001).

4.9.2.5 Organisational systems

Organisations make use of certain systems to promote training and development effectiveness. Two such systems are the training and development approach utilised by the organisation, and the reinforcement systems utilised to condition learning (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Salas et al., 2012). The following sections present the results from the interviews across the six cases with regards to these two systems and their effects.

Training and development approach: In all six cases only informal training was presented to employees. This is understandable, given the basic level of skills typically needed in agricultural work. One of the managers indicated that they were considering the provision of formal education to some employees. In spite of the informal nature of training, managers cited several training methods and approaches being used: in all six cases both on- and off-the-job training was utilised, and managers provided informal coaching (in support of training) when they perceived a need for it to exist. In three cases multimedia tools were also recognised as valuable training tools. The employees were all aware of the way in which their managers selected participants for training, as well as the different methods and approaches that were used to present training to them. Ten of them specifically mentioned that the variety of methods and approaches used to present training and development improved the effectiveness thereof. These findings maintain the argument of Thorne and Mackey (2003) that employers need to utilise a broad range of training sources and methods in order to achieve the best possible results.

Reinforcement of learning: None of the managers provided direct financial rewards as incentives for performing in training (indirectly, training and development over time led to wage increases). Most were also careful not to create unrealistic expectations relating to potential material benefits of training. All of the managers

indicated that they provided employees with substantial positive and negative feedback, as well as verbal and symbolic recognition for their success in training to varying degrees: employees were congratulated and in many cases their diplomas were ceremonially distributed. These practices aligned with the suggestions of Chiaburu et al. (2004), Gibson et al. (2009), and Salas et al. (2012) that reinforcement was to some degree contingent on rewards and feedback, and that this could improve the effectiveness of skills development.

Ten of the employees were aware of the provision of informal recognition, and positive and negative feedback respectively. For both recognition and feedback, two employees were unaware of managers' input. This served to generally confirm the use and effect of the aforementioned practices. Six of the employees also pertinently stated that training and development had high intrinsic value. Two employees indicated that a lack of feedback or recognition would not negate the intrinsic value of training. This intrinsic value of training could thus conceivably place a lower limit on the negative effects of insufficient feedback or recognition.

Five of the managers and ten of the employees acknowledged that recognition had a positive impact on motivation to learn. The remaining three recognised the potential impact of this, but did not perceive such recognition to be fully manifest on their farm. This finding alluded to the arguments of Chiaburu et al. (2004), Russ-Eft (1997), and Salas et al. (2012) that rewards provided for success in training could serve to motivate employees perform better in training and that such rewards need not be financial or tangible: recognition could also be seen as a reward for performance and serve motivation.

4.10 Adapting the framework of variables

During the cross analysis of cases the following emerged:

- Most of the variables in the framework were supported for inclusion and possible further study
- The inclusion of certain variables did not find full support over the six cases, but no variables or relationships were rejected, as this would be the domain of further research into the matter

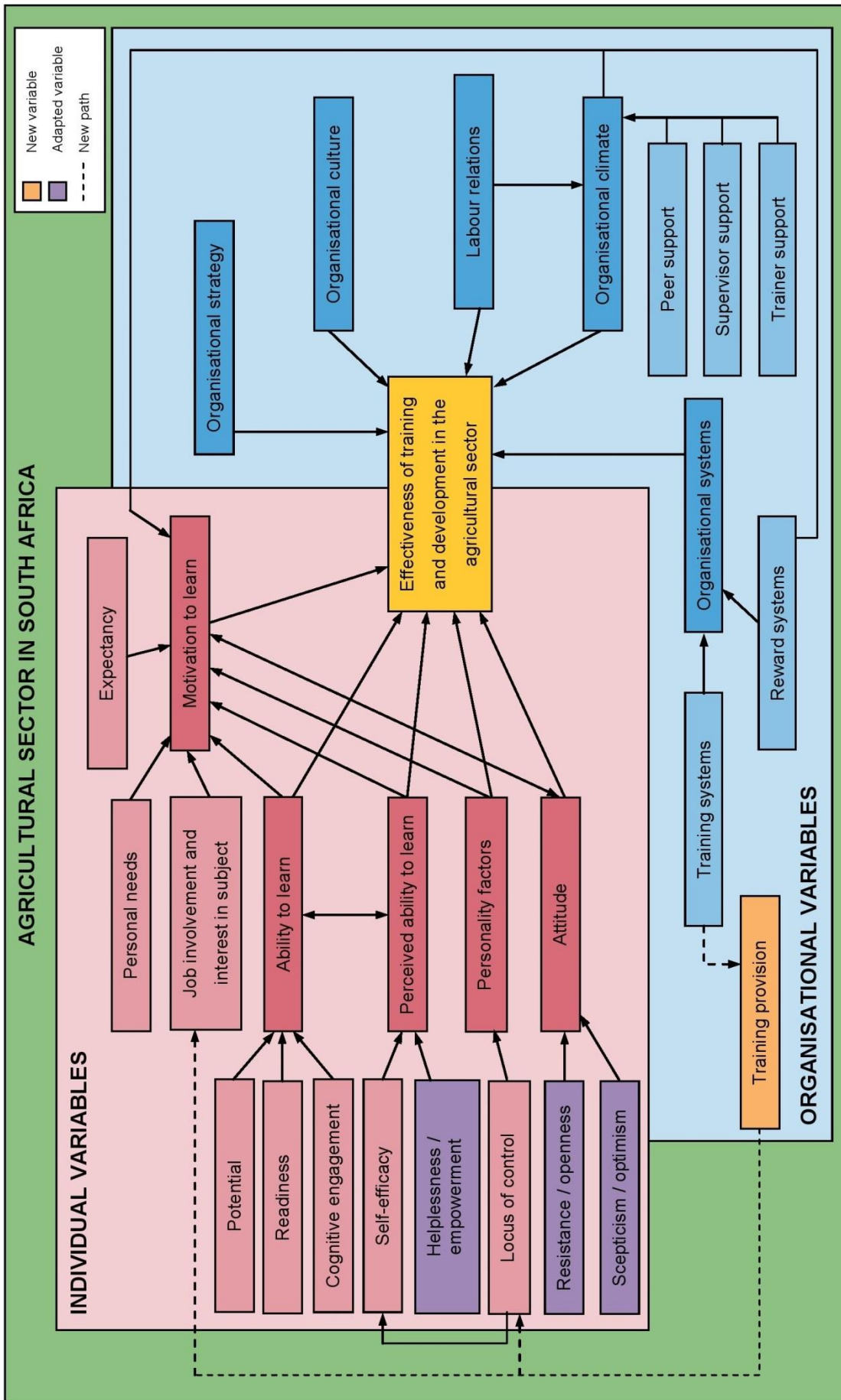


Figure 6. An adapted framework for successful skills development in the agricultural sector

Certain additional relationships and variables were also identified for inclusion in the framework:

- Three variables were reframed in a manner which presented positive and negative poles: empowerment was framed as opposed to learned helplessness, openness to resistance to change, and optimism to scepticism
- The extent of provision of training was included as a sub-dimension of training systems on farms, and indicated as potentially affecting locus of control as well as job involvement

Based on the findings the theoretical framework of variables was presented at the end of Chapter 2 (Figure 4, p. 52) can be revised and updated to account for these findings (see Figure 6, p. 113). The new framework serves as an illustration of the key findings of this research study.

4.11 Conclusion: Chapter 4

The preceding sections presented the descriptions and results of the six separate case studies and the consequent cross-case analysis and discussion thereof. The relevant literature was integrated in this discussion to demonstrate the findings related to the framework of variables (Figure 4, p. 52) and adapt it to account for the various findings (Figure 6, p. 113).

The next chapter presents the conclusions which could be drawn from this study, the implications of the research findings, the limitations this study faced, and the recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine which individual and organisational variables could conceivably have an impact on the effectiveness of learning and skills development on farms. These individual and organisational variables operate within a specific macro-level context, in this case the agricultural sector.

Chapter 1 established that the development of human resources in South Africa is an issue of critical importance to the future well-being of the country. This applied to all sectors in society where, as a result of apartheid and continued poverty and limited access to resources, groups of people have been disadvantaged and their chances at developing to their full potential compromised. The agricultural sector was highlighted as a key area to investigate skills development. Such development was influenced by three contextual levels of needs: the macro- (national), meso- (organisational), and micro-level (individual).

Chapter 2 explored the variables which may have an impact on the effectiveness of skills development in terms of the micro- and meso-levels. Several individual and organisational variables were identified and included in a framework of relevant variables to illustrate their potential effect. Chapter 3 explained and motivated the exploratory approach of the study and the use of multiple case study method in collecting, organising, and analysing data.

The findings in the six cases under study were presented in Chapter 4. A discussion of each case was presented along with a summarised version of interview results. Cross-case analysis was performed and the findings compared to the relevant literature. Finally, the framework of variables was updated to reflect new information which came to light during this analysis.

This chapter represents the final part of the thesis. In the following sections, the most important conclusions to be drawn from the study, their implications for relevant stakeholders, the limitations faced in conducting the study, and certain recommendations for future research are discussed.

5.2 Conclusions

From the outset, it was apparent that training and development can represent a complex phenomenon. From this study, it could be concluded that in the South African agricultural sector, this is indeed the case. Even though the scope of the framework of variables (Figure 4, p. 52) was very broad, there still remains room for expansion.

This study focused on the individual and organisational levels. Additional variables in the national context could be expected to have additional effects within this framework, but were not pursued in this study. Recognition of the contextual reality of the unique agricultural environment and the complexity of the variables studied were key considerations when deciding upon the method used in the study. Multiple case study methods highlight the importance of context in investigating research problems and allow researchers to present rich, meaningful results on complex matters. This complexity and contextual focus, in addition to the exploratory approach undertaken, affirmed a multiple case study method an effective platform for performing the study.

The six cases selected for study shared certain characteristics (i.e. were limited to the Western Cape, primarily produced some form of crop, and were not subject to serious labour strife), but varied in terms of ownership, size, distance from urban centres, and culture. This presented an interesting (if not exhaustive) cross-section of farms' organisational composition in the Western Cape. The relative similarity of findings across cases indicated that, while results may not be generalisable to the entire agricultural sector, they were replicable and supported potential reliability in future studies.

At the individual level it emerged that the major variables represented relevant and complex phenomenological networks in their own right. Relationships existed between motivation to learn and transfer skills, attitudes to training and development, perceived and actual ability to learn, and employee locus of control to a greater or lesser extent. The subcomponents of these variables (factorial structure of components) added to their complexity: most of the variables could be dependent on various underlying factors. In addition to this, organisational variables and the

behaviour of employers in the sector could lead to further effects on certain individual variables.

Employees in the study possessed varied levels of education. These levels ranged from very basic and limited formal education to successful completion of Grade 12. Low levels of education are concluded to have negative impacts on learner abilities. In a sector where low education levels are the norm, this is likely to present a significant challenge to managers who wish to effectively develop their human resources. Fortunately, it seems that managers are aware of this problem and their impacts, as ABET courses were offered specifically to address the issue.

Motivation to learn and transfer skills can result from a variety of factors. This represented one of the most complex and interwoven variables in the framework. Such motivation is integral to the success of learning exercises and can be influenced by the actions and behaviour of individuals involved in the training process, in addition to personal needs and ambitions. Managers' hesitation to communicate the potential material benefits to employees was understandable, although it may have compromising effects on extrinsic motivation, given the relative importance of material needs among low earning employees like farmworkers. In addition to extrinsic factors, employees' intrinsic motivation was also noteworthy as it transcended potentially inhibiting factors such as low educational levels.

The trend of positive attitudes to training among employees in the study showed that there is a desire for learning and skills development among farm workers. These positive attitudes increased the perceptions of value and stimulated employee motivation, thereby allowing for greater success in skills development. Negative attitudes may still manifest among employees. The persistent nature of attitudes would require managers to act swiftly when observing such negative perspectives.

Locus of control allowed employees to take responsibility for their performance in training. While most of the respondent employees believed themselves to have an internal locus of control, it is unknown whether this perception will hold in actual events of failure in training or where training and development represents a significant challenge. Employee perception is also a crucial element in determining their abilities to learn: perceptions of ability could shape the expectations the employee has regarding future success in training and so establish a belief that this

is what will come to pass. Basic training in agriculture counteracts such beliefs in that there is often no assessment of learning, therefore no formal judgment on success exists. Self-efficacy can be considered to represent a complex variable in the framework of variables presented here: it can be affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors including the specific design of training as well as managerial perceptions of employees' efficacy in training.

On the organisational side, managers typically approached training and development in an informal manner. Training and development was implemented like a support function on these farms, rather than a strategic imperative. The measure of informality in managing and organising learning on farms resulted in difficulties in assessing the impact and value of such training investments. More formalised goals and structures would allow managers to derive greater value from the training they present to their employees and, for example, avoid situations where employees receive repetitive training which does not necessarily contribute to their existing knowledge, skills, or abilities.

Despite the perception of training and development as a support function, managers recognised training and development as a central cultural element: the development of employees' skills over time was important to sustain operations by matching skills growth to industry development. Institutionalising training and development as core organisational value translated into stronger managerial and employee value perceptions which promoted its importance and success. Training was valued not only for operational reasons, but also for the positive potential impact it could have in the broader rural community.

Labour relations can be contentious in the agricultural sector in South Africa: it contributes to the definition of any interaction between managers and employees. The relationship existing between managers and employees could thus affect the approach employees take to engaging in training and development and so affect the success thereof. This relationship could also ensure either a negative or positive climate in which training is presented and have further indirect implications. Such a climate needs to be supportive in order to promote effective skills development. The behaviour of peers, instructors, and supervisors can have positive or negative effects on employees' performance in training and on their motivation to learn.

Managers can also draw on organisational systems to assist in the management of training and development. The informality of their approach thereto was also apparent in this area: reward systems, and training approaches and methods were often unstructured. This lack of structure put the potential positive motivational and performance consequences at risk, as it created the risk of managerial inconsistencies. Reward systems presented an ideal opportunity for managers to engage in the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees to learn by creating stronger value perceptions through feedback and visible recognition.

Organisational variables were in many cases related to individual variables (e.g. climate and organisational systems, and motivation to learn) and added to the complexity of the phenomenon being studied. It illustrates the importance of the contextual setting for training and development and the network of interactions between policy, practice, managers, and employees.

5.3 Implications and recommendations

Learning and development is important in any organisational context. It represents a means to adapt to a changing environment and achieve greater personal and organisational success. Employees play a central role in training: they are the ones who need to be developed through such initiatives. Agricultural employees can improve their performance in training by becoming more engaged therein. Their participation in training such as ABET can enable them to grow their readiness and thereby overcome the limits placed on the realisation of their learning potential.

Success in training requires both ability and motivation. Employees need to find alignment between their perceived and actual abilities to learn, as this could allow them to track their own performance goals and to have reasonable expectations regarding their potential to be successful in a training and development situation. Employees need to foster awareness of the intrinsic importance of training and development in this particular context. The increased motivation and subsequent growth in skills would allow greater perceptions of internal control over training (and career) success.

The informal nature of training and development management inhibits many of the beneficial effects of such training and may reduce its individual and organisational effectiveness. Managers should implement more formalised training and development strategies, policies, processes and practices. Such formalisation would also allow more effective training and reinforcement systems to be implemented. This would form a good basis for management control over the whole training process.

Culture and climate can be forged and adapted to suit managerial needs, but this would require targeted and effective intervention. The relationship between management and employees will be important in an attempt such as this. These relationships are contingent on open and effective communication. Employees may not wish to challenge communication structures, but the openness to do so would serve the promotion of more effective vertical interaction. Labour relations are not one sided: managers and employees engage in reciprocal interactions, the nature of which is defined by the behaviour of both parties. Management and employees both thus have (and should use) the potential to promote positive change in labour relations.

Training providers are in unique positions on farms: not only do they serve the purpose of facilitating knowledge growth among employees, they are also perfectly placed to advise and assist employees and management. Providing additional support to employees could improve the transfer of learning. Instructors also have the potential to objectively advise employers on their training and development practices and promote the implementation of more effective systems. This position allows them to support the formalisation of training and development strategy and systems on farms. Training providers could also explore possibilities to facilitate learning in remote locations (e.g. through distance learning, coordinated training presentation to multiple employers, or marketing strategies aimed at the agricultural sector).

Employers already provide a variety of basic services to employees. Examples of these services are the access to social workers on the farm and the provision of ABET training. Increased government investment in ABET programmes in rural areas may prove particularly beneficial to groups such as farm workers. Skills

development is of critical importance in transformation and should enjoy government support and recognition as such. Training and development in general also had further reaching effects than on the individual and organisational levels alone: communities benefited indirectly from higher investment in skills development. This could serve to supplement future skills development strategies on farms.

The adapted framework of variables (Figure 6, p. 113) may not be exhaustive, but it represents a good basis to work from in terms of future research. This study served to start filling a gap in training and development research, given the unique context of the South African agricultural sector. The framework itself can be deconstructed into simpler networks between specific variables, or used as presented here and expanded. The complexity of the framework would have an inherent effect on the method used to study it and researchers would need to draw on general training and development research.

It would generally be inappropriate to make prescriptive recommendations to farm workers, management, or government entities based on the results of this study, however one managerial issue could be clearly highlighted: the informality involved in management on respondent farms. Managers should develop more formal strategies, goals, and systems for training and development in order to assist in managing it effectively. The lack of structure in these matters resulted in very little opportunity for critical evaluation of training and development, which is crucial in determining the individual and organisational value thereof.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

The purpose of this study was to explore and provide an overview of the manifestation of variables which may impact the effectiveness of skills development in agriculture in South Africa. The exploratory approach to the study was not aimed at the formulation of theory or test hypotheses, but rather establishing which variables may present future researchers with valuable insight in this topic. The chapter on results of the study culminated in an adapted framework of variables (Figure 6, p. 113) spanning the individual and organisational levels. This framework could be operational in the agricultural sector in South Africa and thus represents a valuable point of departure for future research.

The scope of the framework added to its complexity and that of studies aimed at investigating it. Future research may be more valuable if this scope is narrowed down, thus allowing for deeper investigations into more specific variable networks. Research questions should thus be aimed at addressing aspects within or across levels (micro-, meso-, or macro-level). Value may be gained from deconstructing the framework and investigating certain parts thereof (especially in terms of more complex concepts such as motivation). This would allow researchers to delve into more detail when performing research and in doing so improve upon the existing framework by supporting or rejecting propositions. Such study may also lead to expansion or contraction of the framework.

Certain variables were framed in a manner which may yield better results if approached differently. Three variables in particular may prove more valuable if approached in either a positive or a polar way:

- Resistance to change can be restated as openness to change or tested on a bi-polar scale (i.e. openness vs. resistance);
- Scepticism can be restated as optimism or tested on a bi-polar scale (i.e. scepticism vs. optimism);
- It may be valuable to include empowerment, resulting from learning and its effect on training and development, as a variable in the theoretical framework, as opposed to learned helplessness. Learned helplessness may not have been common on the farms in this study, but the gravity of the potential effects of this variable warrants further research into its manifestation and effect on training and development.

Additional research may also yield valuable insights in terms of the following:

- The potential of managerial perceptions of employee efficacy to affect self-efficacy in training and development;
- The incidence rate and gravity of learned helplessness among farm workers and its effect on their performance in training and development;
- The general nature of labour relations in agriculture, including the perceptions of employers and employees, the extent of formalisation in labour relations, and its effects on skills development and its climate;

- The intrinsic and extrinsic factors which promote employees' motivation to learn.

Researchers need to be careful when selecting methods to study phenomena in the agricultural sector in South Africa. When investigating micro-level variables, qualitative methods may be more appropriate: the use of questionnaires was ruled out for this study due to expectations of low literacy levels, an issue which would be prevalent in such studies for some time yet. At the meso-and macro-levels, more quantitative measures could be used.

The case study design utilised here presented an isolated, static representation of the variables being studied across cases. The incorporation of a longitudinal element would surely benefit future studies, as it would allow the researcher to track changes over time and develop more conclusive results. Additionally, testing the framework developed in this study empirically (as a whole or in part) could yield valuable and relevant results to academia, employers, and the state in terms of understanding and utilising the various variables in promoting more effective skills development on farms.

5.5 Limitations

Several limitations were faced in conducting this study and need to be acknowledged. These limitations were encountered in terms of existing literature, methodology, and data collection. The dearth of recent research into skills development on farms in South Africa necessitated the extensive use of general literature on the subject. As a result, much of the framework developed in the literature review is untested in the agricultural context and may be speculative.

The lack of such research served to motivate a wider study, with the purpose of developing a general view of the individual and organisational variables affecting the effectiveness of skills development. In the end, the scope of the study was quite wide and therefore did not allow great depth in the course of investigation: data collected on the variables were typically quite basic. By not delving into variables in depth, complex variables or variable networks may have been only superficially explained or accounted for. A further limitation in this sense was the use of self-reports

regarding many variables in the interviews (especially in terms of employee reports on individual variables): self-reports carry the risk of eliciting biased responses.

The sample provided many interesting insights into every day agricultural operations, but cannot be assumed to be generalisable to the sector as a whole. Feedback from and attitudes of respondents were generally positive. Such positive experiences of working life (from employee and managerial perspectives) may have resulted in a measure of optimistic bias in results. When first inviting farms to participate in the study, one such farm declined the invitation, due to the poor quality of labour relations and the potential negative effect of having a researcher ask employees probing questions (according to the farm's owner). Data to be collected on a farm such as this, may have presented a much different result. In addition to this factor, the sample size was quite limited. Only two employees were interviewed per farm. A larger sample of employees per farm could have been valuable, due to the possible heterogeneity of the population of employees on each farm in isolation as well as within the agricultural sector in general.

The complexity of the variables and their networks also affected the interviews. To ensure understanding on respondents' part, some concepts were simplified while others were explained in detail. This could have had a detrimental effect on the quality of responses due to bias (as understanding of the concepts was imparted from the researcher) or limited responses (where short or closed ended responses were given in reaction to lengthy explanations). Without these explanations, respondents would most likely have been unable to provide a meaningful answer. A further limitation of the simplification of concepts may have manifested in the potential loss of underlying meaning.

It appeared in some cases that respondents were intimidated by the presence of the researcher. In all cases these respondents were reassured of the voluntary and confidential nature of the research. They were also reminded that their responses would not be used for evaluations and that they could speak freely. In one particular case an employee was uncomfortable discussing certain aspects of labour relations in detail. As per the ethical clearance obtained for this study, respondents were not required to discuss concepts which may have caused discomfort. This hesitation was thus respected and the interview proceeded without further pursuing the matter. This

unwillingness to share information which may have resulted in a biased result, as incomplete or misrepresented information may have been recorded.

5.6 Conclusion: Chapter 5

This chapter presented the conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations which could be drawn from regarding the variables which may have an effect on skills development effectiveness in the South African agricultural sector. The study showed the complex and unique context in this sector and the role this played in the provision and management of training and development up to now. The research performed here represents a point of departure for future studies on related topics. It is hoped that this crucial area of research can enjoy the focus of future researchers and provide the agricultural sector with valuable practical and academic insights.

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APPENDIX A:

Background information form

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Organisation designation: | |
| Date: | |
| Form completed by: | |

Section A: Financial data

| | |
|---|--|
| Total payroll: | |
| Total skills development levies: | |
| Total budget for training and development: | |

Section B: Production data

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Primary crop or livestock: | |
| Secondary crops or livestock: | |

Section C: Management data

| | |
|--|--|
| Type of owner: | |
| Number of managerial employees: | |

Section D: Employment data

| | |
|---|--|
| Total number of permanent employees: | |
| Number of separable hierarchical levels: | |

Section E: Administrative data

Please indicate which of the following reports are available for the current / previous applicable period

| | |
|---|--|
| Workplace Skills Plan / Annual Training Report | |
| Employment Equity Report | |
| Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Scorecard | |

Please indicate which of the following documents are available

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Skills development policy | |
|----------------------------------|--|

APPENDIX B:

Employee interview

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Employer designation: | |
| Employee designation: | |
| Date: | |

Good day, my name is Jandré Jansen van Rensburg, I am a student at the University of Stellenbosch. Thank you for your willingness to help with this research study. Before we begin our interview, I would like to mention a few things:

- This interview is being recorded in order to allow the researcher to review your answers to the various questions
- Your participation is on a voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences whatsoever
- This interview is confidential in the sense that no information will be mentioned which could lead to your identification by other people who may listen to the recordings or read the published results of the study
- Please think carefully about the answers you give and be honest at all times
- If you do not understand something please inform me immediately so I can explain it (this is important to ensure I get a good answer from you)

Section A: General Information

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Employee position: | |
| 2. Years in service: | |
| 3. Lives on farm (Yes / No): | |

Section B: Perception of Individual Variables Impacting Skills Development

1. Individual ability to learn and develop skills

| |
|--|
| Learner readiness |
| 1. How far did you get with school? (i.e. level of schooling, also formal and informal training received from employer, any additional training) |
| |
| 2. Has what you learned at school and from work helped you to learn better in training? Please explain how you feel it has helped or why not (i.e. explain measure of success, perception of readiness, perception of learning process, role of previous training and development) |
| |
| Learning potential |
| 1. Do you think you can learn new things quickly and apply them at work? |
| |
| 2. How do you learn new things? (What do you do when in training to learn what is being taught?) |
| |
| 3. Do you learn what your employer expects you to in training? (Do you reach goals set in training; e.g. safely using a new machine) |
| |
| Cognitive engagement |
| 1. How much attention do you pay when in training? (Are you easily distracted; i.e. attentively listen to trainer, ask questions, make sense of knowledge) |
| |
| 2. What do you do in training? (E.g. take notes, ask questions, attempt new activities yourself, stare at the walls, be distracted) |
| |
| 3. Do you try to learn all the new things being taught in training? (E.g. practicing, investing time, trying to understand everything) |
| |

2. Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

| |
|--|
| Personal needs |
| 1. Do you think training helps you with personal needs? (E.g. making life at home easier, being able to achieve more from life) Please explain how or if not why |
| |
| 2. Do you think that training in general helps with the following (please say why or why not): |
| a) Your ability to find a new job if you should leave your current one: |
| |
| b) Your ability to do more difficult jobs at work: |
| |
| 3. Do you think that training provided at work helps with the following (please say why or why not): |
| a) Your ability to find a new job if you should leave your current one: |
| |
| b) Your ability to do more difficult jobs at work: |
| |
| Job involvement and interest in the subject |
| 1. Are you interested in the work you do and your daily tasks? (Is your work more than just a way to get money) |
| |
| 2. Do you think training helps you become more interested in the work you do? |
| |
| 3. Do you think your (dis)interest changes how eager you are to learn new things in training? Please say how or if not why (perception of new skills enhancing impact and value of work done) |
| |
| Expectancy in skills development |
| 1. What do you expect will happen when you complete training? (E.g. more challenging or interesting work, more money) |
| |
| 2. How eager are you to do more training when what you expect happens (or does not happen? (If what you expect happens, do you become more eager to do more training or does it stay the same) |
| |
| 3. How do you think training can be valuable in your life? (E.g. usefulness of skills now or later in life, helping to make work easier) |
| |

| |
|--|
| 4. How do you think the usefulness of new skills changes how eager you are to do training? |
| |
| 5. How do management tell or show you why training is done and how it will help on the farm? (In terms of usefulness now or at a later time) |
| |

3. Attitude to learning and skills development

| |
|---|
| Resistance to change |
| 1. Do you think things on the farm can change as a result of training? (E.g. the way people go about their work, the type of work you do) |
| |
| 2. How do you feel about these changes that could happen after training? (E.g. unsure, excited, positive or negative experience) |
| |
| Scepticism |
| 1. Are you in general more positive or negative towards training? Why do you think this is the case? |
| |
| 2. Why do you think your employer wants you to do training? (employer agenda, trust in employer) |
| |

4. Personality: the impact of locus of control

| |
|---|
| Locus of control |
| 1. Who do you think is responsible for what happens after you did something (good or bad)? Why do you say this? |
| |
| 2. Do you think it is you or someone / something else (e.g. trainer, material) that makes you successful in training? |
| |
| 3. Do you blame yourself or someone / something else (e.g. trainer, material) if you fail in training? |
| |

5. Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

| |
|--|
| Self-efficacy |
| 1. Have you been successful in training in general in the past? |
| |
| 2. Do you think training has led to positive things happening in your life? (E.g. salary increases, more interesting work) |
| |
| 3. Do you believe you have the ability to effectively (successfully) learn and develop new skills? Please describe how you see your ability to learn and develop skills |
| |
| Learned helplessness |
| 1. Do you think that you could change your working conditions if you wanted to? Please explain why you think so (Change negative things about work) |
| |
| 2. Do you think that training is a way in which you can change your working conditions? Please explain why you feel this way (E.g. enabling you to do better work) |
| |

Section C: Perception of Organisational Variables Impacting Skills Development

1. Agricultural organisation strategy and skills development

| |
|--|
| Employee perception of skills development strategy |
| 1. What do you think the main reasons for training are on this farm? (E.g. to help employees, to make more money, to make work easier) |
| |
| 2. Do you think training on this farm helps the following people (please explain why you say this): |
| Yourself (the individual): |
| |
| The farm (the business): |
| |
| The community: |
| |

2. Labour relations

| Employee perception of labour relations in the organisation |
|--|
| 1. Are you a member of a labour union? Please say why (not)? |
| |
| 2. How would you describe the relationship between workers and management on the farm? (E.g. trusting, good, bad, suspicious) |
| |
| 3. Do you think workers and management trust each other on this farm? Please explain why you think so |
| |
| 4. Do you think that the relationship workers have with management makes a difference in how successful training is? Please describe how or if not why? (Does a good relationship make training seem more valuable?) |
| |

3. Organisational culture

| Employee perception of organisational culture |
|---|
| 1. Do you regularly receive training on this farm? |
| |
| 2. Does the training you do build on earlier training? |
| |
| 3. Do you think that training is important to both management and workers on this farm? Please say why you think so |
| |

4. Organisational climate

| Employee perception of organisational climate |
|---|
| 1. Do you think your workplace environment (e.g. physical environment, relations with co-workers) makes it easier to learn in training? Please explain why you think so |
| |
| 2. Do you think the following make a difference (positive or negative) in how successful you are in training? And if so, how would you describe this effect? |
| a. Support / encouragement from management: |
| |

| |
|---|
| b. Support / encouragement from co-workers: |
| |
| c. Support / encouragement from trainers: |
| |

5. Organisational systems

| |
|---|
| Training and development approach |
| 1. How is training done on this farm? (I.e. who presents training, who receives training, how is training presented: formal, informal, on the job) |
| |
| 2. Which of the following methods of training do you think make training effective on this farm (please indicate which are not used): |
| a. On the job training (training / instruction as you work): |
| b. Off the job training (training / instruction in a different setting than work): |
| c. Coaching (encouragement and support from management to learn): |
| d. Formal instruction (classroom training at a training institution): |
| e. Informal instruction (training at the workplace): |
| Conditioning of learning |
| 1. How does management show you that you have been successful in training and that they are happy with that success? (I.e. is success in training rewarded on some level) |
| |
| 2. What good things do you think will happen if you take part in training? (E.g. easier to do work, more money, better work) |
| |
| 3. Does management tell you when you did something right (or wrong) that you have just learned in training? |
| |

Section D: Interrelationships

| |
|--|
| Additional personal variables affecting motivation to learn |
| 1. How do you think the knowledge and skills you have built through school and training affects your eagerness to take part in further training at work? (I.e. do you feel ready for the training you receive or not and does this make you more or less eager to take part in it) |
| |

| |
|---|
| 2. How do you think the control you have over the results of your training affects your eagerness to take part in further training at work? (I.e. do you think you are the one who is responsible for the results of training or not and how does this affect your eagerness) |
| |
| 3. How do you think your belief in your own ability to be successful in training affects your eagerness to take part in further training at work? (I.e. do you see yourself as being able to be successful in training or not and how does this affect how eager you are to do training) |
| |
| 4. How do you think your ability to change the condition you work in affects your eagerness to take part in further training at work? (I.e. do you think you can change your circumstances at work – e.g. through training – or not and does this make you more eager to take part in training) |
| |
| Additional organisational variables affecting motivation to learn |
| 1. How do you think the following affects your eagerness to take part in training? |
| a. Support / encouragement from supervisors / management: |
| |
| b. Support / encouragement from co-workers: |
| |
| c. Support / encouragement from trainers: |
| |
| 2. How do you think the rewards (e.g. congratulations, better work, salary increases) you receive for success in training affect your eagerness to take part in further training at work? (I.e. is success rewarded / recognised and does this make you more eager to do training) |
| |
| Additional personal variables affecting attitude to learning and skills development |
| 1. How do you think your overall eagerness to take part in training affects how you feel about training in general (and vice versa)? (I.e. do you feel more positive about training when you are more eager to take part therein and do you feel more eager to take part in training if you feel positive about it) |
| |
| Additional variables affecting perceived ability to learn and develop skills |
| 1. How do you think the control you have over the results of your training affects your belief in your own ability to be successful in training? (I.e. do you think you are the one who is responsible for the results of training or not and how does this affect your belief that you are capable of success in training) |
| |

| |
|--|
| Additional variables affecting organisational climate |
|--|

- | |
|---|
| 1. How do you think the relationship between workers and management affects the conditions in which training takes place? (I.e. how do you think the relationship between workers and management could affect the way in which workers (e.g.) see training, interact with trainers) |
| |

Section E: Additional Information

- | |
|---|
| 1. Do you feel that training and development has helped you perform better in your work? Please explain why you feel this way |
| |

APPENDIX C:

Employer interview

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Employer designation: | |
| Interviewee designation: | |
| Date: | |

Good day, my name is Jandr  Jansen van Rensburg, I am a student at the University of Stellenbosch. Thank you for your willingness to help with this research study. Before we begin our interview, I would like to mention a few things:

- This interview is being recorded in order to allow the researcher to review your answers to the various questions
- Your participation is on a voluntary basis and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences whatsoever
- This interview is confidential in the sense that no information will be mentioned which could lead to your identification by other people who may listen to the recordings or read the published results of the study
- Please think carefully about the answers you give and be honest at all times
- If you do not understand something please inform me immediately so I can explain it (this is important to ensure I get a good answer from you)

Section A: General Information

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Annual budget for skills development: | |
| 2. Number of training / development programmes in place: | |
| 3. Number of permanent employees currently employed: | |

Section B: Perception of Individual Variables Impacting Skills Development

2. Individual ability to learn and develop skills

| |
|---|
| Learner readiness |
| Are employees assessed in terms of their readiness for skills development? In what way are such assessments done? (Sufficient skill level to engage in specific training) |
| |
| Learning potential |
| Are employees assessed in terms of their learning potential? In what way are such assessments done? (Identification of employees who possess the potential to be developed) |
| |
| Cognitive engagement |
| What steps do you take to encourage cognitive engagement (i.e. cognitive effort invested by the employee) by employees in skills development? |
| |

3. Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

| |
|---|
| Personal needs |
| Are employees made aware of the personal benefits that could result from skills development? If so, how is this done? |
| |
| Job involvement and interest in the subject |
| Do you think the measure of involvement employees shows affects how well they perform on skills development exercises? Please elaborate |
| |
| Expectancy in skills development |
| 1. How do you communicate the utility (i.e. applicability and value) of skills development in terms of practical and future value to employees? |
| |
| 2. How do you communicate what consequences employees can expected after engaging in skills development exercises? |
| |

6. Attitude to learning and skills development

| |
|--|
| Resistance to change |
| Have you experienced resistance to training and development in the past? Why was this and how did you address the issue? |
| |
| Scepticism |
| How would you describe the attitudes of your employees towards skills development in general? |
| |

7. Personality: the impact of locus of control

| |
|---|
| Locus of control |
| Do you think employees generally assume responsibility for their actions? Do you believe that this could impact on their performance in skills development exercises? |
| |

8. Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

| |
|--|
| Self-efficacy |
| 1. How are the goals of skills development explained to employees? (I.e. are measurable targets set for employees, which they can measure their success against) |
| |
| 2. Are employees evaluated in terms of the achievement of specific goals and given feedback and assistance? |
| |
| Learned helplessness |
| 3. Can you think of examples where employees with the potential to perform well in skills development fail to do so, due to a lack of belief in their potential to change their circumstances? |
| |
| |
| 4. How do you address this issue when it is observed? |
| |

Section C: Perception of Organisational Variables Impacting Skills Development

2. Agricultural organisation strategy and skills development

| Employer description of organisational skills development strategy |
|--|
| Please describe your skills development strategy in terms of the following phases (i.e. describe the specific actions of management at each stage, if applicable): |
| a. The strategic (and other) goals of skills development: |
| |
| b. Training needs analysis (current and future): |
| |
| c. The formulation of the strategy: |
| |
| d. Implementation of the strategy: |
| |
| e. Evaluation of the impact and success of the strategy: |
| |

4. Labour relations

| Employer perception of labour relations in the organisation |
|--|
| 5. How would you describe the nature of labour relations in the organisation? |
| |
| 6. Please describe the communication processes between management and employees: |
| |
| 7. Do you believe that mutual trust exists between management and employees? Please elaborate |
| |
| 8. Do you think that the nature of labour relations in the organisation affects the effectiveness of skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |

5. Organisational culture

| Employer perception of organisational culture |
|--|
| 6. Do you think it is important to continually develop the skills of employees? Please explain why |
| |

| |
|---|
| 7. Do you feel that continuous learning and skills development forms a core value of the organisation? How is this communicated to employees? |
| |

4. Organisational climate

| |
|--|
| Employer perception of organisational climate |
| Please describe how you perceive the level of support from the following stakeholders to employees during training and what the effect thereof is: |
| d. Supervisor support: |
| |
| e. Peer support: |
| |
| f. Trainer support: |
| |

5. Organisational systems

| |
|---|
| Training and development approach |
| 3. Please indicate which of the following training methods and approaches are utilised in the organisation and motivate why they are used (or not): |
| f. On the job training: |
| |
| g. Off the job training: |
| |
| h. Coaching: |
| |
| i. Formal instruction: |
| |
| j. Informal instruction: |
| |
| k. Multimedia tools: |
| |
| l. Open and / or blended learning models: |
| |
| 4. Do you make use of any additional methods for training and development purposes? If so what are they and how effective have they been? |
| |

| |
|--|
| Conditioning of learning |
| 4. Is there any recognition or reward system in place for employees achieving success in training and development? Please provide a description (formal and / or informal systems) |
| |
| 5. Are employees encouraged to exercise new skills at work? |
| |
| 6. Are correct (and incorrect) applications of training and development content acknowledged? Please elaborate |
| |

Section D: Interrelationships

| |
|--|
| Additional personal variables affecting motivation to learn |
| 1. Do you think that employees' readiness to learn affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| 2. Do you think that employees' perceived measure of control over training outcomes affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| 3. Do you think that employees' perceived capacity to learn and develop skills affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| 4. Do you think that employees' perception of their capacity to change their working conditions affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| Additional organisational variables affecting motivation to learn |
| 1. Do you think that the support employees receive from the following stakeholders during skills development affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| a. Supervisors: |
| |
| b. Peers: |
| |
| c. Trainers: |
| |

| |
|--|
| 2. Do you think that the recognition and reinforcement employees receive in the case of successful skills development affects their motivation to engage in skills development? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| Additional personal variables affecting attitude to learning and skills development |
| Do you think employees' overall motivation to engage in skills development affects their attitude towards learning and skills development and vice versa? How would you describe this effect? |
| |
| Additional variables affecting perceived ability to learn and develop skills |
| How do you think employees' locus of control (the attribution of consequences of actions to oneself or to external variables – <i>interviewer will need to explain or clarify the concept as is necessary</i>) affects their perceived ability to learn? (E.g. employees who take responsibility for actions have stronger belief in own abilities) |
| |
| Additional factors affecting organisational climate |
| Do you think the nature of labour relations in the organisation affects the climate in which skills development take place? How would you describe this effect? |
| |

Section E: Additional Information

| |
|---|
| 2. Please provide an overview of all the training and development exercises in place in the organisation: |
| |

APPENDIX D:

Case interview reports

Case study 1: Rooibos farm 1, Clanwilliam

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Employees underwent annual performance assessments (compiled by an earlier labour relations consultant) which indicated where their skills may be lacking, thus highlighting areas for action in training. The performance assessment was done by the two farm managers and the foremen. Employees were then informally assessed in terms of their readiness to learn, based on managerial observation. Based on each individual's observed readiness, a progressive approach to development was taken, whereby the complexity and type of training was adapted to the readiness of the employee in question. However, management reported difficulty in effectively gauging the readiness of employees to take part in skills development and was unaware of a motivational effect which resulted from individual levels of readiness as a result.

As with learner readiness, an informal approach was taken to assess learning potential: employees with perceived higher learning potential were identified through observation while at work, by taking into consideration the speed at which they adapted to new tasks and responsibilities. Employees with higher levels of education and training, who showed a willingness to learn, and illustrated a perceived capacity to acquire new knowledge quickly were noted for future development.

Management perceived no effective means by which the cognitive engagement of employees in training could have been ensured or improved, due to the fact that most training on the farm was presented by external instructors and management was rarely involved therein. As a result, no active steps were taken to attempt to encourage cognitive engagement of employees in training.

Employee view: The employees had completed Standard 5 and 7 (Grade 7 and 9) respectively. Both felt that attending school (even at this basic level) had enabled them to have a deeper sense of readiness for further training. One indicated that his readiness to learn affected how motivated he was to engage in training while the other indicated that his low level of education made training problematic in terms of understanding more advanced concepts being presented. In spite of their basic level

of education, both felt they could easily acquire new skills through actively listening to training presentations and observing how other individuals performed certain tasks. They made an effort to remain cognitively engaged in training when it was presented by paying attention to the instructor, asking questions for clarification, and making notes during training.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees were not directly informed about the potential benefits of training and skills development in terms of the satisfaction of personal needs such as financial or employment security. Training which was not directly related to their work, but aimed at addressing basic needs (for example personal hygiene and health at home) was presented. It was suggested that this could serve basic health needs.

Employees who performed well at work were also more successful in training and development exercises. This was attributed to the increased enjoyment and perceived value of training, as a result of employees' involvement in and identification with their work. This also impacted on the identification of employees for specific training. The interest of employees in certain facets of their work allowed the provision of training more suited to the preferences of employees where possible.

Employees were not specifically informed with regards to the utility of training and the potential value thereof to themselves or the organisation. The basic purpose of training was communicated verbally to employees involved therein. Motivation to engage in skills development played an important role in employees' general attitude towards the training opportunities which are presented.

Employee view: In spite of not having been made aware of the benefits of receiving training, one employee indicated that in his opinion, training held future value and in some cases skills that were taught had helped him improve his life at home. The other indicated that learning has allowed him to manage stress in his life, as he feels more able to concentrate on important matters. Both believed that training in general as well as the training they received at work would be beneficial to them in terms of performing better at work and serving personal needs such as employment security.

They experienced training to deepen their interest in and involvement with their work. This resulted in motivation to engage in training exercises, as it allowed them to grow in their work roles.

The following outcomes were expected of training: increased earnings over time, making workload more manageable and work itself easier, promotion on the farm and respect among peers. The realisation of these outcomes would result in greater motivation to engage in training. When asked what possible utility training could have in their lives, both indicated that the transfer of knowledge to their families (especially their children) was a great benefit. This personal value attributed to training also encouraged them to take part in further training, whenever it was offered. Motivation toward training and development initiatives impacted on their attitude towards the opportunities which are presented.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees generally viewed training and development as an enjoyable activity and their attitudes toward it were positive. There has been no resistance to skills development on the part of the employees. Employees viewed training as “a day of paid leave”, which could imply that employees may be distracted during training if it was not viewed as serious and important.

Employee view: Training was instrumental in achieving change in the workplace and the possible changes which could ensue would be positive. Neither employee experienced fear of change as a result of training. Their attitude to training was very positive and they showed no signs of feeling sceptical about it, or mistrusting the employer’s motives for offering training. One employee indicated that he believed the employer’s motive for offering training was to allow him to grow in his work and as a person.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Employees failed to take responsibility for their actions and placed the blame on other factors or people, which could indicate a perceived prevalence of external locus of control. Training was presented with the goal in mind to change this perception on employees’ part and encourage a sense of responsibility. It was hoped that through training and development, this practice of fault finding with external

factors or people could be changed, resulting in greater internal locus of control and consequently better performance in training and development.

Employees observed one another at work, and when they perceived their colleagues to be entrusted with more complex and rewarding tasks as a result of success in training and development, they became more motivated to perform in such training and development. The perception of control over success in training also served to intrinsically motivate the employee in question to achieve greater success in training and development interventions.

Those employees who disregarded the value of training or did not believe that training and personal outcomes were within their own control were expected to eventually lose confidence in their ability to learn. This could have compromised the intervention, as employees could develop the belief that they were incapable of learning and thus fail to successfully develop new skills.

Employee view: Both employees believed they had internal locus of control and that failure to achieve training goals was their own fault. The one did indicate that he believed the instructor presenting the training was responsible for his success. This hints at an external locus of control and could potentially indicate that his perception of being in control of his circumstances was misdirected.

Barring problems experienced as a result of their limited education, both employees believed that their perceived control over the measure of success they achieved in training would have affected their motivation to engage therein. They believed that their success in training thus far and their experience of control over it had led them to grow in confidence and resulted in a desire to improve upon earlier success.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Training and development in itself had several goals, yet the individual goals which employees were expected to reach were not drawn up or communicated to them. Their successful completion of the training exercise was thus one of the only goals which employees were set and in many cases the training provided was not formally assessed. The structure for training and development was informal and there was no comparison between actual and envisaged achievement. Employees' perceived capacity to learn played an important role in their motivation to

engage in skills development, as those who had a negative outlook on their own abilities were generally less successful in training.

Employees did not possess sufficient confidence in their own abilities to learn and develop (although no specific example of such a case could be given), which was also part of the reason for the decision to employ a social worker on a full time basis with the responsibility to attempt to change these beliefs. She visited families and individuals and provided counselling and assistance. The hope was that this would help employees perceive their lives as being more meaningful and result in an improvement in their daily lives. Employees' capacity to change their work environment did not have a noticeable effect on their motivation to engage in skills development, as some did not wish to perform higher order work on the farm, but rather to remain in a position of limited responsibility.

Employee view: Employees felt they have been successful whenever they had to undergo training in the past and that this has allowed them to grow in their work and had a positive impact in their lives. Both employees expressed a high measure of confidence in their own ability to learn. This confidence also spurred their motivation to do so.

Neither employee expressed a feeling of being unable to change the conditions in which he had to work and live and both viewed training as a possible means by which they could improve their working conditions. Changing working conditions through growth and development was seen as valuable and thus motivated employees to engage in training.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: The strategic approach to skills development on this farm was informal in nature. In spite of this, a general purpose for skills development on the farm did exist. Management hoped to build a core group of employees skilled in all aspects of the farming operation. This would ensure a stable, reliable source of labour and promote the personal development of this group of people. No training

needs analysis was performed on the farm, these needs were addressed as they arose. What skills development strategy did exist was informal or conceptual in nature, but management were aware of the need for a formal strategy to be put in place. In their approach to the implementation of skills development, they identified appropriate employees for future development and provided training as and when required. Given the informal approach to skills development strategy, the effectiveness of skills development was evaluated in terms of observed changes in the behaviour, attitudes, and skills of the employees on the farm. The level of responsibility taken by employees and the measure of pride they took in their work and accomplishments were flagged as being indicators of successful development. It was also believed that the development of skills could lead to improvements within the community.

Employee view: The absence of clear, formalised developmental goals could be witnessed at the hand of employees' perception as they regarded the only goal of training as being improved performance at work. The two employees believed that training held benefits to themselves in terms of personal growth and development, to the farm in terms of its performance, and to the community through the investment of employees in their families' continued development.

Labour relations

Employer view: Labour relations on the farm were reasonably good. When employees and management differed on certain issues, employees were divided in two groups: those who became angry and upset at the situation and those who were willing to listen to management's views on certain issues and discuss it openly. Daily meetings were held between workers, foremen and management to discuss each day's work and relevant issues. Weekly meetings were also held with foremen to discuss any issues which arose during the week and to discuss operational issues for every following week. Workers did not communicate much with management on an informal level (i.e. outside these meetings).

The manager did not expect workers to fully comprehend the tasks they were required to perform and workers were often unwilling to communicate, which sometimes resulted in a breakdown in mutual trust in certain cases. They often failed to ask necessary questions to enable them to effectively perform the task at hand.

Training was predominantly outsourced and management thus had little contact with employees during the process, thus the relationship between management and the employees would not impact on the effectiveness of training interventions. Labour relations on the farm impacted on the climate in which training was presented: the relationship between management and employees was conducive to communicating the message that training was done with development in mind and communication between management and employees was adequate to this purpose.

Employee view: The two employees did not belong to a labour union, but there were employees who did. Joining a union would not hold any personal benefits, but if support was needed when confronting management, they would consider joining. One of the employees indicated that he was happy with the communication process on the farm, but the other said that he felt management were not open to communication from employees. Mutual trust was lacking at times due to work and performance related issues. One employee expressed the view that receiving training was always a good thing and that the relationship between management and employees would not affect this view, whereas the other indicated that a poor relationship would cause him to be less engaged in training and thus diminish its effectiveness. One employee mentioned that communication between management and employees was good and that this enabled a friendly environment, which also affected the climate in which training had to be performed.

Organisational culture

Employer view: Continuous skills development was important on the farm, because increased skill levels made a definite contribution in the workplace as employees were enabled to perform their work better and become more confident in their work roles. This formed part of the value system of the farm, however this perception was not directly or clearly communicated to all employees as it was informally discussed with foremen.

Employee view: The employees did not share the same perception of the regularity and nature of training: one believed that training was not provided on a regular basis and was repetitive, whereas the other expressed the view that training was presented often and openly and that training expanded existing skills on the farm. Training and development was of great importance to the employees of the farm;

however one employee said that he was unaware whether it was important to management.

Organisational climate

Employer view: No real support was given to employees by management during the course of training. The manager was also unaware of the direct effect of support from employees' colleagues or the instructors presenting training on the effectiveness thereof. Motivation to learn could be affected by the measure of support employees received from management, peers, and instructors. If it was provided, management support could lead to stronger self-confidence and greater willingness to learn. The influence of peers could have both positive and negative effects on motivation: where employees were supportive of each other, motivation was seen to thrive, however on some occasions certain employees had become demotivated due to their peers trying to compromise their development to stop them from achieving more than the rest. The support of instructors was essential, as they worked directly with the employees during the training process and needed to manage employees' motivation to ensure that they learned what was required of them.

Employee view: Colleagues and instructors were generally supportive during training, which improved its effectiveness. One of the employees said that he usually worked alone and as such was not aware of the conduciveness of his general work environment to training. The other said that employees mostly helped each other in (and after) training to ensure that skills were transferred effectively. It was suggested that employees themselves improved the conduciveness of their work environment to effective development. Support from management, their peers and instructors would bolster employee motivation to engage in training.

Organisational systems

Employer view: Training on this farm was predominantly informal in nature, no opportunities for formal training were offered to employees yet various other methods were employed to aid in skills development, including: on the job training (the most common form on the farm), off-the-job training (presented by external instructors and which usually gave employees certificates of competence if they

were successful), as well as an element of coaching, whereby employees were encouraged to take part in training if it was considered to hold potential value for them. Training and development was reinforced through informal methods, such as verbal recognition upon completion of specific courses. Employees' success in training was also considered in their performance evaluation, where their increased skills could lead to financial gain in terms of wage increases.

Employees were not actively encouraged to apply new skills in the workplace, but were expected to utilise newly acquired skills of their own accord. Management were not necessarily familiar with the detailed content of training so were unable to indicate where employees were applying their training in a correct or incorrect manner. Where it was observed, faulty practices were corrected through feedback and on-the-job training. Reinforcement of training could have a positive effect on motivation to learn, but not enough was being done to ensure that employees were aware of the potential benefits of each training and development opportunity. This awareness was considered to be important in achieving higher motivation to engage in skills development.

Employee view: The two employees were aware of the way in which selection for training was done and reported that upcoming training was communicated to them. They were also aware of the different methods of training being used on the farm. Both believed that their success in training was not recognised and made no mention of even verbal recognition for it. In spite of this fact, both expected positive consequences to arise from success in training, such as increased measures of responsibility, personal growth and a change in the nature of their work.

Only one of the employees confirmed that feedback was given in light of the application of new skills. Both indicated that the recognition for success in training was lacking, but that recognition could have had a positive effect on their motivation to learn.

Case study 2: Rooibos farm 2, Clanwilliam

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Individual readiness to participate in training was informally assessed based on each employee's specific level of competence in their jobs. No formal assessment process existed, but additional training was provided to those individuals who showed sufficient skill levels to be able to progress. Employees were all ready for training, but motivation was not related to this readiness.

Learning potential was also informally assessed, based on the employer's perception of the individual's interest, skills, and aptitude in a specific function on the farm. Cognitive engagement of employees in training was outside the control of management and the instructor presenting training was responsible for ensuring that employees paid attention.

Employee view: One of the employees had completed Grade 9 and the other Grade 10 before they left school to find work. In both cases they held the belief that the skills they had acquired at school and through training at work enhanced their readiness to learn. One employee indicated that he did not believe that his readiness to learn could affect his motivation to learn while the other believed that his training up to this point has made him more ready and more motivated to engage in further training.

Both considered themselves to be quick learners and believed that they usually acquired all the knowledge and skills which were being taught during training exercises. Only one could indicate his preferred method of learning: by drawing comparisons between his current performance and the correct way of performing certain tasks as illustrated in training. They gave their full attention during training and said that they asked questions during training in order to ensure they learned all relevant material.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees were verbally informed about potential personal benefits to be gained from participation in training. Employees were also informed

about potential salary increases and promotion on the farm. It was clearly communicated to employees that such increases or promotions were not guaranteed, but could be granted over the longer term.

Employees who showed an interest in, or involvement with a specific role or area on the farm were identified for training by the owner. This involvement was assessed based on the farmer's perception of the particular individual's skill, interest, and involvement in their work. The interest of the employee was critical in determining which training was provided.

The utility of training and development initiatives was communicated to employees on an individual basis when an employee completed a particular course. The purpose of this discussion was to explain to the employee what the reasons for presenting the particular course were. Communication regarding what outcomes employees could expect from training was limited. This was an area which was highlighted for improvement. Motivation and attitude were very closely related and each had the potential to affect the other. An employee who had a negative attitude to training would be less motivated than an employee with a positive attitude.

Employee view: One employee could not indicate whether training helped satisfy personal needs, but the other expressed the opinion that the acquisition of new knowledge allowed him to perform better at work and grow in his work role. Both indicated that education and training assisted them in performing better at work and maintaining a sense of employment security.

They experienced a sense of involvement with, and interest in their work and the interest in their work deepened with training. Both believe that their interest in training material and their involvement in work motivated them to engage in further training. They expected growth in skills, and an increased capacity for performance at work to be outcomes of training. The realisation of these outcomes had increased motivation to learn as a consequence. Both were aware of the utility of training and development in terms of personal growth and improved performance at work. This served to motivate them to engage in training exercises in the future. Their personal motivation to learn affected their attitude to training and development.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Resistance to training was a phenomenon which the employer had encountered in the past (although it was uncommon). One employee who exhibited this resistance held the belief that attending training courses held no benefit for him. This was addressed by explaining to the employee that the benefits from training were not necessarily going to be financial in nature, but could benefit him as a person.

Employees in general had a good, positive attitude toward training and development. This positive attitude was improving over time, as a large amount of training was being conducted and employees were starting to understand what the purpose of training was (i.e. that it was not about pure financial gain, but rather to improve oneself in terms of capacity to perform at work and in life).

Employee view: Resistance to training and change was not a common phenomenon, and both employees indicated that they believed that training could allow positive changes to come to pass in the workplace. They had a positive attitude to training and development and one understood and reiterated the purpose of training envisaged by the farm owner.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Employees sometimes failed to take responsibility for their actions, although this was not a general trend. As time passed, more employees took responsibility for things that “went right or wrong in his section of the farm”. This change was believed to be the result of investment in training and development.

Employees who illustrated behaviour indicating a sense of control over their success in training grew more through training and as such became more motivated to participate therein. The employer said that it was a “logical conclusion” that an internal locus of control would positively impact an employee’s self-efficacy, but could not relate this to a specific case on the farm.

Employee view: Both employees believed themselves to have an internal locus of control and that if they were to fail at training, it would be as a result of their own actions. Conversely, they both expressed the belief that their success in training

rested with the instructor who presented it. When they regarded success as being within their control, this would serve to motivate them to learn more and achieve greater success. Both also believed that the perceived measure of control they had over their success in training would allow them to develop greater confidence in their own abilities to learn.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: As most training was presented by external organisations, the communication of specific goals which employees were expected to reach during training was the responsibility of the instructor. This communication (if adequate) would provide employees with a means of assessing the measure of success they achieved during training. Training providers were expected to report on the measure of success achieved in each training exercise. The achievement of goals posited for training was not assessed and employees were not given real feedback on their performance during training.

The informal nature of training on the farm helped to build confidence, as in many cases there was no “pass or fail” system in place. A fear of failure and lack of confidence could demotivate employees who participated in training. The employer could not think of an example where an employee failed in training as a result of learned helplessness. Employees who believed they could change their work environment were more motivated to participate in training and these employees were also more open to communicate with the owner. Some even made suggestions for improvement of operations on the farm.

Employee view: Both employees expressed confidence in their own ability to learn and develop new skills. This confidence was instrumental in maintaining motivation to learn, as they perceived a sense of growth in their skills and abilities. One believed that he would not be able to change his work environment and that every time he had to perform a new task, this came as a challenge. The other indicated that he perceived change in working conditions as being within his power, through taking responsibility for his actions at work. Both believed that training constituted a means by which they could improve their working conditions. They were more motivated to engage in training as a result of the perception that this training would result in positive changes at work.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: The training and development strategy on this farm was informal in nature. Goals for training and development were not formally set or planned ahead in great detail, except in cases where certification and statutory requirements stipulated that training needed to be conducted on a regular basis. Other than in these cases, the availability of training programmes (cited as an obstacle to skills development) was considered. Based on this, a decision whether to send employees for training or not was made. The farm was in the process of assisting its employees to set up a cooperative business entity, which would necessitate training in the establishment and management of such an organisation. Certain certifications and statutory policies (especially management, working conditions and environmental certifications such as UTZ and Fairtrade, in addition to health and safety legislation) required training to be provided to employees. Needs arising from the satisfaction of the requirements of these factors formed the basis of training needs analyses on the farm. No formal or conceptual strategy was in place on the farm; except for the statutory and certification training (which was generally accessible) training was implemented based on the availability thereof (external providers were mostly used and training provision was dependent on the courses they offered as well as the timing of the courses throughout the year). The impact or success of training was indirectly assessed by means of individual and performance evaluation of employees. Their growth in knowledge and skills (as perceived by the employer) was considered by the employer as an indicator of successful skills development.

Employee view: The two employees indicated that in their opinion, the core strategic goal of training was to make their work easier and to ensure that it was done correctly. Both believed training and development to be beneficial to themselves, the farm, and the community: it allowed them to experience personal growth, the farm to perform better as a business, and the knowledge and skills which were acquired to be transferred to family members as well.

Labour relations

Employer view: Labour relations on the farm were healthy. Communication between management and employees followed a direct line in both directions. Employees could directly approach the farmer with any issues they experienced at work. Mutual trust existed between management and employees, due to the fact that communication channels were direct and open. Labour relations had an effect on the effectiveness of training and development, as a breakdown in these relations could have caused a loss of interest in training being presented. Labour relations could affect the climate in which training and development took place, as poor relations would have resulted in a negative environment and compromised training effectiveness.

Employee view: The two employees had diverging beliefs regarding labour relations, although neither were members of a labour union. The first was not interested in joining a labour union but believed that labour relations on the farm were not very good. Mutual trust was not consistent on the farm, as management and employees were suspicious of each other. This inconsistency was believed to originate with issues about remuneration in particular. The relationship between management and employees could impact on the success of training and development. The second said that he considered joining a labour union, as this would put him in a stronger negotiation position. Labour relations on the farm were sound and management and employees did trust each other, as they understood one another. Labour relations could not directly impact on the effectiveness of training and development initiatives. Both employees believed that labour relations could impact on the climate in which training and development had to take place.

Organisational culture

Employer view: A high measure of importance was attached to training and development, as the skills required to function effectively as employee on a farm had changed dramatically over the past 20 years. Farm workers did not require any skills to perform normal duties in the past, whereas they needed to be trained in various elements of agricultural operations in the current environment. It was expected of employees to perform much more complex work than in the past. Continuous training and development was a core value on this farm and this was communicated

to employees by explaining what value they could derive from training and development in terms of current and future benefits.

Employee view: Both employees indicated that they received training regularly and that the training they received typically increased their knowledge and skills in various areas of operation on the farm. Training and development was an issue which was important to both management and employees on the farm.

Organisational climate

Employer view: Support was provided by management to employees during training in the form of encouragement and an illustration of confidence in employees' abilities to perform. This support had a positive impact on employees' performance during training exercises. The employer was not aware of any support given to employees by their colleagues. Although he was not specifically aware of support provided by instructors during training, the employer had trust in their professional approach and believed that they provided support to employees which enabled them to be successful. In addition to the direct effect of support from management and instructors, support from these stakeholders was present and had a positive impact on the motivation of employees to engage in training.

Employee view: The two believed that their work environment was generally conducive to effective training and development and attributed this to the positive manner in which stakeholders on the farm interacted with one another. Both experienced support from management which had a positive impact on their performance during training exercises. Their colleagues usually encouraged them to participate and be successful in training. Both employees experienced training providers to be supportive; this support impacted positively on their performance. The support from management, colleagues and instructors, had a positive impact on the motivation of employees to engage in training.

Organisational systems

Employer view: Several methods of training were utilised on the farm. A large measure of on-the-job-training was provided in such a way as to complement off-the-job training (which was mostly provided by external organisations). Management utilised coaching when interacting with employees during both on-the-job and off-the-

job training in encouraging them and addressing concerns with learning material. No financial recognition was given for success in training and there was a lack of verbal and symbolic recognition for employees who successfully completed training courses. This constituted an issue to be addressed and the employer intended to hand out certificates to employees and offer verbal recognition for their effort and success. Employees were actively encouraged to utilise new knowledge and skills at work and both positive and negative feedback was given to employees with regards to their application of learned content at work. Recognition of success was perceived to have the potential to result in greater motivation to engage in training.

Employee view: An announcement was made when training was available and they were asked to volunteer if they were interested. Both employees were aware of the utilisation of various training methods and approaches as described by the employer and believed that they served to make training and development more effective. They were given copies of their certificates and considered this to be a form of recognition for their success. There were several potential positive outcomes to participating in training, such as: personal growth, better career opportunities and higher income. Only one of the employees was aware of feedback related to the application of training content at work. Recognition of success could result in greater motivation to engage in training.

Case study 3: Fruit farm, Citrusdal

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Employees were assessed in terms of their readiness to engage in training, based on management's perception of individual employees' capacity to learn and develop. Certain types of training were presented to any employees who wished to participate. Employees who were members of the workers' trust's management team received specific training to equip them for this role. Younger employees on the farm were more open to new experiences and this enhanced their readiness to learn which in turn increased their motivation to engage in training and development. Employees with a lower level of education were less motivated to engage in training and development.

Learning potential was assessed in an informal manner and was based on the perception of the potential of each employee to perform in training and development exercises. Most training was presented by external providers who reported back to management upon completion of training exercises. During these feedback sessions the providers reported on the way in which employees became cognitively engaged in training. This feedback has generally been positive and instructors were instrumental in ensuring employees' cognitive engagement during training.

Employee view: Both the employees who were interviewed completed Grade 12. The one employee said that she would have wanted to progress to tertiary studies, but was unable to as a result of financial implications and the other spent a year after school to complete a technical matric at a local college. Both indicated that they wanted to engage in further education and training, as they considered themselves to be ready for it and believed further training to be very beneficial in terms of personal and career development. Their readiness to learn made an impact on their motivation to learn. Both desired to learn and grow through work, and the one indicated that training and development opportunities also resulted in an increased emotional investment in the organisation.

Both possessed the potential to learn new material quickly and considered training to be a challenge they enthusiastically accepted. The application of training content

was very important and assisted them to learn more quickly. They always learned the required content from every training exercise, even though some types of training and development exercises did not provide an overview of their measure of success. They paid their full attention during training exercises and listed several strategies they used to ensure they remained cognitively engaged, such as: visualising practical implications, testing content in practice, asking questions for clarification and ensuring that the exercise was perceived as valuable and enjoyable.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees were actively made aware of the benefits of training and development through verbal communication from management. It was important to encourage employees and to ensure that they were aware of the impact training and development could have in their lives. Employees who were more involved in their work performed better in training exercises. Employees' performance in training could serve as an indicator of performance at work. Interest during training and interest or involvement in their work was strongly related.

When a new training exercise was made available, the potential value of the training and its application on the farm was verbally communicated to employees. The possible effect of training on the course of each employee's career on the farm, the purpose of each course, and the value of training to the farm, the employee and the community was explained. The employer attended the last session of formal training exercises and asked employees for feedback on the training they had received. Feedback from the employees at this point was generally positive. Employees who were perceived as more motivated to learn had a more positive attitude to training and development in general. Motivation to learn also had a positive impact on motivation to work.

Employee view: Training and development would be beneficial in their lives, as the employees believed it to be a source of personal growth which allowed them to achieve more in work and improve their quality of life. One believed that training (in general as well as that received on the farm) would allow him to enjoy increased employment and financial security and to perform better at work. The other believed that her secondary education was crucial in ensuring employment security, but that it did not necessarily allow her to perform well on the farm. On the other hand, she

believed that her training at work would not necessarily impact on her employment security, but that it surely aided in improving her performance at work.

One employee stated that he was “in love” with his job and that he was completely committed to the work and to the organisation. Training allowed him to develop a deeper involvement in his job, as the insight he gained resulted in him developing more respect for his work. He was always eager to engage in further training, as a result of his interest in his work and his strong desire to engage in development. The other indicated that when she started working on the farm, it was not an ideal situation for her, as she had completed Grade 12 and expected to find more prestigious work. In spite of this, she enjoyed the people she worked with and her work. She believed that the training she had received on the farm has allowed her to develop an interest in her work and that this interest resulted in greater motivation to engage in further training.

Only one of the employees was aware of the communication regarding the purpose, utility, and impact of training and development taking place and said that management met with employees to explain the developmental needs on the farm and why training was required in certain areas. The other stated that she was unsure of the purpose of training at times. Both expected training to be applicable to their working environment and to equip them with skills necessary to perform their work effectively. One indicated that on a personal level he expected career growth over time and that if his expectations (i.e. application of training at work and career growth) were met, this would motivate him to engage in further training. The positive impact of training would allow him to grow personally and in his work and consequently achieve more success. The other was not sure whether the satisfaction of her expectations would motivate her to engage in further training. Both highlighted the potential growth, career development and readiness for training as important benefits they perceived to result from training. This value of training served to motivate them to engage therein. The employees believed that their strong motivation to learn resulted in the maintenance of a positive attitude to skills development.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees on the farm had a very positive attitude to training and development in general. There has never been an employee who resisted training (or the change resulting from it). The employer was concerned with the decline in the number of training providers in rural areas as well as the closure of state funded training providers. Scepticism about training was not an issue on the farm and positive attitudes to training was the general trend here.

Employee view: Both employees believed that training allowed positive change to take place on the farm, although one did remark that it was her perception that at times negative things could happen which compromised the positive effects of training. Personal and organisational performance increases were specifically named as positive changes which resulted from training and development. Scepticism was not an issue on the farm and employees' attitudes to training were generally very positive. The employer wanted employees to grow in skills and performance along with the organisation.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Most employees on the farm took responsibility for their actions and demonstrated a measure of internal control beliefs. This had an impact on the success of the individual employees performance in training and at work, as those who illustrated internal control beliefs wished to grow through training opportunities. The visibility of personal growth based on individual effort enabled employees to take responsibility for their actions and in doing so become more motivated to develop their own skills. Employees who possessed an internal locus of control were more likely to develop confidence in their abilities as a result of growth through training.

Employee view: Both employees had a perceived internal locus of control. The one recognised the potential impact of external factors on his performance in training, but believed that success or failure was predominantly his own responsibility, whereas the other believed that her success was dependent on the instructor but that she would attribute failure in training to herself. Their perceived internal locus of control contributed to their motivation to engage in learning. In addition to the increase in motivation, internal control perceptions allowed them to develop greater self-efficacy.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: The goals of training were not formally expressed to employees, but they were verbally informed of the general purpose of training and the basic goals they were expected to reach. Employees' success in training was evaluated, but feedback was insufficient at times and could be improved. Employees with strong self-efficacy beliefs were more motivated to learn as a result.

Learned helplessness was a phenomenon which was prevalent in the agricultural sector. Many of the employees on the farm had completed Grade 12, but as a result of the lack of higher level employment, many of these employees develop a form of learned helplessness. Employees with the potential to hold higher positions were encouraged to search for work that was more suitable to their level of skill, but the safe, known environment on this farm may have contributed to a fear of the unknown among employees. Employees consequently stagnated in their jobs and lost the motivation to achieve more in their careers. The practice of internal recruitment for vacant positions helped to address this, but the impact of this was limited by the slow growth of the farm. Employees who did not convey a perception of learned helplessness were more motivated to learn.

Employee view: The two employees have generally been successful in training in the past, and training has had a positive impact on their lives. Both indicated that they have strong self-efficacy beliefs with regards to their performance in training. The one indicated that in order to ensure effective learning he set reasonable goals for himself during and after training which allowed him to follow "a path to success", implying that he built on successes in training and developed his own self-efficacy in this manner. Both were apparently confident in their own capacity to learn and develop new skills, and indicated that this increased their motivation to learn. The one employee stated that if he did not possess strong self-efficacy, he would be demotivated and would not wish to engage in training.

Neither of the two hinted at perceptions of helplessness: both believed that they could change their working conditions through specific actions on their part. The one indicated that he had already achieved such changes since he commenced employment on the farm, by being willing to take initiative and challenging the status quo of standard practices on the farm. The other indicated that she built strong

relationships and communication channels with her colleagues and management, which allowed her to address problems at work. Training served to leverage positive change in the workplace, through increasing skill levels and capacity to perform at work. Both believed that they were able to change their working conditions through training and development. This perception increased their motivation to learn.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: The central goals of the farm's training and development strategy was universal development, whereby all employees received training over time, as well as ensuring that all statutory and certification requirements were met. The lack of local training providers was again cited as an issue which generated frustration. Management on the farm performed limited needs analyses for training: apart from statutory and certification requirements, the management team took into consideration the different courses which were available at different times during the year and based on this decided which courses would serve the farm strategically. The training and development strategy was informal and conceptual, but the development of a policy regulating and formalising the process was planned for the near future. In the implementation of training and development, the type of training presented as well as the timing thereof were considered (seasonal concerns are important, due to fluctuating labour demands on the farm). When a specific course was aligned to the farm's needs and labour demands on the farm allowed it, employees were selected and sent to attend it. The evaluation of training and development was informal in nature. Productivity gains and attitudes to work were considered to be indicators of success in development.

Employee view: The employer's motivation for presenting training was to develop employees and to create a more productive and healthy work environment. Training was beneficial to themselves (personal growth and development), the farm (increased performance), and the community (transfer of knowledge and skills to families and the consequent empowerment of the community).

Labour relations

Employer view: Labour relations on the farm were sound. Employees would always have concerns with remuneration, but they were generally satisfied in spite of this prevalent issue. They wanted to have direct contact with top management on the farm and provision of this contact allowed for a healthy relationship. This motivated the maintenance of an “open-door” policy with regards to communication, which all employees were aware of and many made use of. The employer was always available to talk to employees on any level on the farm. Strong mutual trust existed between management and employees, as most employees had been in employment on the farm for a long period, and this trust was built and earned over a long time.

Poor labour relations could impact negatively on the effectiveness of training. Management acquired another farm at some stage in the past, where the existing labour relations were very poor and in spite of concerted efforts on their part, this situation did not change. Consequently the employees on this particular farm did not show an interest or willingness to engage in training and stagnated. Labour relations affected the environment in which training and development takes place, as poor relations could have led to discomfort among employees who attended training and consequently have had an indirect effect on the effectiveness of training.

Employee view: Both employees believed that labour relations on the farm was sound in spite of minor instances of conflict, as there was open communication between management and employees at all times. Mutual trust did exist between management and employees. Sound labour relations would impact positively on the effectiveness of training and investment in training could improve labour relations. Neither were members of a labour union, and one even stated that he failed to see what purpose a labour union would serve on this farm, as the communication structures and relationships between management and employees were very open and inclusive. Labour relations could impact the climate in which skills development had to take place. The relationship between management and labour defined the nature of communications and where a climate of poor or ineffective communication existed, the purpose of skills development may have been lost on employees, potentially resulting in ineffective training exercises.

Organisational culture

Employer view: Training was very important on the farm as it served to motivate employees to work and allowed them to build their skills. Continuous training and development formed a core value of the farm and this was clear to employees in light of the extensive investment therein.

Employee view: All employees received training on a regular basis, with many attending several courses each year. The nature of training was such that it introduced new skills but also built forth on earlier training, depending on the course attended. Training and development formed a core value on the farm as there was a definite need for development among employees and the training which was provided allowed personal and organisational growth and performance to improve.

Organisational climate

Employer view: Management on the farm was very supportive of employees during training, as individual coaching took place in many cases. Support from employees' colleagues during training was also perceived to have a positive impact on the effectiveness of training, as employees worked well together, encouraged, and helped each other and were enthusiastic about each other's development. Instructors were expected to be supportive. This support was critical in the successful development of employees' skills. The support of management had a positive impact on motivation to learn. Peer support could impact on motivation to learn, but this impact could be positive or negative, depending on the message being relayed by these peers. The support given by instructors would also impact on motivation to learn.

Employee view: The work environment on the farm was conducive to effective training and development in general. Management on the farm was very supportive of employees during training, in terms of individual coaching and additional verbal encouragement and assistance where necessary. Peers were generally supportive during training and development. Instructors who presented training also provided support by explaining concepts which they may have failed to understand and made training an enjoyable and interesting experience. The support of management and

instructors had a positive impact on motivation to learn. The one employee indicated that training had to be made pleasant and applicable to their work by the instructor to ensure motivation. Peer support had the potential to impact on motivation to learn positively or negatively.

Organisational systems

Employer view: Management made use of several training methods and approaches, including extensive on-the-job and off-the-job training and informal but regular coaching of employees. Only informal training was presented on the farm, as formal tertiary education presented several challenges which made it unfeasible. Formal education was impractical, as the resources required to sponsor an employee's studies away from the farm (e.g. at a university or college) were too great. Multimedia instruments were also used in training from time to time. When seasonal workers first started working on the farm, an instructional video in Xhosa regarding various tasks was shown as part of their induction.

Verbal recognition was given to employees who attended and successfully completed training courses and certificates were given to each employee who completed these courses. Certain types of training were also directly linked to remuneration, as the operational capacity and responsibility of the employee was increased when such training was completed (e.g. forklift operator courses). Managers on the farm encouraged the use of newly acquired knowledge and skills in employees' daily tasks and gave regular feedback with regards to employees' application of training material in the workplace. Negative feedback was very common, but positive feedback could (and should) be increased. The provision of recognition would stimulate employees' motivation to learn.

Employee view: Training was provided to all employees on the farm and selection for specific courses was done in terms of individual level of skills and where these skills needed to or could be developed. Both employees were aware of the various methods and sources used by management to develop employees' skills and believed that these methods aided in ensuring that such development was effective. They were aware of the recognition and increases in remuneration over time resulting from training and development. Attending training courses had a positive impact in their working lives, as they could receive recognition for their success,

perform better, and gain the respect of management and their colleagues. Both received sufficient feedback regarding their application of training content in the workplace and such feedback was given in an open, friendly, and helpful manner. Recognition was important in becoming motivated to learn.

Case study 4: Wine farm 1, Franschhoek

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Employees were assessed in terms of their readiness to learn on an informal basis by each manager in their respective departments. This assessment was based on each respective manager's perception of individual employees' readiness to engage in further training. A formal skills audit was planned for the near future, which would allow more effective management of training and development and ensure that employees received training at an appropriate level. Employees' readiness to learn had the potential to affect the effectiveness of skills development. This would become clearer when employees embarked on the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) courses the farm intended to provide.

Learning potential was not assessed at this stage, but the farm was providing ABET courses to those employees who were interested. These courses were aimed at developing basic skills and the manager believed that over time, they would be able to identify individuals with high learning potential based on their performance in these and other courses. Low literacy levels was specifically cited as a primary motivation for the provision of ABET courses. A meeting was called with all employees before they embarked on a new training exercise with the aim to illustrate the personal importance of training and attempt to motivate them to become cognitively engaged in training.

Employee view: The two employees believed that readiness to learn had an impact on their success in training exercises. The one employee had completed Grade 12 in 1997 and started employment on the farm as a security guard. He received training on the farm which allowed him to become a brand ambassador and become involved in the marketing process. The other had left school after completing Grade 10 and completed the SKOP 1, 2, and 3 winemaking courses. Readiness to learn had an impact on their motivation to engage in further training.

Both believed they have high learning potential, as each was able to acquire new knowledge and skills rapidly, which was achieved by effectively engaging in training exercises. They were always engaged in training exercises and attempted to learn

all new content. The one did however indicate that cognitive engagement depended on his attitude to the specific training being presented. He sometimes failed to give his full attention to training and believed that he may not learn all that is required of him in such cases.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: As part of the attempt to increase the motivation of employees to engage in training and development, managerial staff were assisted in conducting performance assessments biannually. It was the responsibility of each manager to conduct these performance assessments with each individual employee. Apart from performance measurement and management, these sessions allowed management staff to identify individual development needs and also explain to employees why training was performed and how it could benefit them.

Employees' job involvement played a critical role in determining their success in training and development. The provision of training would allow employees to develop a deeper interest and involvement in their work. It was the responsibility of each department's manager to communicate the vision of their respective departments, what the role of each employee in terms of this mission was, and what the organisational motivation for training was.

The provision of this information was very important in maintaining motivation to learn, but this was a long term process which each manager needed to drive autonomously. Communicating specific expectations to employees was inappropriate, as this could lead employees to have unrealistic expectations of promotion or wage increases. When managers did illustrate what employees could expect to result from training, they were encouraged to focus on the personal growth which was inherent in skills development. This was done in order to illustrate to employees that there were more benefits to be had from training and development than purely financial incentives. Motivation to learn led to a more positive general attitude to training.

Employee view: Both employees believed education, training and development within as well as outside work context to be important in ensuring employment and financial security. Training constituted a means of satisfying personal needs at work.

The one employee illustrated this in terms of his progress on the farm: without training he would not have been able to move away from his duties as security guard and grow into his current position as brand ambassador. Training allowed him to achieve higher order personal needs in the form of self-esteem and self-actualisation. Both were very involved in their jobs, and training and development allowed them to develop a deeper interest and involvement therein. Their interest and involvement in their work had positive impacts on their motivation to engage in training and development.

The goals and purpose of training in respective departments were clearly communicated to employees on the farm. Both employees expected to experience personal growth, improved performance and increased responsibility to result from training. The satisfaction of these expectations would serve to motivate them to engage in further training and development. Training held utility for them as individuals and this served a motivational purpose. Motivation to learn resulted in a more positive general attitude to training and development.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Resistance to training had been encountered on the farm before. This was a very serious problem and active attempts were made to address it. Building relationships between employees and managers and facilitating conversations regarding the importance and the personal value of training between employees and their managers could assist in addressing this issue. In many cases training was not voluntary and these discussions were deemed by the manager to be especially important in these cases, as resistance was most prevalent here.

Although it is still too negative, the general attitude of employees to training was becoming progressively more positive. Some employees illustrated a fear of the unknown and of change. The provision of ABET training to employees would serve to alter this sceptical view of training in general.

Employee view: Training and development was seen as a means of achieving change in the workplace and the resulting change was usually positive. Both employees maintained positive attitudes to training. The goal of training on the farm

was to increase performance and facilitate personal growth of employees without any ulterior motive.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Employees did not demonstrate an internal locus of control. This was changing and employees were taking more responsibility for their personal and working lives, but there was still much progress to be made in terms thereof. Where employees did demonstrate an internal locus of control, they were more prone to be successful in training and development. Perceived control over success in training would have a positive impact on motivation to learn. Locus of control also impacted on perceived self-efficacy in training and development. There was a strong focus in training, as well as coaching, on establishing the perception among employees that they were in control of what happened at work and that they needed to take responsibility for their actions.

Employee view: Both employees recognised their control over their success in training and development, but to varying degrees: one indicated that he mostly had control over what happened in his life, whereas the other believed that external factors impacted on his life very strongly. The first employee perceived both internal and external factors to affect his success in training and development, but believed that if he failed that it would most likely be as a result of his own action. The other believed that he was responsible for both success and failure in training and development and that perceived control over success in training will have a positive impact on his motivation to learn. The other employee does not believe that this control impacted on his motivation to learn. Their internal locus of control had a positive impact on their self-efficacy beliefs.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Although employees were provided with general information regarding the goals and purpose of training, measurable individual goals were not being set for each employee yet. Employees were however evaluated in terms of their success in training and development and provided with regular and meaningful feedback. Self-efficacy beliefs were critical in stimulating the intrinsic motivation of employees to engage in skills development. Management's perceptions of

employees' efficacy affected these employees' motivation to learn. Learned helplessness had not been encountered on the farm, but it was common in the agricultural sector. Management on the farm invested heavily in development aimed at improvement of conditions in the community through training courses regarding basic value systems. These courses served to benefit many of the employees living on the farm and allowed them to grow as individuals.

Employee view: Both employees had a strong sense of self-efficacy with regards to training and development. The first believed he would achieve success in any training course the employer would wish to present him with and wished to enrol for tertiary education at some stage. The other was always confident in his capacity to learn, but tests and examinations made him anxious. Their strong self-efficacy beliefs had a positive impact on their motivation to learn.

Neither of the employees held beliefs of helplessness. The one is currently satisfied with his career on the farm and the other still wishes to achieve more and felt capable thereof. Training was a means to achieve positive changes in working conditions and both thus engaged therein with much enthusiasm. The capacity to change working conditions through engaging in training had a positive impact on motivation to learn.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: The farm submitted a Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report to AgriSETA annually and this was used as a guideline for skills development strategy each year. These documents were not solely used when planning new training exercises, as the environment on the farm was dynamic and training needs were variable. The specific goals of training and development were not formalised yet, as individual training plans for employees were in progress. When determining needs for training and development, the following sources of information were used: reports submitted to AgriSETA, growth projections, and informal assessments of individual employees' career and training paths. A training needs analysis was in the process of being formalised. There was no formal training and development strategy in place, however management were committed to continuous development and

growth in employees. A training and development policy which clearly states the mission of the farm in this regard would be adopted in the near future. This policy would be designed in such a manner that all employees could understand the it and be aware of the purpose of training and development on the farm. Any such policy had to be bound by the value of training to the individual and the organisation.

There was an annual budget for training and managers applied to the HR manager for the provision of training to employees. The HR manager then sourced the appropriate training and employees were sent thereon. The assessment of training and development effectiveness was also not formalised. Management's perception of growth and progress as well as the financial value and utility of training was taken into consideration as informal instruments of training and development evaluation.

Employee view: Training and development on the farm was provided to empower employees and the approach of management to training and development ensured benefits to the individual, the organisation and the community through increased performance and a transfer of skills and positive attitudes to learning in the community.

Labour relations

Employer view: Management had a vision for labour relations to become positive and engaging on the farm. There had been a marked improvement in labour relations and this was due in part to the influence of the social worker in the community. The social worker assisted employees and their families with the development of healthy value systems which were observable in their behaviour at work and in relations between employees and management. The process of labour relations management was formal and structured with the intention of correcting incorrect behaviour rather than act punitively. In the process of addressing disciplinary issues at work, cases arose where employees were referred to the social worker for further assistance.

Communication on the farm was generally open between management and employees. Managers were actively encouraged to maintain an open channel of communication with their employees. The climate on the farm was open and comfortable and thus conducive to effective communication. Mutual trust generally

existed between management and employees, but there were cases where this trust was lacking. Labour relations on the farm could impact on the effectiveness of training and development, as positive consideration of an employee by a manager stimulated motivation. Training could have a positive reciprocal effect on labour relations as well. The existing labour relations on the farm did not have a negative effect on the climate in which training is presented. Employees remained motivated to engage in training in spite of labour relations related issues which occasionally arose.

Employee view: Neither of the employees were members of a labour union: the one stated that he had no need for the assistance of a union and the other indicated that he failed to see the point of a labour union in the context of this particular farm. Labour relations on this farm were sound and communication between employees and management on the farm was free and open. The organisation was open and trusting in general. The one employee described staff on the farm to operate as a family did.

Labour relations could affect the effectiveness of training. The one employee stated that the trust and commitment he felt toward the farm motivated him to engage in more training. The other indicated that the clear communication between management and employees promoted training and could thus affect the success thereof. Both believed that labour relations could impact on the climate in which training was presented. The one believed that poor labour relations would create a climate which was not conducive to training and development and the other indicated that the current labour relations were conducive to a positive climate for training.

Organisational culture

Employer view: The dynamic and changing environment on the farm created a strong need for skills development. The farm invested in its employees in terms of skills development and this constituted a benefit to the employees themselves. Continuous skills development was a core value on the farm and was generally embraced. Employees were aware of the importance management attached to training and development. Employees approached management freely when they experienced a specific need for further training and when this was the case, management tried to facilitate such development as far as possible.

Employee view: All employees on the farm received regular training and training was presented in such a way as to progressively build on existing knowledge skills and abilities. Training was a core value on the farm and they embraced this as a personal value as well.

Organisational climate

Employer view: Managers on the farm provided extensive and very strong support to employees engaging in training. The measure of support employees received from their colleagues was assumed to be positive. Furthermore, instructors who presented the training had a key support role and the provision thereof varied between different instructors. Support from supervisors, colleagues and instructors affected motivation to learn as well.

Employee view: The work environment was generally conducive to effective skills development. Support and encouragement from management and colleagues, open communication, and extensive on-the-job training were cited as reasons therefore. Supervisors and colleagues provided support which had a perceived positive impact on success in training. The first employee indicated that he was unsure whether external training providers provided employees with support, as they mostly presented their material and then left again without further contact with employees. The other believed that these instructors did provide sufficient support, enabling better performance. Support from supervisors, colleagues and instructors affected motivation to learn positively.

Organisational systems

Employer view: Several methods of, and approaches to training were used on this farm. On-the-job and off-the-job training were extensively utilised in skills development. Management were all committed to provide subordinates with extensive and continuous training. Off-the-job training was also used to provide employees with opportunities for soft skills, work related skills, and life skills development. Coaching was performed extensively by all managerial personnel. Although the farm predominantly relied on informal training, management were considering the provision of formal education and training to employees. Instructors

used several tools to ensure effective skills development, including application in the workplace and multimedia tools.

Recognition for employees' success in training was given at all times. Employees who attended courses were given verbal recognition and certificates were ceremonially handed over when they were received by the employer. In addition to this, employees who completed training were mentioned in the farm's newsletter and a photograph of the employees involved was also published therein. Employees were actively encouraged to apply new knowledge and skills at work and management gave both positive and negative feedback to employees with regard to their application of these new capabilities. The recognition given to employees had a positive impact on their motivation to learn. Recognition generated a passion for learning and development among employees.

Employee view: In addition to the planned training offered on the farm, employees were able to request specific training they wished to attend. In all instances the potential benefits to both the farm and themselves were taken into consideration in reaching a decision on the facilitation of such requests. Both employees were aware of all the various training methods and approaches used on the farm. These methods and approaches had a positive impact on the success of skills development. Managers gave recognition for their successes and they have always been congratulated when they completed a new course. Both expected personal growth to result from training. Managers gave positive and negative feedback regularly. The recognition they received for success in training had a positive impact on their motivation to learn.

Case study 5: Wine farm 2, Paarl

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: There was no formal evaluation of learner readiness on the farm, but employees' perceived success in training, and progress made as a result, were taken into consideration when deciding which employees would attend a specific course. Only employees who were perceived as ready for certain training exercises were sent on such training. A lack of readiness would have a negative impact on their motivation to engage in such training. As with learner readiness, learning potential was evaluated in terms of the perception of the managers. The employees on the farm had been employed there for many years and over time they had illustrated individual measures of learning potential. The managers attempted to improve cognitive engagement of employees in training by providing information regarding the expected career path of each employee, the role of the employee during and after training, and by actively encouraging employees to make an effort to internalise learning content.

Employee view: The first employee only had a basic level of education (he was illiterate) and his skills predominantly resulted from training on the farm. This basic education and his literacy level presented obstacles to training effectiveness, as many training courses required basic literacy. The other employee had completed school up to Grade 8. She was ready to learn, as she had engaged in volunteer work at an old age home which she perceived to have aided the development of her skills and capacity to learn. Personal readiness to learn had a perceived positive impact on motivation to learn. They possessed the potential to acquire new knowledge and skills within the limitations of their readiness to learn and were able to learn all the content being presented during the course of training.

The first employee stated that his engagement in training exercises was dependent on the means of presentation: he found it difficult to concentrate on training material when extensive use was made of written content. Apart from this issue, he tried to learn and apply new content and always asked questions when he did not understand something. The second employee always paid attention in training

exercises and attempted to learn what is being presented by asking questions and applying new skills at work.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: Training did not generally result in employees being promoted, but the non-material benefits of training to employees and the farm were verbally communicated. Furthermore, employees were informed when training could result in growth in terms of their role on the farm. The manager indicated he perceived employees on the farm to take ownership of their work. The assistant manager stated that this psychological ownership of their work led to a perceived improvement in their performance in training. The job involvement resulting from employees' ownership of their work had a positive impact on their motivation to engage in training.

The utility of training was communicated to employees verbally and management attempted to make employees aware of the application of their training at work. The managers were in constant and direct verbal communication with employees regarding the possible outcomes which could result from training. Employees' attitude to learning and development was affected by their motivation to learn. Highly motivated employees also had a more positive attitude to training and development.

Employee view: Training assisted the employees in satisfying personal needs. The one stated that success in training made him happy and the other believed that training allowed her to provide help in the community and promoted her access to information. Education and training did not necessarily need be related to work to enable one to achieve employment and financial security with more ease. Both believed that the training they received at work would improve their financial and employment security. They were involved in their work and stated that they enjoyed the work they do. This involvement deepened with the provision of training and also affected their motivation to learn as well as performance in training: it allowed them to grow in terms of their skills.

Both employees expected feedback on their performance in training. The one indicated that he did not necessarily expect a change in the nature of his work, based on training alone. Both believed that receiving such feedback would serve to

motivate them to engage in further training and development. Training presented on the farm had a measure of utility because it led to personal growth, increased performance at work, and was clearly applicable to the work they performed. The perceived utility of training also had a positive impact on their motivation to learn.

Both were aware of the verbal communication from the managers regarding the purpose and potential outcomes of the training they attended. The one indicated at this stage of the interview that not enough opportunity was given for employees to practice training. He cited fire fighting training in this case, as it was training which rarely had to be used, but required more practice and was very important. Motivation to engage in training and development and employees' attitude thereto had a reciprocal relationship.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Resistance to training had never been encountered on this farm and employees generally had very positive attitudes to training and development. The assistant manager perceived employees to have shown a keen interest in receiving new information and being challenged through training.

Employee view: Training was a means to achieve positive changes on the farm and over time there had been much improvement in their working conditions as a result thereof. Both employees had very positive attitudes to training and perceived the challenge it presented as positive. The employees did not illustrate mistrust in the employer's agenda for the provision of training and believed that training was presented specifically to enable personal and organisational growth.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Most employees had an internal locus of control and generally took responsibility for the consequences of their actions: employees attempted to address the mistakes they made at work, which also positively impacted their performance. Perceived internal control over training outcomes impacted positively on employees' motivation to engage in training. Locus of control had a positive impact on employees' self-efficacy beliefs, as employees with perceived internal locus of control expressed greater confidence in their capacity to learn and develop.

Employee view: Both employees possessed internal locus of control. The one recognised the fact that external factors could have an impact on learning, but both felt in control of their success or failure in training exercises. Control over training outcomes impacted on their motivation to engage in training. One indicated that the challenge presented by training motivated her to perform, as she perceived her success in training to be in her control. Both believed their internal locus of control had a positive impact on their self-efficacy beliefs.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Formal goal setting was not performed for training purposes and outcomes. Employees' perceived skill levels were monitored and applied in different work roles at which time employees received regular feedback regarding their performance. Self-efficacy beliefs did not impact on the motivation of employees to learn. This motivation was perceived as inherent in all employees as they generally attempted to perform in training, even in cases where they lacked confidence in their abilities to do so.

Learned helplessness was not generally encountered among employees, but management attempted to create an environment where such beliefs would not be engendered. One element of this environment was the consideration of whether employees were ready for certain types of training and sensitivity to readiness issues such as limited literacy. Issues such as learned helplessness were addressed by giving employees opportunities for growth and also allowing them to grow at their own pace. This approach was supplemented by the coaching of employees. Employees witnessed the growth of their colleagues resulting from training. This awareness of positive changes to working conditions being within their control positively impacted on employees' motivation to learn.

Employee view: Both employees illustrated strong self-efficacy beliefs and indicated that they believed training enabled them to achieve positive work related outcomes. Their strong self-efficacy allowed them to be more motivated based on their perceived increased measure of success. Neither employee illustrated aspects of learned helplessness. Both perceived change in the workplace to be within their hands and that training presented them with a means to achieve such change. They

perceived their working conditions to be subject to positive change as a result of training and that this motivates them.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: The managers indicated that they based the goals of training and development on the functional role each employee was expected to play on the farm, given the needs experienced in managers' perception of the farm's operation. When determining the skills development needs on the farm, the managers considered the operational needs experienced in the course of normal operations. The assistant manager indicated that another consideration in needs analysis was the succession of employees on the farm, as workers who approached retirement age needed to be replaced by younger employees with similar levels of skills. The farm did not have a specific, goal-oriented skills development strategy, but the managers indicated that it was linked to the overall corporate development strategy and to the sustainable operation of the farm. According to the managers training and development on the farm typically followed the following process: setting a budget for training, consideration of succession, consideration of training aging and obsolescence, requesting institutional permission for indicated training and finally considering additional training programmes as required. The evaluation of the success of training on the farm was informal in nature as managers considered the perceived improvement in performance among employees who attended such training.

Employee view: The two employees perceived the strategic goal of training to be that of allowing personal and business growth which could result in benefits to employees and the farm. Both employees perceived training to contribute to the growth of themselves, the farm, and the community. The employees experienced personal growth in terms of skills and abilities to perform, the farm benefited by way of improved quality of work and productivity, and the community benefited directly in terms of improved literacy (ABET courses) and indirectly as a result of knowledge transferred from training attendees to their colleagues and families.

Labour relations

Employer view: Labour relations on the farm were sound. Communication on the farm was well established, as there were daily meetings with employees. Management was open to employees' ideas and suggestions. Any employee could approach the manager or the assistant manager with any issues they experienced at work. There were regular meetings between employees and their representative union, where issues were raised and added to the agenda for meetings between the union, the farm managers and the corporate human resources manager.

Mutual trust existed between the two parties. Employees approached management freely and felt comfortable enough when doing so to express their frustrations at work, when this was experienced. Sound labour relations on the farm assisted the establishment of a climate conducive to effective skills development, as poor labour relations would have resulted in negative attitudes to training and development.

Employee view: Both employees were members of a labour union. The first did not perceive any benefits to arise from his union membership and the quality of representation was insufficient. The second expressed the perception that the union was there to assist with problems when they arose. Labour relations on the farm were generally good. Mutual trust existed between the two parties: management and labourers endeavoured to solve problems together and management treated personal issues raised by employees as confidential.

Labour relations impacted on the effectiveness of skills development, as a result of trust and open communication and mutual assistance in training. The labour relations on the farm supported a positive climate in which training and development took place. One employee also indicated that sound labour relations had a positive impact on her attitude to training and development.

Organisational culture

Employer view: Training and development was very important in operations on the farm, as the growth of knowledge and skills was inherently required to make progress in keeping with the sector. Training and development constituted an organisational value, within financial constraints, but this was not specifically communicated to employees.

Employee view: The one employee stated that he did not believe that employees received regular training but that training which was presented built on previously established knowledge and skills. Training was important to those employees whom he perceived as being actively involved in their work. The other indicated that she perceived training to be presented regularly and in a manner that promoted the growth of knowledge and skills. Training was an important issue to both management and employees, as both desired growth and greater capacity in the workplace in her opinion.

Organisational climate

Employer view: Support was provided to employees during training by assisting them where necessary and listening to employees' feedback on training. Employees' colleagues generally provided a large measure of support during training. Instructors generally presented training and left without providing additional support to employees, resulting in a lack of support from this field. The support employees received from colleagues, management and instructors had the potential to affect motivation to learn. The presence of support from these stakeholders positively impacted on employees' motivation to learn.

Employee view: The working environment was conducive to effective skills development as employees strived for mutual development and consequently helped each other and shared their knowledge. The two employees received much perceived support from management during training in the form of assistance in learning and material support (such as provision of transport if required and providing paid time off for training). Colleagues generally provided a large measure of support during training and instructors were supportive during training in that they ensured that employees understood training content. Support from colleagues, management and instructors affected their motivation to learn positively.

Organisational systems

Employer view: On-the-job training was applied on a daily basis, but this was not logged sufficiently. Off-the-job training was also regularly presented, but external providers were used for this. The managers engaged in the individual coaching of employees on a daily basis. No formal education was offered to employees on the

farm, but informal training included such initiatives as National Qualifications Framework (NQF) recognised training and ABET courses. Multimedia tools were used by external instructors but not for the purposes of internal training.

Reward systems for success in training on the farm were informal: employees' success in training and development initiatives was verbally recognised and when possible, certificates were formally distributed to employees upon completion of training. Employees were provided with work which required the application of their newly acquired knowledge and skills and positive and negative feedback was provided when observing the performance of employees after attending training. Recognition given for success in training had a positive impact on employee motivation to learn and the absence of any recognition would lead to decreased motivation.

Employee view: All employees on the farm received training which was mostly presented by an external instructor. Both employees were fully aware of the various training methods used on the farm and perceived this utilisation to have a positive impact on the effectiveness of skills development. They were aware of verbal recognition and the formal distribution of diplomas by management. The one confirmed that employees received positive feedback when correctly applying new knowledge and skills, and that management helped to correct mistakes employees made in this application. The recognition received for training motivated them to learn, however the one employee indicated that she perceived the acquisition of knowledge to be a motivating factor in itself.

Case study 6: Wine farm 3, Paarl

Individual variables impacting on skills development

Individual ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Employees' readiness to learn was assessed informally, based on the perception of employees' interests, capacity, aptitude and performance at school. The educational level and the language in which training was presented often determined the readiness of employees to engage in training, and readiness to learn affected their motivation to learn. Psychometric assessments have been used to assess employees' learning potential before, but this was not a regular exercise. There was no direct attempt by management to ensure the cognitive engagement of employees in training, but this was believed to be achieved indirectly through the provision of ABET courses. One of the benefits of this training was that employees developed better learning competencies which enabled them to become cognitively engaged with their learning material.

Employee view: Both employees completed school up to Grade 8 and stated that their education and the training they received on the farm enabled them to develop their readiness to learn. The one also indicated that she was attending ABET courses being presented on the farm, which was improving her readiness to learn. Readiness to learn impacted on their motivation to engage in training, as their motivation to learn increases or decreases along with perceptions of readiness.

They possessed the potential to learn effectively and made use of social interaction and repetition of tasks to enable effective learning. The one also indicated that he did not believe that formal training was the only source of learning and that colleagues also represented sources of new knowledge and skills. They were generally cognitively engaged in training and made active attempts to internalise all material being presented through application thereof in their work and investing attention.

Motivation to engage in learning and skills development

Employer view: Employees on the farm were generally very motivated to engage in training and development. They were verbally informed of the potential impact training could have on their lives in terms of satisfying personal needs (such as employment and financial security). Employees who were involved in their work

achieved greater success in training as a result of increased investment and interest in training content. A link existed between performance in training and performance at work. The corporate human resource management department was responsible for communicating the opportunities for training and the benefits training held for employees. The potential outcomes of training and development were not communicated to employees sufficiently. Motivation to learn impacted on the attitude of employees thereto. Higher measures of motivation to learn also led to more positive attitudes to the training and development initiatives provided on the farm.

Employee view: Training impacted positively on employees' personal needs. The one stated that this impact depended on the type of training being presented. He has experienced growth both in his working capacity and in his personal life based on different types of training provided on the farm. Both believe that their general education and training as well as training provided on the farm allowed them to satisfy personal needs such as employment and financial security. They expressed interest in and enjoyment of their work and believe that training allowed them to develop a deeper interest in and involvement with their work. Their interest in their work positively impacted on their motivation to learn.

Both had certain expectations of training: the one employee expected training content to be applicable to his work and to be assigned increased responsibilities upon completion thereof, while the other expected promotion over time. The realisation of these expectations would serve to motivate them to engage in training and development. The perceived utility of training was an important consideration in their individual motivation to learn. This utility manifested itself in increased performance, improved attitudes and growth in knowledge, skills and abilities. Both were aware of verbal communication from management, informing them of the purpose and utility of training on the farm. Motivation to learn impacted on their attitudes to training and vice versa.

Attitude to learning and skills development

Employer view: Resistance to change in training context training had never been encountered on the farm; instead employees usually requested additional training. Employees were very eager to learn and generally had positive attitudes to training

and development with no sign of scepticism. This positive attitude was illustrated in employees' willingness to attend ABET classes after work on Fridays.

Employee view: The employees had positive attitudes to change resulting from training and indicated that training was a means by which positive changes could be established on the farm. Neither gave any indication of the presence of resistance to change nor expressed scepticism towards training. Their positive attitude was the result of the potential for personal growth inherent to training and development. Management's motivation for providing training was vested in the potential for improved work performance.

Personality: the impact of locus of control on learning

Employer view: Employees generally possessed internal locus of control and this had a positive impact on their performance in training. Employees who took responsibility for their actions, perceived success to be in their control, and achieved success in training were more motivated to engage in it. Certain employees perceived their skills and abilities to have been "given" to them, rather than aspects which could be developed and this external control perception could compromise the employee's perceived capacity to learn and develop new skills.

Employee view: Both employees had internal locus of control. Success or failure in training was predominantly under their control, except in cases where external factors (such as the language used by instructors) resulted in difficulty achieving this success. When they perceived themselves to be in control of their success in training and development, they were also more motivated to engage therein. Their perceived internal locus of control allowed them to have a stronger belief in their ability to learn.

Perceived ability to learn and develop skills

Employer view: Each specific position on the farm requires a certain set of skills which was used as an illustrative tool in communicating the individualised goals in training. This enabled employees to become aware of skills which needed to be developed. The feedback and support given to employees was not always sufficient and this was an area which could be improved upon. Employees had an expectation of immediate promotion upon completion of training. Employees with greater

confidence in their capacity to learn performed better in training situations and were more motivated to do so.

Cases of learned helplessness have been observed among employees, but employees more often struggled with training when their actual (as opposed to perceived) capacity to learn and develop was compromised. Employees who exhibited such learned helplessness were assisted in determining possible means of correcting this perception through consultation and coaching. Employees who experienced a feeling of helplessness were less motivated to engage in training as they reached a state where they failed to see the value or potential behind any training exercises.

Employee view: Both employees had been successful in training in general in the past and were confident in their capacity to learn. They were confident in their ability to learn and develop new skills and that this confidence also improved their motivation to learn.

Neither experienced feelings of helplessness – both were capable of achieving positive change at work. Training was seen as a means by which such change could be realised. The employees had the ability to make a positive change in their lives through training, thus increasing their perception of the value of training and their own motivation to learn.

Organisational variables impacting on skills development

Farm strategy and skills development

Employer view: There were few clearly definable strategic goals in training and development on this farm. The social development of the community of workers living on the farm was one such goal, as was the sustainability of operations in terms of skill levels on the farm. Training needs were not formally analysed on the farm. The skills required to perform a specific function were taken into consideration in addition to the expected succession of employees on the farm. Succession planning was based on managerial perceptions of employees' capacity to perform a certain function and the perceived personal preferences of the employee, but other forms of training needs analyses were informally conducted. There was no formal skills development strategy on the farm; the skills development needs identified and the

courses which were available and feasible (given seasonal labour demands) were considered when determining which training courses to present to employees. Supervisors were included in discussions regarding employees' skills requirements on the farm and this in addition to statutory training requirements were used as the basis for training programme selection. It was necessary to have employees with sufficient skills to stand in for their colleagues when required and this need was used as an additional guideline when selecting employees for training exercises. The success of training and development was informally assessed according to the manager's perception of the value added thereby.

Employee view: The two employees believed the purpose of training and development on the farm to be the development of employees' skills to improve their performance and working conditions. Both perceived training and development to have a positive impact on themselves (through personal skills growth), the farm as an organisation (through better business performance) and the community in general (through improving employee relations and living conditions).

Labour relations

Employer view: Labour relations on the farm were inconsistent. There have been difficult times on the farm where employees expressed unhappiness. In some cases employees perceived themselves as victims of management, but in general the labour relations were sound. A very formal communication process was in place on this farm: vertical communications were structured and the chain of command was followed when management and employees communicated. Regular meetings between management and supervisors were held to address any observed issues.

Mutual trust existed between management and the employees, although exceptions could be observed at times. Employees who displayed a positive attitude were more reliable and consequently enjoyed more trust. Labour relations could affect the effectiveness of training and development on the farm to a limited extent, as there were cases where shop stewards had a negative impact on employees' attitude to training through perceived intimidation. Labour relations could also impact on the climate in which training and development took place, as the labour union on the farm exerted pressure on management to implement universal training and

development without allowing for differences in job levels. This could have a negative impact on employees' attitudes to training and development.

Employee view: Both employees were members of a trade union. The first cited support in labour relations and the second protection as their motivation for membership. The second employee was not prepared to elaborate on what she believed she would need protection from. The employees' views of labour relations were generally positive, with the first describing it as being "sweet and sour". They believed that mutual trust generally existed between management and employees, although one indicated that this was not always the case and that inconsistent feedback from managers on important issues could be a possible explanation for instances of poor relations.

Labour relations had the capacity to affect the effectiveness of training. The first employee believed that good relations could positively impact on success in training whereas the second believed that poor relations would negatively impact the success of training. One stated that poor relations between management and employees could generate negative attitudes to training and development among employees and that this could adversely impact on the climate in which training had to take place. The other indicated that labour relations were generally good on the farm and that this made the climate more conducive to participation in training and development.

Organisational culture

Employer view: The manager stated that he was a "great supporter" of the concept of continuous development of employees' skills, as more highly skilled employees could be expected to deliver better performance than those who do not receive training. In addition, continuous training and development formed part of the value system of the farm as organisation. This was communicated to employees using the illustration of strengthening "links in the chain". In addition to this, the success of the farm's products was communicated to employees and recognition was given for their individual inputs which made this performance possible.

Employee view: Training was important for both management and employees, as it allowed mutual growth to manifest. Both perceived training to be regularly presented on the farm and done in such a manner as to ensure progressive skills growth.

Organisational climate

Employer view: Management provided support and information to employees, their colleagues were generally supportive (although at times some employees were jealous of the opportunities of others), and instructors were very supportive – employees were asked to give feedback on their experiences of training exercises and to mention how supportive the instructor was. The support from these parties was instrumental in establishing and maintaining employees' motivation to learn.

Employee view: The employees' working environment aided the effectiveness of skills development, due to the perceived positive environment created by their colleagues. They received support from management, their peers and instructors during skills development and this had a positive effect on the effectiveness of skills development. In addition to the direct impact of this support during training, such support also stimulated motivation to learn.

Organisational systems

Employer view: Several sources of, and approaches to training were utilised on the farm, including on- and off-the-job training, coaching, and informal instruction. On-the-job training was the most widely applied. The farm was actively involved in providing employees with ABET training. Employees received much material and personal support from management during ABET training. Although no formal recognition or reward programme was in place for successful completion of training by employees, some recognition was given in that certificates were ceremonially distributed to them when received from training providers. Employees were actively encouraged to utilise newly acquired skills in the workplace and where appropriate assisted to correctly apply these new skills. A motivational effect was observed when recognition was given to employees who achieved success in training.

Employee view: The implementation of training and development on this farm was presided over by the managers who decided which employees would receive training and the nature this training. Training was mostly presented by external instructors

and usually practical in terms of application in the workplace. Both employees were aware of all the various forms of training reported by the manager.

The practice of distributing certificates was recognised and the first employee added that management called employees in to explain the purpose of the course and their performance therein upon completion. Training represented an opportunity to grow in terms of knowledge and careers. Management helped employees to correct mistakes in their work and acknowledged good performance. The reinforcement of learning through rewards or recognition was a very important aspect in employees' motivation to learn.