Evaluation Report on Learnership: *Lessons from*
Specialist Security Practices (NQF 4) Learnership Programme

Final Report

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Executive summary

The area of skills development in South Africa remains a work in progress, while there have been definitely improvements, there are some gaps that need to be addressed. The study sought to investigate the impact and effectiveness of the SASSETA Specialist Security Practices (NQF4) learnership programme over a three-year period. A Multiple methods approach was implemented and a survey design were adopted for the data collection. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected via an online questionnaire from alumni, host organisations and SASSETA. In total, 118 responses were collected from learners and seven responses were obtained from host institutions.

The main findings of the study indicate that the learnership programme is effective. This is because it has provided the learners with the required skills and knowledge required in the safety and security industry. It has improved the sub-sector's professionalisation and for some, it has opened employment opportunities. Alumni and host organisations are satisfied with the programme and both recommend continuing it. Host organisations are more than happy to host learners undertaking this learning intervention.

There are few challenges that has been identified by learners and host organisations. Learners complained that stipends are paid late, and the same complain came from host institutions. The certicates issuance and delay remain an important issue that needs to be addressed. There are also issues that relates to communication which came from both students and host institutions. The study recommends that this programme is continued because of the impact it, has on providing leaners with knowledge and skills of the sector. SASSETA must address the issues that have been identified as challenges.

This report looks at the learnership programmes in particular Specialist Security Practices learnership (Private Security Sub-sector). The study highlights some of the strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement which may help focus future interventions in strengthening SASSETA's learnerships.

List of acronyms

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PSiRA	Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority
SAPS	South Africa Police Service
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SASSETA	Safety and Security Services SETA
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning

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1.1 Introduction

The changing demand for jobs and skills, driven by funding, skills, and shifts towards automation necessity the review and assessment of delivery of the learning programs to ensure that there is return on investment and resources are deployed effectively. The area of skills development in South Africa remains a work in progress, while there have been definitely improvements, there are some gaps that need to be addressed.

Learnership programmes and other forms of work-based learning are experiencing a revival, in recognition of their effectiveness in easing school-to-work transition and serving the economy. It will therefore be of crucial importance to ensure that learnership programmes are resilient so that they continue to have a positive impact on education and labour market outcomes of learners and support employers in finding workers with the right skills.

In this chapter the background and motivation for the study, the evaluation questions, the objectives of the study, the paradigm perspective and the evaluation design will be discussed. As part of the research design, the evaluation approach and the evaluation method will be discussed. The chapter will then be concluded with the layout of the study chapters.

1.2 Background

Technology is 'hollowing out' more routine tasks and jobs. An ageing workforce is increasing the importance of lifelong learning. There is increasing demand for middle-level technical and vocational skills, and for social and emotional or 'meta' skills. An effective, resilient and responsive skills system is one that delivers the changing skills mix needed by the South African economy.

The pace and scale of change mean that during their careers workers will find some of their skills become redundant, and they will therefore need to upskill or reskill. The key inclusion challenge is therefore to ensure that the workforce are equipped, from the outset, with the foundation competences that will help them to learn new skills, and that the skills system is organised in an adult-friendly way so as to support them in doing so. This will allow those who aspire to further learning, as well as displaced workers who urgently need retraining, to pursue their chosen programmes successfully.

The skills development, also commonly referred to as human capital development, is not a novel concept in the South African organisational environment. While methodologies, models and alternate ways of funding skills development have come to light over the years, the essence of investing in one's workforce remains the same. Arguably, all economies need skilled workforce so as to meet global standards of quality, to increase their foreign trade, to bring advanced technologies to their domestic industries and to boost their industrial and economic development. Thus, skills and knowledge becomes the major driving force of socio-economic growth and development for any country

The skills development bodies like SASSETA which are tasked with the mandate to ensure that skills development is not too distant from skills for development. In other words, they facilitate skills development that equips the workforce with skills that can meaningfully contribute towards their livelihoods, the economy and wider development goals. Updating qualifications and programmes in response to changed labour market requirements will be essential to ensure that skills intervention are responsive to the labour market demands.

Large numbers of unemployed people have been trained through learnerships, internships, short skills programmes including new venture creation, only to remain unemployed as the skills systems fails to link business skills training with occupational skills or wider assistance that small enterprises need to be established (HSRC, 2013). The skills development is an essential prerequisite for the improvement of organisational performance, so to ensure that the barriers to the effective implementation of skills development programs it overcome, it is important to meet the education and training needs of employees at different levels of organisations (Lubbe, 2013).

Skilled employees are defined as empowered employees who have the capacity of taking increasing responsibility for the satisfaction of their personal and professional needs, while empowered employees do not need regular and consistent supervision because they can work without reliance on others (Giguere, 2005). This is supported by Carl (2000) who defined empowerment as a process of development and growth through which individuals go that enables them to make independent decisions and to act autonomously with a view to making a contribution towards the development of their particular environments.

Coetzee (2013) maintained that there are different forms of skills needed within different organisations for the improvement of services required by their clients, including technical skills and reading, writing and numeracy skills. These skills are also required by people to enable them to access employment, enhance their performance and improve self-growth and professionalism (Coetzee, 2013). According to Kirkpatrick (2006), the following skills are essential for the effective functioning of organisations:

- *Core professional skills, which are required from a certain category of individuals who are regulated by their respective professional councils and bodies.*

- *Specialty skills, which include specific technical or functional skills that ensure that employees remain market-relevant so that they are always able to provide customers with high-quality services.*

Giguere (2005) suggested that specialty skills are regulated by what they term skilled behaviours, which is defined as a complex sequence of actions which has become so routinised through practice and experience that it is performed without much conscious thinking or deliberation. Patterson (2008) defined these skills as the specific skills that are related to what people do in their day-to-day activities, such as skills required to perform a certain task within a particular government department. Industry skills, which are aimed at improving the business between clients and organisations so that clients are attracted into doing business with these organisations that care about their wants and needs.

The program evaluation is one of the critical element that has been emphasized as a way of improving skills intervention responsiveness to the labour market demands. An assessment of program fidelity is an important aspect of program evaluation. Fidelity is defined as the extent to which the delivery of a program adheres to its protocol, program model, and/or curriculum (Mowbray, Holter, Teacgue, & Bybee, 2003). The beneficiaries' perceptions of the quality of the educational experience is also an essential part in a comprehensive evaluation of an educational program (Chen & Lo, 2012).

1.2.1 Private security industry in South Africa

The South African Security Industry is one of the third largest employer in the country with most services focused on the guarding sector (Schneider, 2012). The private security sector is very broad encompassing a large number of roles ranging from security guards and bodyguards to private reaction services and venue control (Tennant, 2020).

As the Private Security Industry continues to evolve, it has become important to ensure that certain standards of training are maintained whereby training becomes necessary for the more specialised services and electronic services (Tennant, 2020). Putzier (2017) highlights that security companies across all industries need to be actively and urgently investing in the reskilling of current workers as part of their transformation and future work caused by the digital transformation. Skill development through various programmes plays an important part in increasing the demand of new skills caused by the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Berg and Gabi (2011) outline that training regulations are set out in the Security Officers Act 92 of 1987 Section 32 which addresses the purposes promoting training in the industry.

Th e criminal environment changes constantly. New forms of crime crop up at about the same pace as changes in methods of committing older forms of crime. A strong core of education and training programmes should be aligned with changing world of work in the context of the 4IR. SASSETA needs to enhance their partnerships with the PSET system to improve the responsiveness of skills training interventions in the sector. There is an emphasises the integrating into PSET programmes and courses learning opportunities that prepare people to be able to cope with accelerating change. This is a joint responsibility that requires the active engagement and support of institutions like SASSETA.

1.2.2 Program outcome and attributes – Specialist Security Practices (NQF Level 4) Learnship

As the private security industry demand increases, the number of the skilled and capable security force is also increasing World Bank. (2018). SASSETA has a responsibility to facilitate the skills development in the safety and security sector of the South African economy. In an attempt to reduce the skills mismatch and professionalising the private security sector, SASSETA implements various skills programs and learnership programmes.

Learnerships: A learnership is a structured learning programme which includes theoretical and practical workplace experiential learning over a period of at least 12 months and which leads to an

occupationally related qualification registered on the NQF. A learnership is a work-based experiential learning intervention, which enables the learner to acquire an NQF-registered qualification associated with a specific qualification, trade or profession while gaining work experience. Its value lies in the fact that learners who are unable to engage in full-time study and are provided with an opportunity to work and learn at the same time.

Learnerships provide an opportunity for learners who cannot afford to study full-time to increase their knowledge and work experience in a cost-effective yet meaningful way, that empowers them with relevant skills in order to enhance their career path in the safety and security sector. This further assist learner to advance their learning toward an NQF-aligned qualification. The perception is that this will lead to an overall improvement in the qualifications of the workforce, with increased earning capacity and sustained employment.

The prerequisite for Specialist Security Practices NQF4 learnership programme is a National Certificate in General Security Practices (NQF3) or Skills Programme 1, 2 and 3. Most learners enrolled on this programme have the basic knowledge and skill of the safety and security industry. The programme seeks to enhance the skills and knowledge of the general security officers.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the skills intervention in a form of a learnership program (Specialist Security Practice) that were implemented by Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) within the private security sub-sector between 2018 and 2021.

1.4. Evaluation objectives

The evaluation objectives were to:

 (i). Explore the effectiveness of the Specialist Security Practice Program with a program fidelity lens.
 (ii). Ascertain outputs (or outcomes) of the program.
 (iii). Report on beneficiaries satisfaction on the program.
 (iv). Investigate the employability prospects and the career progression of the beneficiaries, and
 (v). Provide recommendations based on evaluation findings.

1.5 Evaluation questions

 (i). What are the outputs and/or outcomes of the Specialist Security programme including completion vs dropout rates?
 (ii). Were the programme goals and objectives achieved within the given time and budget constraints?
 (iii). Were there any unnecessary or redundant activities or processes that could have been eliminated to make the project more efficient?
 (iv). Were the resources (e.g., staff time, technical, financial) allocated to the programme used effectively?

(v). What are the gaps and challenges facing the Specialist Security Practices programme implementation?

(vi). How does the programme align with the overall objectives of the NSDP and priority occupations?

(vii). What are the key success factors that have contributed to the sustainability of the programme thus far, and how can these be replicated or expanded upon?

(viii). How has this learnership improved the professionalisation of the security industry within the sector?

(ix). What are the key challenges and achievements encountered during implementation of this learnership (employer and learner perspective)?

(x). How relevant is the Specialist Security Practices programme in relation to the changing needs of the industry?

(xi). To what extent has the Specialist Security Practices programme contributed to the employability?

(xii). To what extent has the Specialist Security Practices programme contributed to the career progression of learners?

1.6 The significance of the study

Higher education stakeholders have expressed growing concern about teaching and learning performance and outcomes of education. The emerging gap between graduate attributes and what industry requires not only refers to the lack of employment readiness of graduates, but also their generic skills. One technique that can assist in improving learners' development of generic skills is program such as learnerships, skills programs and work-integrated learning (WIL).

By ascertaining the program fidelity and student satisfaction of the program may help focus future interventions in strengthening SASSETA's learnerships. Beneficiary led (or participant) evaluations of the program its provide one aspect of SASSETA's accountability and helps to strengthen the future similar program fidelity. Furthermore, program evaluation ascertain the quality of delivery to which the program has been delivered in a manner likely to have effect on its goals and objectives.

1.7 Structure of the report

Chapter 1: introduction and background, this chapter will introduce the study and provide detailed background information about the research problem, aims and objectives of the evaluation. **Chapter 2: Literature review,** the conceptual framework guiding the study will be presented and major concepts discussed and linked to the objectives of the evaluation.

Chapter 3: Research methodology, the research methodology adopted in the study will be presented in this chapter. That is, the scientific methods that were used to carry out the study. **Chapter 4: Findings,** this chapter will analyse and present the findings of the research. It will be divided into qualitative and quantitative analysis. **Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations,** conclusions and recommendations of the study is presented in chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Machi and McEvoy (2022) define a literature review as a written argument that supports the building of a case from literature sources obtained from previous research. It provides the background and context of current knowledge of the topic under study and lays a foundation of the research being conducted. Hart (2018) is of the view that conducting a literature review is important because the methodology, focus and originality of a topic depends on it.

Kalpokaite and Radivojevic (2021) argues that "conducting a literature review is an important part of the craft of research". This is because this practice enables researchers to familiarise themselves with current trends around the topic of study, thus positioning themselves to contribute new knowledge and build on what is already known in the field.

This chapter presents literature reviewed on the security sector in South Africa. It starts by focusing on private and public security and goes on to discuss learnership programmes, work integrated learning (WIL) and internships. Challenges and opportunities provided by learnerships are also discussed.

2.2 Education, training, skills and skills development

Kruss (2004) argued that the concepts of education, training and skills are important concepts that are closely associated with skills development, as skills development is provided to individuals through education and training. Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda, and Nel (2010) contended that the training and development of employees is a complex issue, as no single stakeholder can be held responsible for this task.

Erasmus et al. (2010) reported that education and training could just as well be provided to individuals through a variety of levels, for example studying at a university and/or attendance of workshops. OECD (2013) stated that education and training improve the levels of skills, as skills are transmitted to employees and community members through SDPs.

Kruss (2004) maintained that higher education should broaden and expand its traditional scope to ensure that critical and analytical skills are better focused on and directly relevant to economic needs. This is supported by Lubbe (2013) who viewed higher education as one which is aimed at preparing individuals for becoming directly employable in new occupational fields, leading toward the effective economic development of society. In a nutshell, higher education plays a significant role in preparing individuals for work-related tasks and/or employment. Kruss (2004) suggested that higher education should be oriented towards the needs of industry and society and focus on present as well as future creation of knowledge.

2.3 Legislative frameworks guiding learning programs

This section briefly discusses the legislative frameworks that inform learnerships in South Africa. Three legislative frameworks have been identified for discussion. It is the Skills Development Act, the Skills Levies Act, and NQF.

2.3.1 Skills Development Act of 1998

The Government of South Africa through the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 identified key skills that must be developed and improved within the South African workforce. The Act established the National Skills Authority, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), gives directions on learnerships, and explains the role of the Department of Labour in the skills development endeavour (Republic of South Africa Government Gazette, 1998). This Act was amended in 2008, by the Skills Development Amendment Act 37 of 2008 and in 2011, by the Skills Development Amendment Act 26 of 2011.

2.3.2 Skills Development Levy of 1999

The Act provides directions to employers to pay a skills development levy to encourage skills development. This levy is paid by employers and distributed to SETAs. The Act provides direction on how the levies are paid, under what conditions are employers exempted from paying levies, registration of payment of levies, distribution of levies and other levies related guidelines.

2.3.3 Higher Education Qualifications Framework or National Qualifications Framework

This Act provides guidelines on qualifications in South Africa. It explains the different levels of qualifications, for example NQF levels 1 to 10. The specialist security practices programme is at NQF level 4, which means that it is equivalent to a certificate. This framework stipulates the number of credits each qualification has, progression to other qualifications and prerequisites.

2.3.3.1 Learnership studies in South Africa

Several studies have been conducted in South Africa on learnerships involving several SETAs. This section will review literature on similar studies. It is worth noting that the literature is vast and covers diverse issues. Davies and Farquharson (2004) studied the recruitment and selection of learners to a learnership programme in KwaZulu-Natal. They found that it was important to consider the following factors when recruiting learners: create an unambiguous selection criterion, identify appropriate applicants based on the formulated criteria, involve stakeholders, and identify reasons for low participation.

Ansell (2007) presented results of a learnership programme taken by Journalism students at a large South African media company. Ansell reported on the opportunities and challenges faced by the learnership programme. It was reported that students that students were satisfied with the knowledge and skills obtained from the learnership. The host company was also pleased and stated that the leaners have gained so many skills and that they are employable. Mummenthey and du Preez (2010) investigated the implementation of a learnership programme in the Western Cape construction

industry. According to the authors, "the study was an attempt to illustrate why it is necessary to implement efficient and effective learnerships in the construction industry" (p.1). Their study found that despite low satisfaction with the system in the workplace and among institutional providers, the learnership system was nevertheless regarded as an appropriate means to develop artisans.

Rankin, Roberts, and Schöer's (2014) study looked that the successful factors into the implementation of a learning programme. They found that learners have high hopes that after the programme they will get employed which is not the case. They also found that the structure of the programme poses challenges. They lamented the fact that service providers redistribute allocated resource. de Chalain (2015) investigated leaner support in the work environment during learnerships. It was discovered that leaners with high support from family, co-workers, and mentors have a high level of satisfaction with leads to easy learning.

Koyana and Mason (2016) reported on lessons learned from a wholesale and retail (W&R) leanership programme in Mpumalamga Province of South Africa. They found that the learnership has contributed immensely to the skills development of rural women and its contribution to transformation. Kanyane et al. (2017) conducted a literature review of the impact of learnerships in local government sectors. They found that Learnerships are the most common intervention within municipalities. They also found that learners were highly satisfied with the learnership programme and recommended that it is extended to accommodate other people.

2.3.3.2 Specialist Security Practices (NQF4) Learnership programme

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (n.d.) the Further Education and Training Certificate: Specialist Security Practices is an NQF Level 4 qualification for the field of Law, Military Science and Security. The qualification aims to provide the qualifying learner with the competencies needed to undertake a range of security processes and practices and other elective competencies.

The course is designed for people working in the security environment at operational levels who endeavour to perform more than elementary security functions. At the end of the course, learners will be able to specialise in basic security aspects or have an option to move into supervisory avenues within the security industry. According to the SAQA website (SAQA, n.d.:n.p.), at the end of the course, the learner will be able to:

 (i).   Provide security services to clients.
 (ii).   Explain and apply current legislative requirements to own area of responsibility.
 (iii). Contribute to a safe and secure environment.
 (iv).   Communicate with internal and external clients.

The SAQA website (n.d.) states that the rational of the programme to avail a qualification in the safety and security environment. After completion, the qualification will enable learners to be able to deter and detect criminal activities. It will contribute to a safer environment that is needed for economic development, financial investment, and the development of business opportunities.

It provides the elementary competencies needed in the security sector such as access and egress control, conducting patrols and observation techniques. Once the learners have completed the qualification, they will be able to access higher qualifications, and will be able to choose from specialised fields such as dog handling, assets in transit operations, firearm specialisations, and other qualifications (SAQA website, n.d.:n.p.).

2.3.3.3 Benefits of learnerships

According to Taxtalk (2019:50), learnerships enable the learner to gain knowledge and skills and workplace experience that can lead to better employment or entrepreneurship. O'Neil, Davel and Holtzhausen (2023:11) are of the opinion that learnerships offer increased learning and development and increased performance levels. They further state it provides learners with a variety of skills including technical, soft and unintended skills (for example workplace skills) that they would not have obtained before the learnership.

There are also several benefits that learnerships bring to the employer. According to TaxTalk (2019) learnerships can benefit the employer in several ways. For example, relevant training of the learner to address business needs, improved skills and work performance, achievement of employment equity targets, and financial support. Goldberg and Hamel (2018:32-33) mention three main benefits of learnerships for the host organization: increased skills development, tax incentives and, employment tax incentives.

O'Neil, Davel and Holtzhausen (2023:7) list the following benefits of hosting learnerships by organisations: lower recruitment costs, capacity building with employees that understand the culture of the organisation, simplified onboarding, community involvement, and improved B-BBEE. De Jager (2021:31-32) provides advice on how companies can benefit from learnership tax incentives. Other benefits include a broader benefit to the society, for example upskilling and hiring local talent (O'Neil, Davel and Holtzhausen, 2023:7).

Koyana and Mason (2016:734) found that learnership programmes contributed significantly to social transformation through rural entrepreneurship. In a case study, they found that the programme empowered disadvantaged women and youths to gain access and skills which, could enable them to grow their businesses. The literature has identified several benefits of learnerships to the learner, host organization and society in general. Host organisations seem to benefit more from tax incentives, individuals gain valuable knowledge and skills and the society benefits by having skilled people.

2.3.3.4 Learnership challenges

The literature has identified several challenges that lead to learnerships failing. These challenges must be taken into consideration by employers, funders, and leaners. Griffin (2003:54) found that the major challenge with learnerships is the exclusion of the workplace environment. This was supported by Hattingh (2006) who is of the view that learnerships fail because the workplace environment is mostly neglected. That is, stakeholders do not investigate the suitability of the workplace before a

learnership takes place. Issues such as resource (teachers, coaches, equipment, etc.) availability are sometimes ignored before a learnership is implemented. Ansell (2007:24) indicated that lack of material resources, and curriculum mismatch were the main challenges associated with learnerships. Vorwerk (2014:55) identifies three challenges related to the implementation of learnerships; the negative impact of the knowledge acquisition paradigm, the lack of a formal work culture, and the loss of the 'apprenticeship' culture.

Mummenthey and du Preez (2010) found that stakeholders were dissatisfied with the learnership programme. They complained that the quality of learnership outcomes were of poor, that the responsible SETA's services were lacking, and the unavailability of required information. The authors further reported that training providers complained about bureaucratic processes at SETAs, and unsuitable learnership content. Leaners complained about the high number of dropouts and the delay in the processing of certificates (Mummenthey and du Preez, 2010).

De Chalain (2014) found that co -worker, supervisor and mentor support was critical in the satisfaction of learners in the learnership programme, something that was not usually available. Aigbavboa and Thwala (2014:n.p.) found several challenges in Learnership programmes. They found that challenges are caused by "ignorance and confusion amongst stakeholders, bureaucracy and poor administration within industry and SETAs, lack of support from various relevant stakeholders and low levels of employer participation in the delivery of learnership programmes".

Koyana and Mason (2016) found that learners have difficulty in absorbing the large amounts of information that came with the course content. Learners also complained of the unavailability of mentors to provide advice. Leaners lamented the fact that the learnership was spread through a huge geographic area which inconvenienced them on travel arrangements. It was also raised by learners that foreign nationals have penetrated their area and they had to compete with them for the learnership. Govender and Davidson (2019:644) found that learnerships encounter several challenges. They found that:

- The Learnerships were not fully accepted and understood by industry,
- Qualified learners had no job title,
- There were no trade test certificates,
- There were no nationally recognised trade test certificates,
- Learners were treated as an unqualified by industry,
- Training gaps between the Learnership qualifications and Apprenticeship trade qualifications were evident,
- The trade qualifications developed by the various Standards Generating Bodies (SGB's) of the specific SETA and were sector specific; and
- An ineffective quality assurance system enforcement by some SETA's.

Fuller and Governder (2020) are of the view that the length of time allocated for Learning programmes causes challenges. This is because some programmes are shorter than other. They also state that long-distance and working students do not qualify for learnerships. The Finance,

Accounting, Management Consulting and Other Financial Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) (2020) found that one of the main challenges of learnerships is student drop-out. The study found several reasons for students' dropout before completion of which one is poor mentorship.

2.4 Empirical studies on learnership programs in South Africa

Several studies have been conducted in South Africa on learnerships involving several SETAs. This section will review literature on similar studies. It is worth noting that the literature is vast and covers diverse issues. According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (n.d.:n.p.) a learnership is "a work based learning programme" that leads to an accredited qualification.

Learnerships are directly related to an occupation or field of work, for example, welding, plumbing, etc. SAQA (n.d.) further states that learnerships are based on legally binding agreements between an employer, a student, and a training institution or provider. The Department of Labour (2008) (as cited in Feinberg, 2019:5) defines learnership as a contract between a learner, employer, and an accredited skills development provider for a specific amount of time.

Goldberg and Hamel (2018:32) defines a learnership as "a programme, instituted by an organisation, which gives employees or potential employees the opportunity to study towards a registered qualification, and on-the-job experience in the field that they want to pursue". The authors further state that a learnership can be provided to employed and unemployed people. In South Africa, learnership programmes usually take a year, but they can be completed in less than a year or longer than twelve months.

According to TaxTalk (2019:50) a learnership is a work-based learning programme that leads to a qualification. In South Africa, it can be a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level qualification. TaxTalk (2019) further state that they are directly associated with a specific sector, and they are funded by Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs). A learnership is regulated by a contract between employer, leaner and other stakeholders if necessary.

Cooksey (2003:207) provides a more abstract definition of learnership and defines it as a developed capability to know when, where and how to engage in collective learning process for the benefit of the organization in rapidly changing circumstances. Cooksey (2003:207) further states that learnership is linked to high self-efficacy, and confidence. Potgieter (2003:170) defines a learnership as paraprofessional and vocational training programmes that stretch across professional divide. They combine theory and practical and the learner is trained on not how things are done, but also how they are done.

Potgier (2003) further states that a learnership involves an employer who hosts the learner and a third party that teaches the learner. After completing, the learner will receive a qualification (an NQF qualification). Potgieter (2003) also provides the reasons for learnership programmes. Learnerships are provided to address brain-drain, to counter the decline in apprenticeship, to address historical favouritism, and address the challenges of lack of skills in the workforce. Goldberg and Hamel

(2018:33) state that there are two types of learnerships in South Africa: funded and unfunded learnerships. In a funded learnership, the employer applies to a SETA for fundings and if granted, the learnership can take place. In an unfunded learnership, the employer pays the costs of the learnership.

Rankin, Roberts, and Schöer's (2014) study looked that the successful factors into the implementation of a learning programme. They found that learners have high hopes that after the programme they will get employed which is not the case. They also found that the structure of the programme poses challenges. They lamented the fact that service providers redistribute allocated resource.

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Davies and Farquharson (2004) studied the recruitment and selection of learners to a learnership programme in KwaZulu-Natal. They found that it was important to consider the following factors when recruiting learners: create an unambiguous selection criterion, identify appropriate applicants based on the formulated criteria, involve stakeholders, and identify reasons for low participation.

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Mummenthey and du Preez (2010) investigated the implementation of a learnership programme in the Western Cape construction industry. According to the authors, "the study was an attempt to illustrate why it is necessary to implement efficient and effective learnerships in the construction industry" (p.1). Their study found that despite low satisfaction with the system in the workplace and among institutional providers, the learnership system was nevertheless regarded as an appropriate means to develop artisans.

2.4 Learnership impact studies conducted in South Africa

This subsection presented a distinction between tracer studies and impact studies. The reason for this distinction is to select the best method for this research. That is, is it an impact study or a tracer study. The researcher is of the opinion that an impact study is suitable for this investigation. This is because the study investigates the effectiveness of the SASSETA Specialist Security Practices Learnership programme.

MERSETA conducted an impact assessment study as early as 2008 of their learnership and apprentice programmes. The study aimed to "ascertaining the efficiency and effectiveness of the learnership and apprenticeship systems and to assess their impact on the demand for and supply of skills for the industry" (Mukora et al., 2008:18).

The study found that MerSETA learning, and apprenticeship programmes yielded positive results because they provide important opportunities for participants to learn in the workplace, linking theory and practice and thus to deepen the skills base of the South African economy. They also provided key opportunities for unemployed people to gain skills and work experience and improve their employability. (Mukora et al., 2008:21).

The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) (2013) conducted a impact assessment study to "To obtain an independent and objective assessment of the impact of the implementation of the skills development projects and programmes with particular emphasis on the learners' experiences" (HWSETA, 2013:1). The study found that "there has been a significant contribution towards the sectors targets for the number of people who have to go through skills programmes in the sector" (HWSETA, 2013:2).

Aigbavboa and Thwala (2013) also conducted an impact assessment of learnership programmes in the construction industry. The study was "aimed at investigating the major obstacles faced in delivering effective learnerships in the construction industry in South Africa". The study found that there was considerable confusion and ignorance amongst training providers which led to poor service delivery.

The Fibre Processing & Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&M) SETA (2014) conducted an impact assessment study of its learnership, apprentice, and bursary programmes. The aim of the study was that "would empirically examine the impact of Learnerships, Apprenticeships and Bursaries on learners, and determine the extent to which these programmes are achieving their objectives. This project served to understand, explore and document key features, trends, challenges and the impact of these three skills interventions in the different FP&M sub-sectors" (FP&M SETA, 2014:7). One of the many findings was that employers were positive about the programmes offered by the SETA."

2.5 Conclusion

There have been several studies that have been conducted globally and in South Africa to investigate the benefits of internship programmes. This section will briefly review literature on the benefits of internship programmes to students and companies. In as much as the study focuses on learnership, internships offer similar, hence its inclusion in the study.

Narayana, Olk and Fukami (2010:61) state that internships provide the student with the opportunity to apply theory to practice and a useful way to find future employment. The company receives short and long-term benefits by hosting interns. Companies receive temporal reprieve from hiring students and the students' skills can be transferred to permanent employees. Cheong, Yahya, Shen, Yen (2014:333) state that internships provide interns with the opportunity to obtain first-hand experience in the real working world.

According to Pan et al. (2018:13) internship programmes can promote students' job search success and offer a smooth transition from school to work. Rogers et al (2021:2) are of the view that for companies, internships are a cost-effective screening and recruitment tool and a way to bring novel knowledge and skills to the host company. From a student perspective, Rogers et al (2021:2) are of the opinion that "internships provide students with enhanced career development and preparation, relevant work experience, and greater networking opportunities, among other benefits". These have been found in studies all over the world.

The literature has revealed several tracer studies that have been conducted by SETAs in South Africa over the years. This shows that SETAs have been collecting information about their Learnership Programme recipients. This section reports on a few studies found in the extent literature. Wildschut et al. (2017) investigated the possibility of tracer study uses by SETAs in providing valuable information about their work-based training programmes. Wildschut et al. (2017:xi) recommended the institutionalization of tracer studies in post-secondary education and training systems to strengthen data collection.

Chapter 3

Evaluation approach and methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology will be discussed. The discussion will include the research design, the evaluation approach, and the evaluation method. As part of the evaluation method, the design, population, sampling, research instruments, data analysis, and validity & reliability are going to be discussed. The evaluation findings provide an objective description of the current status of the programmes. The findings can guide relevant the SETA and its partners in understanding the Specialist Security Practices (NQF4) Learnership programme educational needs.

Program evaluations play an important role in safety education. By ascertaining the program fidelity and student satisfaction of safety and security education the evaluation highlights some challenges and areas for improvement, and may inform future planning, development, and evaluation(s) of the Learnership education in the SETA. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations.

3.2 Evaluation approach

The evaluation will be based on a mixed methods approach. This is influenced by the purpose and evaluation questions of the study. The study will employ both quantitative and qualitative, methodological approach. The qualitative approach as a method which is mostly applied in studies which investigate new phenomena in that it relies heavily upon what the research participants have to say about their experiences of such phenomena whilst the quantitative relies on aggregation and numerical data.

According to Creswell (2011) as cited by Park, Yin and Son (2019:337), a multiple methods approach is a study in which the researcher collects, analyses and uses multiple forms of qualitative and quantitative data. Park, Yin and Son (2019:337), the major benefits of the multi-method design are strengthening the findings through triangulation and complementing the weaknesses of the single research method. Davis, Golicic and Boerstler (2011:468) state that in multiple methods, the evaluators draws data from multiple data sources.

In a mixed methods study, the mixing of methods must be done throughout the study, not at a single point. An example would be using pragmatism at philosophical level, and using a survey design and a case study, and applying both probability and non-probability sampling methods. The data was then triangulated. Multiple methods were suitable in this study because the study sought to determine the impact or to evaluate the SETA learnership programme which is being delivered through the involvement of various stakeholders.

3.3. Evaluation design

This study adopted a survey research design. In a survey, investigators administer a survey to the sample or a whole population to describe perceptions, attitudes, and characteristics of the population

(Creswell & Hirose, 2019:3). Surveys collect quantitative data using questionnaires, and then researchers "statistically analyse the data to describe trends about responses to questions and to test research questions or hypotheses" (Creswell & Hirose, 2019:3).

According to Gray (2014), a research design can be viewed as a detailed plan which researchers implement to pursue their research projects and includes all the necessary elements which are prerequisites for the successful implementation of a research project are. Kumar (2011) stated that a research design must be viewed as a strategic plan for a research project which sets out the broad structures and features of the research study.

3.4 Population and sampling

This section presents the study population and sampling methods used. It also presents the reasons for choosing those sampling methods.

3.4.1 Population

A population is all the people or items with characteristics that the researcher aims to study (Bhattacherjee, 2012:65). Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017:1607) define a population as a group of individuals having one or more characteristics of interest. Blaikie (2010:172) defines a population as an "aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of criteria.

Blaikie further states that population elements are single members of units of a population. These could be people, social actions, situations, events, places, time or things. This means that a population of a study could be any unit of interest that is paramount to answering research questions. The population of this study was human subjects. That is, past learners who participated in the learnership program, SASSETA, learners and the hosting institutions.

3.4.2 Sampling

Two types of sampling techniques are common in social research, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the elements have a known chance of being selected (Blaikie, 2010:172). In non-probability sampling, the probability of elements being selected is not known, because the researcher might choose a particular element consciously or unconsciously (Blaikie, 2010:172).

In this study, probability sampling methods were adopted. A census was adopted. This means that all 324 participants were targeted, and all 14 host institutions were targeted as well. SASSETA was also targeted as a respondent because some research questions required a response from SASSETA. The breakdown of students' representation by province is provided in table 1:

Table 3-1: learners' representation by province

Gauteng	Limpopo	North West	KZN	Total
200	94	1	29	324

3.4.3 Research instruments

Data collection instruments are specific procedures used to gather data for the research (Nkomo, 2010). There are various data collection tools or instruments that can be used in research. They include questionnaires, interviews, content or document analysis schedules, and observations (Maree & van der Westhuizen, 2010:35).

In this study, only one type of instrument was used: an online questionnaire. Three questionnaires were used to collect data. One questionnaire collected data from past learners, another used to collect from host institutions and other one was used to collect data from SASSETA.

The questionnaires used to collect data from past learners and host institutions, the questions had both open ended and closed ended questions. The aim was to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the two groups of respondents. The one that collected data from SASSETA had only open-ended questions. Please see the appendix for the instruments.

3.4.3.1 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Pietersen and Maree (2010:183) define descriptive statistics as the collective name for several statistical methods that are used to organise and summaries data in a meaningful way. Pietersen and Maree (2010:183) identify two ways of representing statistical data, namely: graphical and numerical.

In this study, descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts and percentages is used to analyse data, and it is presented in graphs. Microsoft Excel was used as a data analysis tool. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. According to Krippendorff (2004:18), content analysis is a "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text to the content of their use". It provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of phenomena, or informs practical actions.

Elo and Kyngäs (2008:108) defines it as a system of analyzing documents. The aim is to attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon. Content analysis was used for the analysis of data from and open-ended questions.

3.4.3.2 Validity and reliability

Issues of validity and reliability are very important in research. These are benchmarks that are used to validate research. A valid study must show what exists and a valid instrument must measure what it is supposed to measure (Bapir, 2012). Le Compte and Goetz (1982) state that reliability is concerned with whether a study can be replicated. In this study, validity and reliability was assured by pretesting the instruments before the final instruments are distributed.

3.5 Ethical consideration

Respondents are protected from any form of harm in any research involving people. Privacy and anonymity of participants were observed. Participants were notified that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time of the study without any form of sanctions. The interview schedule included consent information that the participants read. If they were willing to participate in the study, they signed the consent section and proceeded to answer questions. Information obtained from respondents will be kept safe and used for this study only.

Informed consent was used to protect the rights of respondents by letting them know the purpose of the study. The voluntary participation of respondents was considered, as the respondents were granted a right to withdraw from their participation at any time if they felt like withdrawing.

For confidentiality, the evaluators ensured that other people did not gain access to the confidential information shared by participants during the data collection process. It was further ensured that other people do not have access to the confidential information shared by participants during the data collection process. The next chapter will present the evaluation findings.

Chapter 4

Findings and discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It is divided into three sections. Sections one is learners' responses, section two is host institutions' responses, and section three is SASSETA's Response.

4.2 Learners' responses

This section will present findings of the leaners. Demographic details are presented first, followed by learners' satisfaction with the programme and lastly challenges and solutions.

4.2.1 Demographic details

This section will present findings of the demographic details of the respondents.

4.2.1.1 Gender

Understanding the gender representation is very critical in realising the gender equality in the safety and security sector. Figure 4-1 below indicate that the SSP intervention is dominated by males. These findings are consistent with the findings of the sector skills plan (SSP) (2022) that show that the safety and security sector in the South African economy is dominated by males. However, the male dominance of 7% is not surprising and its shows that the sub-sector is transforming.
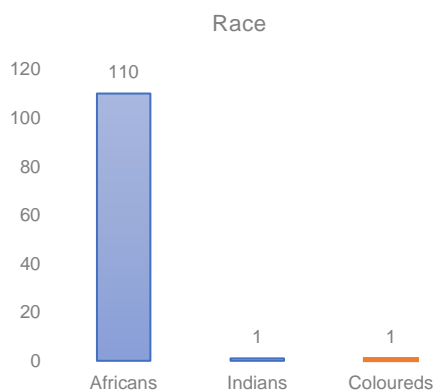
Figure 4-1: Gender representation
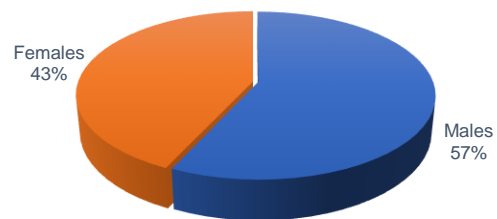
Source: Author's calculations

4.2.1.2 Race

*Figure 4-2: Race representation*

Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked state their race. It is a requirement in South Africa that race is considered in most professional spheres. This is to measure transformation in all spheres of the South African economy. The findings indicate that many of the leaners are Black South Africans having a 93% (110) representation.

There was only one Coloured and Indian participant and no Whites. However, it is worth mentioning that six participants did not indicate their race. It is encouraging that most of the of the participants are Black Africans. This is in line with government transformation policies. Figure 4-2 presents the findings.

4.2.1.3 Age

The age of the participants was sought. It was to determine the age groups that participants fall under. This question is important to determine if the youth is considered for the programme. The findings indicate that many of the participants came from the 36-45 age group, followed closely by the 20-35 age group. The 46-60 age group came third and one participant is above 60 years of age. It is encouraging to see that the youth (20-35 years) is part of the programme. This is in line with government's youth empowerment programmes. Figure 4-3 shows the findings.
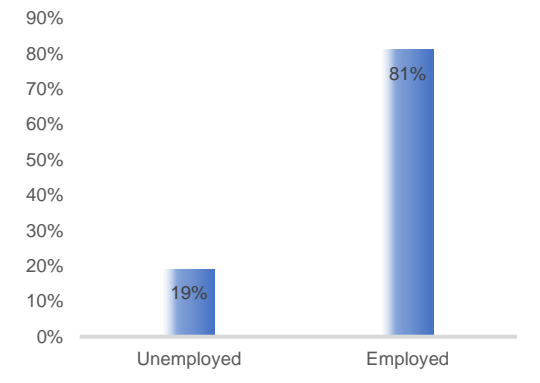
Figure 4-3: Age distribution
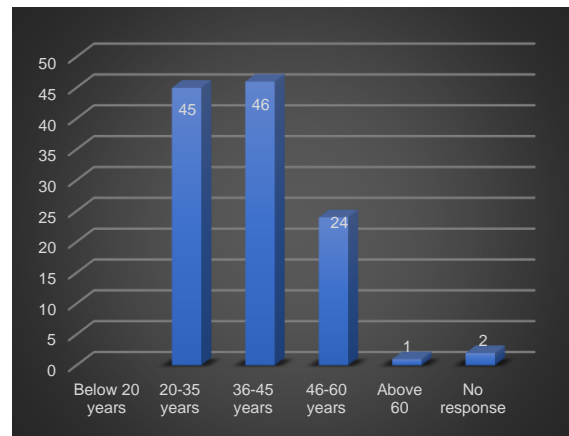
Source: Author's calculations

4.2.1.4 Employment status

Figure 4-4: Employment status
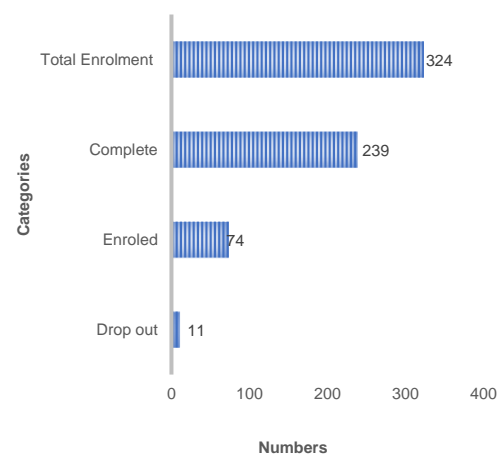

Source: Author's calculations

According to figure 4-4, 81% of the beneficiaries were employed and 19% were unemployed. These findings shows that the programme is more popular on those who are employed within the private security sector.

One of the research objectives was to establish the contribution of this learning intervention in employability of those who undertook the program. The result shows that out of the 19% who were unemployed during the implementation of the program

4.2.1.5 Enrolment status

Figure 4-5 shows that there were 324 learners between 2018 to 2021, out of the 324 learners those who completed their studies were 239 which represent 74% of the enrolment population. According to the data at hand 74 learners which represent 23% are still enrolled in the programme while 11 drop out.

The follow-up question was imposed to those who dropped out as to understand the reasons behind and it was established that some changed jobs and others got employment as they were unemployed when enrolling in the programme. The dropout rate is very low as it accounts for only 3% of the total population.

Figure 4-5: Enrolment status

Source: Author's calculations

4.2.1.6 Geographic location

Figure 4-6: Geographic distribution
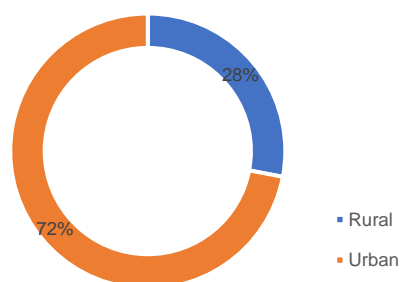
Source: Author's calculations

Figure 4-6 depicts the geographic location of those who attended the programme, the result shows that more than 70% of the beneficiaries are in the urban areas.

This is line with the SSP (2022) which found that the labour force in the security sub-sector are in the urban areas. The finds are consistent with the fact that more consumers of the private security are in the urban community compared to the rural communities.

4.2.1.7 Work experience

The programme accepts employed and unemployed learners. The learners were asked to state their work experience. The findings indicate that most of the participants (38 (32%)) have between 5-10 years' work experience. They are followed by those with between 11-15 years' work experience and those between 16-20 years' work experience. Figure 4-7 presents the findings.

The figure indicates that there was no leaner who did not have work experience. This means that most were recruited while working. Most learners have been working to between 5-20 years.

Figure 4-7: Demonstration of work experience
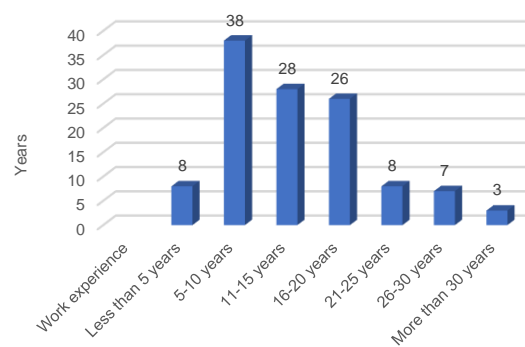
Source: Author's calculations

4.3 Satisfaction with the Specialist Security Practices programme

This section presents findings about learners' satisfaction with the programme. Among the findings are the level of satisfaction with the content, resources provided by host institutions and overall satisfaction with the programme.

4.3.1. Satisfaction with theory content

Figure 4-8: Satisfaction with theory content
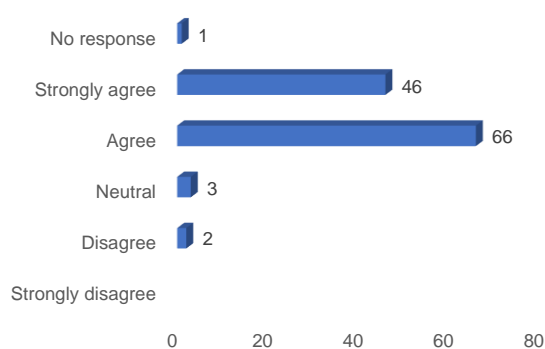
Source: Author's calculations

Learners were asked if they were satisfied with the theory that was taught to them during the training programme. Figure 4-8 shows the findings.

The findings indicate 66 (56%) and 46 (39%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively to being satisfied with the theory content. This means that most of the learners are satisfied with the theory that was taught to them. Very few participants (5(4%)) were either neutral or disagreed. Credit must be given to the host institutions for providing satisfactory content.

4.3.2. Satisfaction with practical content

Learners were also asked if they were satisfied with the practical content provided to them by host institutions. The findings indicate that most students are satisfied with the practical content provided to them by host institutions.

Figure 4-9 indicates that 73 (64%) and 41 (36%) agree and strongly agree respectively. This shows that most learners are satisfied with the practical training content. Again, credit must be given to the hosting institutions.
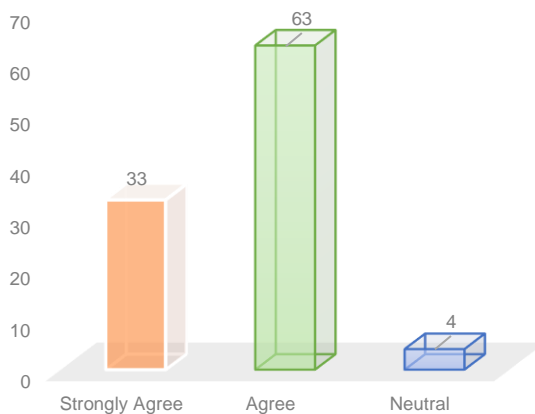

Figure 4-9: Satisfaction practical content
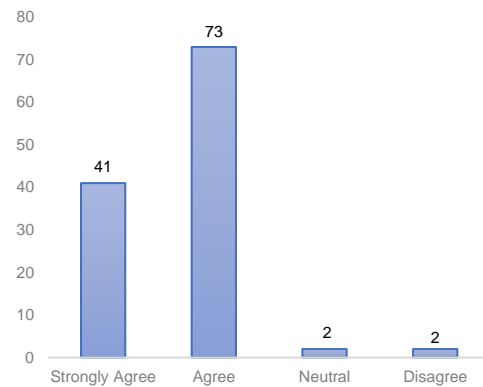
Source: Author's calculations

4.3.3 Satisfaction with resources of host institutions

Figure 4-10: Satisfaction with resource provided by host institutions

Source: Author's calculations

Resources provided during training play a vital role in the training process. Learners were asked if they were satisfied with the training resources provided by host institutions. Figure 4-10 shows the findings

It shows that most participants are satisfied with training resources provided by host institutions. Seventy-four which is 63% of the participants are satisfied with the resources. Forty (33%) strongly agree that the host institutions provided satisfactory resources. Only four (4%) that we neutral regarding the satisfaction in relation to the provision of adequate resources. The host institutions must be commended for providing satisfactory resources to learners.

4.3.4. Satisfaction with time allocated to training

Participants were asked if they were satisfied with the time allocated to the programme. The findings indicate that most participants were satisfied with the time allocated to the learnership programme.

This is because 91 (78%) indicated that they were satisfied. 24 (21%) are very satisfied because they strongly agreed that time allocated was sufficient. Figure 4-11 shows the findings.
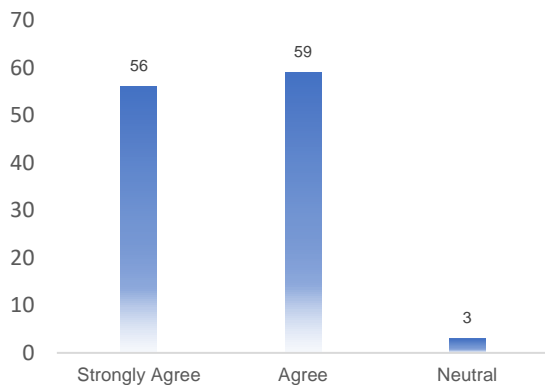
Figure 4-11: Satisfaction with the time allocated to training
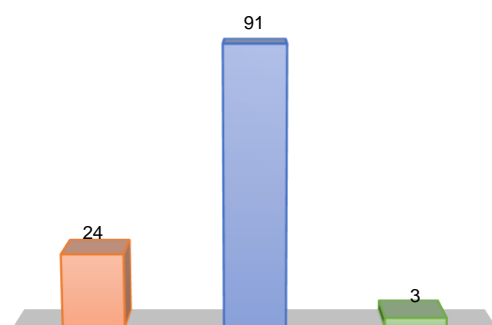
Source: Author's calculations

4.3.5. Knowledge and skills acquired in the programme

*Figure 4-12: Satisfaction with knowledge and skills acquired*

Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked to indicate if the programme equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills of the industry. This was to determine the effectiveness of the learnership programme. The majority expressed their satisfaction with the knowledge and skills acquired from the programme.

This is because 59 (50%) and 56 (49%) agreed and strongly agreed that they acquired the required knowledge and skills. This is 99% of the total number of respondents. Credit must be given to host institutions for equipping the learners with the necessary skills and imparting their knowledge to learners. Figure 4-12 shows the findings.

4.3.6 Application of knowledge and skills in current job

Figure 4-13: Application of knowledge and skills in the current job
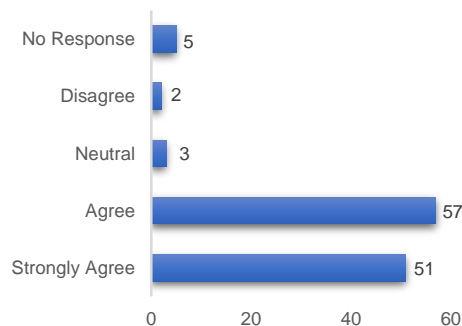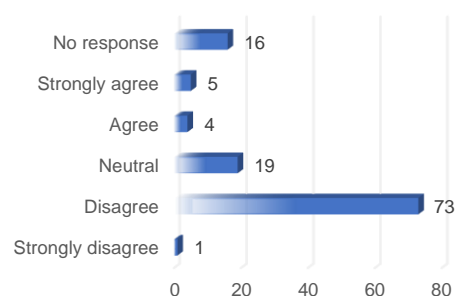

Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked if they apply their acquired knowledge and skills in their current respective jobs. Participants indicated that they apply their acquired knowledge and skills in their current jobs. This is after they were asked if the knowledge and skills acquired in the programme are useful. The findings indicate that participants apply these knowledge and skills in their jobs. Fifty-seven (50%) and 51 (44%) participants agreed and strongly agreed to applying their knowledge and skills in their respective jobs. This means that most learners apply their knowledge and skills in their current jobs. Figure 4-13 shows the findings.

4.3.8. Role of learnership programme in promotion

When asked if the learnership programme contributed to their promotion, most indicated that it did not. Seventy-three (62%) disagreed that it contributed to their promotion. Twenty-one agreed and strongly agreed. It is encouraging that there are participants who got promotion because of the learnership programme although it's a small number. It is also worth noting that many participants are not sure if the programme contributed to their promotion. Figure 14 shows the findings.
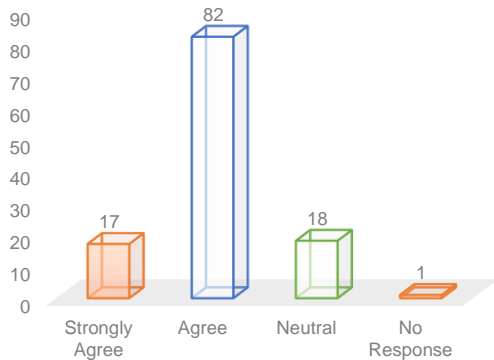
Figure 4-14: Contribution of the learnership in promotion

Source: Author's calculations

4.3.9. Employment growth due to learnership programme

Figure 4-15: Role of the learnership programme in employment opportunities

Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked if they believed that the learnership programme will contribute to their employment growth. The majority 99 (85%) are positive that the programme will contribute to their employment growth. This shows that participants have confidence in the programme. Figure 4-15 shows the findings.
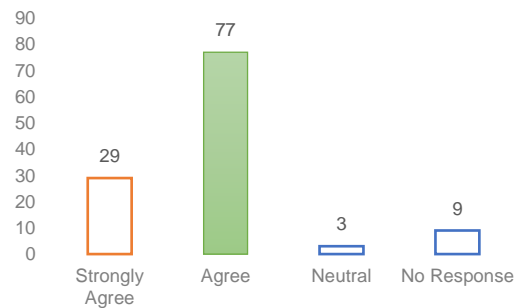
Figure 4-16: Satisfaction with the job

Source: Author's calculations

When asked if they are satisfied with their jobs as security specialists, 91% indicated that they are. It is encouraging to see that they are passionate about their jobs. Figure 4-16 shows the findings.

4.3.10. Intention to further education

Figure 4-17: Intention to further education
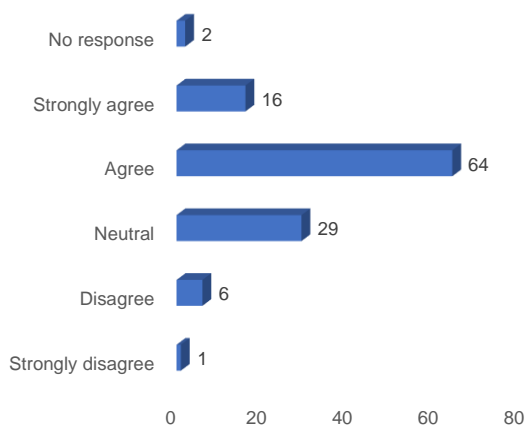
Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked whether they will continue with further education after enrolling to the learnership programme in Specialist Security Practices. It is encouraging that most indicated that they would continue to further develop themselves by furthering their education.

Sixty-four (55%) and 16 (14%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively. A good number of participants (29 (25%)) are not sure. Others indicated that it is the end of the academic journey for them. Figure 4-17 shows the findings.

4.3.11 Role of programme in improving professional conduct

When asked if the if the programme has improved their professional conduct. The findings in figure 4-18 indicate that it has improved their professional conduct. Hundred and fourteen participants (98%) agreed that it has improved their professional conduct. This is indeed encouraging.

Figure 4-18: Role of programme in improving professionalism
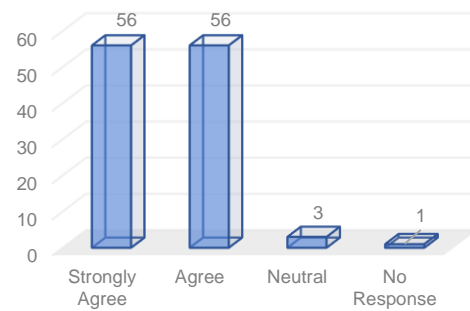
Source: Author's calculations

4.3.12. Overall satisfaction with the learnership programme

Figure 4-19: Satisfaction with the programme
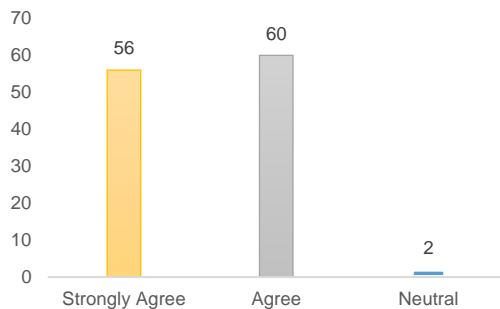
Source: Author's calculations

Participants were asked if they were satisfied with the programme. Most indicated that they are satisfied with the programme. Sixty agreed and 56 strongly agreed that they were satisfied. That is 98% of the total population. This means that the programme is making an impact on the learners. Figure 4-19 show the findings.

4.3.13 Encouraging others to enrol into the programme

When asked if they will encourage others to participate in the programme, participants indicated that they would encourage others to enrol for the learnership programme. It is assumed that this is because of the satisfaction that they have with the programme. Figure 4-20 shows the findings.

Figure 4-20: Encourage others to enrol in the programme
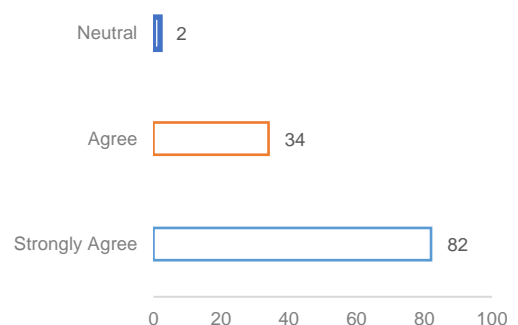
Source: Author's calculations

4.3.14 Continuation of the programme by SASSETA

Participants were asked if SASSETA should continue with the programme and most agreed that the programme must continue. Eighty-four percent strongly agreed that the programme must continue and 14% agreed. This means that many agree that SASSETA must continue with the programme. This could be linked to their satisfaction with the programme. Figure 4-21 shows the findings.

Figure 4-21: Continuation of the programme by SASSETA

Source: Author's calculations

4.3.15 Challenges faced by learners

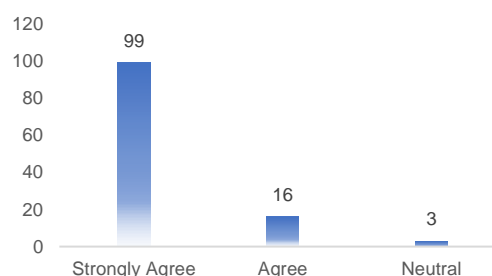Participants were asked to indicate if they have encountered challenges in the programme. Participants indicated that there is too much administration and that communication with SASSETA is difficult. When asked what challenges they encountered during the programme, participants indicated that it was stipend challenges and that the classrooms were not conducive.

The issue of stipend seems to be a big challenge because more than 90% of the unemployed beneficiaries expressed their dissatisfaction with it not being paid on time. The issues of certificates not being issued is also another challenge that learners expressed, more than 40% of the learners interviewed expressed the fact that they have not received their certificates. Others voiced their dissatisfaction with host institutions that used them as guards when they were in the programme. These are some of the responses,

"Classrooms were not conducive". "Employers were using us as guards while we were on learnership".
"Our stipends were always late". "The protective gear was not provided".
"I have not gotten my certificate as yet".

When asked about how the issue could be resolved. Participants had several suggestions. They indicate that SASSETA must improve communication with learners, pay stipends on time, and that certificates must be issued early. This is what they said,

"SASSETA must award certificates in time and also send stipends in time". "SASSETA must please send our certificates". "The institution to be more communicative as to why we have not received our certificates after more than 5 years".

4.4 Host institutions' responses

This section presents finding from host institutions. The first questions that was asked from host institutions was the number of years that the have been hosting the programme. The findings indicate that most host institutions have held the programme for between two and four years (43%). This was followed by those who have been hosting the programme for less than 10 years. Figure 4-22 shows the findings.

Figure 4-22: No of years of hosting the leadership programme
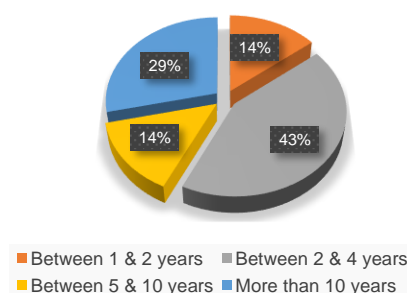
Source: Author's calculations

4.4.1. Number of learners hosted since inception

Figure 4-23: Number of learners hosted through the programme

■ Between 10 & 19 ■ Between 20 & 29 ■ Between 30 & 49 ■ More 50

Source: Author's calculations

Host institutions were also required to indicate the number of students that they have hosted since the inception of the programme.

It was encouraging that most institutions have hosted more than 10 students since the start of the programme. Figure 4-23 shows the findings.
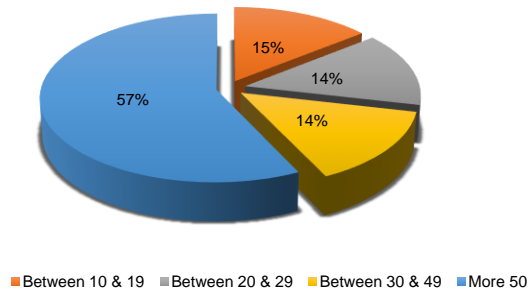
4.4.2. Evaluation of the Special Security Practices programme

This section presents findings about the satisfaction of host institutions with the learnership programme**.**

4.4.3. Satisfaction with the running of the programme within the organisation

Host institutions were asked if they are satisfied with running the programme. All institutions were satisfied with hosting the programme.

Five (71%) organisations indicated that they were satisfied and two strongly agreed that they are satisfied. Figure 4-24 shows the findings.

Figure 4-24: Satisfaction with running of the programme
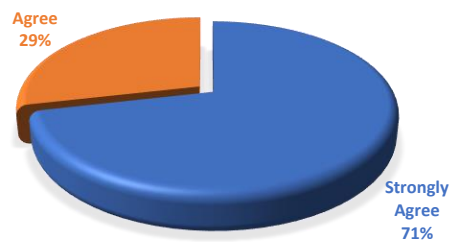
Source: Author's calculations

4.4.4. Management of programme by organisations

Figure 4-25: Satisfaction with running of the programme

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree
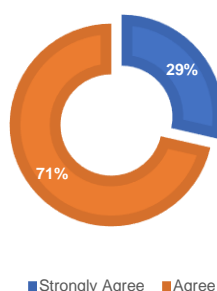
Source: Author's calculations

Host institutions were also asked if they felt comfortable about hosting and managing the programme. The findings indicate that all host organisations were satisfied with the overall management of the programme.

Figure 4-25 shows that 100% of the responded commended effort and cooperation made by all the stakeholders were involved in the project.

4.4.5. The programme management by SASSETA

Host institutions were asked if the programme is well managed by SASSETA. This was to determine if there is good cooperation between SASSETA and host institutions. The findings indicate that most institutions agree that SASSETA is managing the programme well. Others are not sure, but it is assumed that there could be a few challenges that are encountered. Figure 4-26 shows the findings.

Figure 4-26: Programme management by SASSETA

Source: survey (2023)

4.4.6 Satisfaction of the programme

Host organisations were asked if they are satisfied with the whole programme. Eighty-three percent indicated that they are satisfied with the programme, 17% indicated that they are more than satisfied because they strongly agreed.

This means that overall, host institutions are satisfied with the whole programme. Figure 4-27 shows the findings.

Figure 4-27: Satisfaction with programme

Source: survey (2023)

4.4.7 The programme enabling the learners to acquire industry skills and knowledge
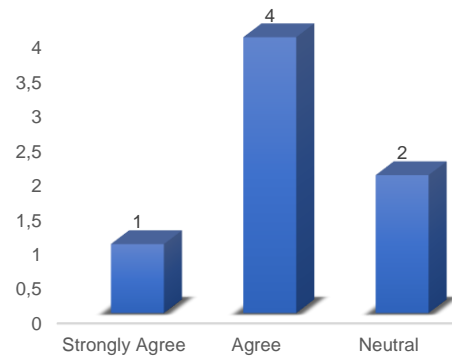
Figure 4-28:Skills and knowledge acquired by learners
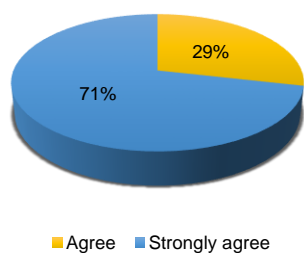
Source: survey (2023)

When asked if the programme has equipped learners with the required skills, 71% of learners indicated that it has. This is shown by 71% of participants who strongly agreed, 29% agreed which means that most host institutions are satisfied with the skills and knowledge provided by the learnership programme. Figure 4-28 shows the findings.

4.4.8 The knowledge and skills obtained by the learners are applied in their jobs

When asked if the knowledge and skills are applied by learners in their jobs, most host institutions agreed that the knowledge and skills are applied by learners in their current jobs. This is encouraging because it means that learners have been upskilled and they can use their newly acquired skills. Figure 4-29 shows the findings.

Figure 4-29: Satisfaction with learners' knowledge and skills
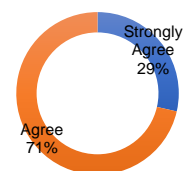
Source: survey (2023)

4.4.9 Professionalism of learners

Strongly Agree — 29%
Agree — 71%
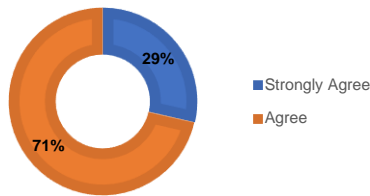
Source: survey (2023)

One of the research objectives is to assess the impact of the SSP learnership in improving the professionalisation of the safety and security sector. The question was posed to host employers as they are the ones who can give better insight on this regard.

The results are presented in the figure below where 2 host employers strongly agree that the intervention contribute to the professionalisation. Out of the 7 host employers, 71% agreed to the fact that the SSP intervention contribute to the professionalisation of the private security sub-sector is the are the largest consumer of the output of this initiative.

4.4.10. Continuation of the programme in the organisation

Figure 4-31: Willingness to continue with learnership programme

43% 57%

Strongly Agree   Agree
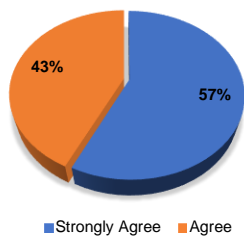
Source: survey (2023)

Host institutions were asked if they are willing to continue with the programme. All institutions indicated that they are willing to continue with the programme. Four strongly agreed that they are willing to continue with the programme and three agreed which represent 57% of the total population.

This is a strong indication of willingness from host institutions. This is encouraging indeed because it shows that the programme has a positive impact on organisations. Figure 4-31 shows the findings.

4.4.11 Encouraging other organisations to host learnership programme

Host organisations were asked if they would encourage other organisations to participate in the learnership programme. The majority agreed that they would encourage others to participate. 86% either agreed or strongly agreed. Figure 4-32 show the findings.

Figure 4-32: Encouraging other organisations to participate

14%   14%
72%

Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree
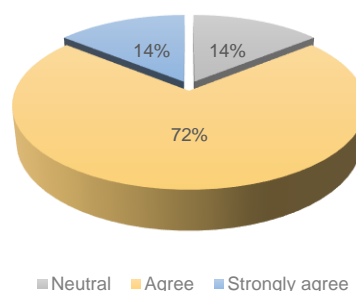
Source: survey (2023)

4.4.12 Continuation of programme by SASSETA

Figure 4-33:Ccontinuation of programme by SASSETA
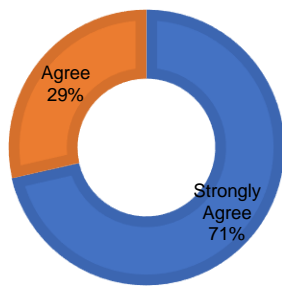
Source: survey (2023)

Host organisations were asked if SASSETA must continue with the learnership programme. All organisations indicate that it must continue with most strongly agreeing.

This is another strong indication that the programme is making a positive difference to learners and host institutions. Figure 4-33 shows the findings.

4.4.14 Opinion on the learnership programme addressing skills shortages in the industry

Figure 4-34: Learnership addressing skills shortages
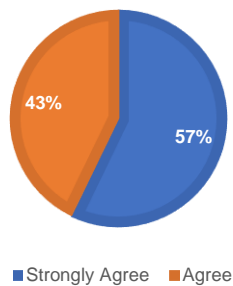
Source: survey (2023)

Host institutions' opinions were solicited to find out if the learnership programme would address skills shortages in the safety and security industry.

All organisations indicated that indeed the learnership programme will address skills shortages. Fifty-seven percent agreed and 43% strongly agreed. Figure 4-34 shows the findings.

4.4.15 Opinion on the learnership programme addressing employment shortages in South Africa

Unemployment is a big challenge in South Africa. Host institutions were asked if the learnership programme will address unemployment challenges in the country (South Africa).

Fifty-seven percent agreed and strongly agreed that it would address unemployment if South Africa. Others were not sure. Figure 4-35 shows the findings.

Figure 4-35: Programme addressing unemployment in South Africa
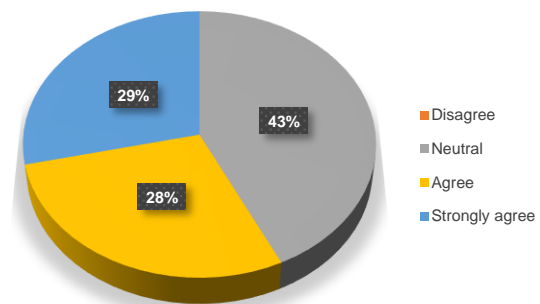
Source: survey (2023

4.4.16 Challenges faced by the Special Security Practices programme in organisation

This section reports on the challenges encountered by host organisations when preparing for the programme, and during the programme.

Only one employer indicated that there was a challenge with recruitment. The others did not encounter any problems. Another participant indicated that "*We didn't face any challenges because we aligned with the training needs and before the project started, we made sure that training materials are up to date*".

Others indicated that there were a few challenges at the implementation phase. They said:

"*Finalising the contract was not easy between our company and SASSETA. The process was not very smooth*".

"*We feel that SASSETA at times does not communicate efficiently, which makes even implementation difficult as we not sure of the requirements*"

Employers were asked to comment if they encountered challenges with learners' knowledge and skills. Mixed reactions were identified. Others were happy with the skills, but others were not happy with reading and English language skills (communication skills). Most lamented the fact that communicating in English was a challenge. They said,

"*We made sure that we recruit learners who participated in General Security Practices because they already have knowledge and skills about the security and most of the unit standards that are in specialist security practices they have done them in General Security Practices*".

"*Sometimes understanding English was not easy for learners which made it hard to be able to read materials*".
"*Most learners do not possess skills of reading for understanding*".

4.4.17 Challenges encountered with stakeholders such as SASSETA

Most employers stated that they had no challenges encountered with stakeholders such as SASSETA, but others were not happy with the administration of the programme by SASSETA. Those who are not happy with SASSETA stated that,

"*Administration of SASSETA is not very easy to work with*".
"*SASSETA Administration is not easy to deal with*".

Challenges encountered with learners' work ethic (professionalism) 2 employers indicated that there were no challenges encountered with the learners but others stated that the learners had challenges meeting deadlines.

One employer stated that "*No challenges at all, the learners are working together, they treat each other with dignity and respect, and they support each other. They behave appropriately*".

Another said that, "*Learners work, so sometimes meeting deadlines was hard as they are sometimes not available*".

4.4.18 Challenges encountered with resources (material and financial)

29% of employers complained that SASSETA paid them late, but others had no issues with resources.
They said,

"*SASSETA pays us very late*".
"*On most months SASSETA paid us very late*".

"Getting training equipment was not easy. For example, if we wanted to train the learners about cash in transit, employers would not allow us to use their cars."
"No challenges because the Company prepared the learning material before the start date of the project".

4.4.19 Recommendations to resolve challenges

Employers were asked to suggest solutions to the challenges. They had this to say,

"We can recommend that the company and SASSETA meet before even signing of contracts, so they are able to update us on what has changed and show us documents that are needed and also discuss early on what is expected".
"Maybe entry level English course can be given before the initial course commences".

"SASSETA should pay us on time for easy running of the programmes. Also, they might ask employers to allow us "service providers" to use their equipment". "SASSETA to pay in time. The administration to be more communicative in due course giving service providers ample time even if there is something to change".

On general comments one employer said that,

"According to me it is good to train the learners on the Specialist Security Practices because they create an avenue for personal development and self-esteem improvement. It is not only to motivate them but also to enhance their career prospects".

4.5 SASSETA's response

This section presents responses from SASSETA. The reason for this section was to give SASSETA a chance to comment on the learnership programme. SASSETA was asked to briefly highlight the objectives of the Specialist Security Practices programme. The response was,

"To attract and retain quality learners in the security sector and place them in a position to be further trained to become security supervisors".

SASSETA further explained how the learnership programme's objectives are aligned to the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) and the response was that,

"To ensure that employed and unemployed South Africans have adequate, appropriate, and high-quality skills that contribute towards economic growth and employment creation and social development. This meets the objective in the NSDP on workplace training for employed and unemployed learners".

SASSETA was asked if the programme has achieved its objectives over the past three years. It was revealed by SASSETA that it has achieved its objectives. This is what SASSETA had to say,

"Yes, more learners are interested in the security sector as the programme is in a higher NQF Level. It helps them to develop their skills for them to participate in the economy and climb the corporate ladder. Many security companies reported that learners who have attained this qualification have been promoted. In addition, they have indicated that the clients where these learners guard, do commend the quality of work of these guards".

SASSETA further stated that,

"Yes, the programme will improve relations between employer and employees. There is always a need for security supervisors and these learners are best placed for that work. Security services in the country is in great demand due to the high crime rate so it is sustainable from a long-term perspective".

This means that the programme is needed important, and it is sustainable because of the need for security personnel. The challenges that have been encountered in the running of the programme were also highlighted by SASSETA? It was stated that,

"Some skills development providers are unable to do Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in order for more learners to get the qualifications".

"Some learners do find some of the unit standards difficult". …"Some employers do not submit the correct contractual documents to enable us to pay them and then these impacts on the smooth running of the project".

The last-mentioned challenge was also highlighted by host institutions. The response from the project manager clarify the of the late payment which was main on incomplete information submitted by the employers and learners SASSETA gave suggestions on how the challenges can be addressed. SASSETA stated that,

"*Support and guidance should be provided to learners on the mechanism used to enter the RPL route*". "*Capacity building sessions are being held since 2022 with various stakeholders to assist them to run the learning program smoothly and to also claim correctly under the DG contract*".

"*Add more unit standards that are beneficial in the security industry e.g., National Key Point Unit standards*".
"*I would also make it compulsory that learners who have this qualification should be given preference for supervisor jobs*".

SASSETA was asked when it started funding the learnership programme and the response was that:

"*SASSETA started funding this program from 2015 after engagements with the Private Security Industry who requested for the implementation of this qualifications to address career progression of security guards to security supervisors*". This means that the programme has been running for eight years.

SASSETA explained that:

"*This programme is the Learnership on the FETC Specialist Security Practices qualification. It is part of the vertical articulation in the learning pathway designed by private security and follows on from the National Certificate: General Security Practices Learnership*".

SASSETA also explained that since the inception of the programme; "*the number of funded learners is 324. There are many other learners who are trained and funded by themselves and their companies*". This means that so far SASSETA has trained 324 learners, but the total number is higher because others have paid for their own training. According to SASSETA, all learners are Black Africans. This is in line with the findings of the learners. It was found that there were no white learners involved in the programme. SASSETA stated that people with disabilities are not involved in the learnership programme because of its nature. It was stated by SASSETA that,

"*This programme is security related hence many learners with disabilities do not meet the enrolment requirements to be on these learnerships. We thus focus funding on other programs for disabled learners*".

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the study. Responses were received from learners, host institutions, and SASSETA. Learners' responses indicate that they are satisfied with the overall learnership programme. They are satisfied with the content, and the knowledge and skills required from the programme. As much as they are satisfied with the programme, there are challenges that they have identified. This includes, the late payment of stipends, poor communication, and not receiving their certificates in time.

Host institutions indicated that they are satisfied with the programme and they would like to continue hosting. They commented positively about the knowledge, skills and professionalism of the trainees. SASSETA provided the objectives of the programme and its alignment to national policies. Challenges that are faced were also highlighted by SASSETA.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter provides the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. It summarises findings from the leaners and host institutions.

5.1. Summary of findings

The study sought to investigate the impact of the Special Security programme. Data was collected from learners, host institutions, and SASSETA. The study sought to address eight objectives as stated in Chapter one. This section presents a summary of the findings according to the objectives of the study.

(i). Ascertain the outputs (or outcomes) of the Specialist Security Practices programme.

According to SASETA responses, the aim of the learnership programme is to train and upskill learners in the safety and security sector in line with NSDP policy. The findings indicate that the main objective of the programme is being achieved. This is because both learners, institutions and SASSETA indicated that the programme has indeed improved the knowledge, skills of the learners. The programme has also improved their level of professionalism. Further to that, learners and host institutions voiced their satisfaction with the programme, and they would like to see it continue because of the impact it has.

(ii). Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Specialist Security Practices programme

There is no doubt that the programme is effective as alluded above. In terms of efficiency, there are challenges that need to be sorted because it is regarded as effective. Challenges will be presented in the next objective.

(iii). Identify gaps and challenges of the Specialist Security Practices programme implementation

There are several challenges that have been identified in the programme. As reported in the findings section, learners raised the following major challenges:
- Late payment of stipends
- Non-conferment of qualifications (learners not receiving their certificates after completion of programme), and
- Poor communication

Similar challenges were raised by host institutions. They indicated the following major challenges:

- Difficulties in finalising contracts with SASSETA,
- Poor administration and communication at SASSETA,
- Late payment by SASSETA,
- Poor language and reading skills by learners, and
- Lack of resources.

SASSETA raised some of the challenges raised by host institutions. SASSETA blamed host institutions for submitting documents late which then leads to late payments. SASSETA also indicated that some host institutions cannot authorise RPL which leads to some students not being able to enrol. The issue of students not coping with the programme has also been raised. All these challenges affect the efficiency in the running of the programme.

(iv). Assess the programme sustainability in addressing priorities of the NSDP and priority occupations.

SASSETA's response indicate that there is a shortage of specialist security supervisors. Host institutions and learners suggested that the programme must continue because of its effectiveness. Host institutions went further to say that they are willing to continue hosting the learners. This means that this programme is sustainable. It can also be hindered by lack of funding.

(v). To assess the extent to which the learnership programme is improving on the professionalisation of the security industry

When learners were asked whether the programme has improved their professional conduct, most learners agreed. This was corroborated by host organisations. This means that it has indeed improved their professional conduct.

(vi). To investigate the benefits for employers on the implementation of this programme, particularly the skills levels and retention of the learners completed this programme

Host institutions are satisfied with the knowledge and skills levels of the learners. However, the retention rate of learners by host institutions was not ascertained.

(vii). To evaluate the effectiveness of the Specialist Security Practices learnership in providing learners with the necessary skills and knowledge

This has been covered under objective one.

(viii). To investigate the employability and the career progression of learners

Most learners indicated that they have already been working when they enrolled for this programme. A few indicated that they got employment after enrolling into the programme. The conclusion drawn is that to somewhat, the programme has provided an opportunity for employment for learners.

5.2. Conclusion and recommendation

In conclusion, the study found that the programme is effective, and it must be continued. This is because learners and host institutions are satisfied with overall programme, especially the knowledge and skills it has provided the learners. It was also found that it is aligned to the NSDP outcomes. There are several challenges that have been identified which needs to the addressed in order to improve the production of skills in the private security sub-sector. For the smooth run and maximising the impact of this learning intervention it is critical to implement measures to address the identified short coming in the implementation of the programme.

It is therefore recommended that:

(a) Recommendation to SASSETA:

- **Communication**

Effective communication with wisely chosen words holds the potential to achieve milestones, while ineffective communication may yield poor results deteriorating the quality. The latter might occur due to the presence of resources with diverse skill sets and requirements in a project. The inability to indicate the requirements or the inability of team members to grasp the needs will provide undesired results leading to discrepancy and failure of the whole project and team.

Gathering intellectuals with ideas and deciding powers brings valid points worthy of argumentation. Such effective communication is a better method for reaching a conclusion or decision regarding new ideas, projects, or problems faced during the projects. SASSETA must normalize regular meetings to ensure that expectations are clearly outlined, It ensures team members are aligned on project goals and understand exactly what's expected of them. It also helps build trust, so everyone works better together from project start to finish. It worth noting that there are meetings nonetheless, the training providers and employers felt that these meetings are insufficient.

- **Stipends and payment**

A stipend is defined as a fixed sum of money paid upfront or periodically to cover living expenses and other costs as well as to pay for services provided. It is often used as a form of financial aid for students or trainees who are enrolled in educational institutions or engaged in some sort of training program. Late stipend payments can cause financial difficulties for learners, affecting both their professional and personal lives.

The stress and consequences resulting from these delays can have a ripple effect on their work performance and overall well-being. It is worth mentioning that SASSETA has realised the impact of late payment of stipends It is recommended that SASSETA finalise the development of a payment solution as a matter of urgent as these will go a long way in resolving this challenge.

- **Certification**

A certificate is an institutional signal that you have completed the course of study. That "brands" you as someone who has completed something that is hard and requires organization, tenacity, and a certain ability to work in a bureaucracy. Since potential employers don't know you, they look for indicators that a candidate is qualified and able to perform in the vacant position. The certificate gives them greater knowledge and confidence in your capabilities.

In short, it helps when you're job hunting or competing for a promotion. It within this background that SASSETA address the issue of delays in awarding certificates to deserving students.

SASSETA must continue with the programme because of its effectiveness in empowering learners with the required skills and knowledge of the industry.

(b) Recommendations to host institution:

Research has shown that an engaged learning environment increases students' attention and focus, promotes meaningful learning experiences, encourages higher levels of student performance, and motivates students to practice higher-level critical thinking skills. Therefore, it is recommended that host institutions must provide required resources for the programme (some indicated that they did not have training material and students complained about poor classroom facilities).

(c) Recommendation to learners

Reading with an understanding is very critical in the security space, the security force in most instances is the first respondent in crime scene, it is fundamental to have moderate communication and reading skills. Therefore, it is recommended that they enroll for extra language and reading classes to improve their reading and communication skills.

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