The Effectiveness of Leadership Learning Interventions at a Local Municipality in Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

Anthony Isabirye[1] [ID]*, Khadija Moloi[1] and Zondi Mkhabela[1,2]

1-Vaal University of Technology, South Africa

2-Department of Human Resource Management

*Corresponding Author: isabiryeaki@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions in a local government municipality in Mpumalanga province, South Africa, through the lenses of the selected participants. Guided by the adapted staff development framework developed by Isabirye (2015), the researchers employed a qualitative approach. In-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of seven senior municipal officials, codenamed P1 to P7, who participated in leadership learning interventions. Although the findings reveal the benefits of the learning interventions, the study highlights several shortcomings as indicated by the Participants. The shortcomings included among others, a lack of tailored programmes and materials for financial management as well as insufficient time for learning. Against the revealed shortcomings, the researchers suggest strategies and techniques that could enhance the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions in a local government setting. Such strategies and techniques included among others, the importance of tailored training approaches, continuous evaluation, the need for municipal support, and ample time to ensure the desired outcomes. These findings contribute to the existing literature on leadership development and provide practical recommendations for local government municipalities seeking to improve leadership effectiveness and organisational performance, through learning interventions.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Leadership learning is a critical element in the success and growth of any organisation, including local government municipalities (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Schoenberg et al., 2021). A leadership learning intervention is a structured and purposeful activity or programme designed to enhance and develop leadership skills, knowledge, and behaviours in individuals or groups (Cummings et al., 2021). It involves a systematic approach that includes various learning methods, such as training workshops, coaching, mentoring, experiential activities, role-playing, and simulations, to enable participants to acquire new insights, perspectives, and capabilities in leadership (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Cummings et al., 2021). Such interventions aim to facilitate the growth and improvement of leadership abilities, enabling individuals or groups to effectively lead and influence others toward achieving organisational or team goals. In the context of South Africa, where the government is constantly striving to improve service delivery and governance, effective leadership becomes even more imperative (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024).

Studies conducted on leadership learning and developmental interventions (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Patterson et al., 2019) point to the ongoing transformation of organisations which has increased the need for effective leaders. The current study motivated the growing interest in investing mechanisms to ensure improved performance and productivity. As the focus on the importance of leadership in organisations increases, there is also growing consensus that leadership talent alone may not be sufficient to help propel contemporary organisations forward (Maxwell, 2024). Rather, what is required is targeted leadership training interventions. Regulated institutions like South African municipalities depend on senior management to meet constitutional obligations. Thus, the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions is critical, particularly due to accelerated global and local changes in organisations such as municipalities. The responsibility to guide and direct any municipality's purpose remains the senior managers' responsibility. The complexity and unpredictability of the municipal context (for example the increase of coalition governments in most municipalities in South Africa since the 2021 local government elections) require that senior managers be versatile and willing to learn new competencies, knowledge, and skills to facilitate the delivery of the expected services to communities effectively. The effectiveness of leadership learning therefore, is imperative for leaders in municipalities to continue embracing opportunities created to improve their capacity to remain effective in their roles and responsibilities (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs [COGTA], 2020; Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024) in the municipality.

However, these municipal organisations often overlook or inadequately address leadership learning and development. Recognising this need, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions. Research by (; Blaik-Hourani, 2020; Litz & Blaik-Hourani, 2019) (Thusi & Selepe, 2023) suggests that the development of managers cannot be overemphasised due to the nature of development, and innovative strategies required to enhance productivity among employees. Local government municipalities play a crucial role in delivering essential services to citizens, making decisions about resource allocation, and implementing policies at a grassroots level (Shilangu, 2019). However, Shilangu (2019), Thusi and Selepe (2023) suggest that municipalities face numerous challenges, including limited financial resources, capacity constraints, political interference, and inadequate leadership development opportunities. These challenges can result in poor service delivery and organisational inefficiencies. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of leadership development in enhancing the performance and effectiveness of local government municipalities (Schoenberg et al., 2021). Leadership learning interventions, such as training programmes, workshops, and mentoring initiatives, have been identified as potential strategies to address the leadership challenges faced by these municipalities (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018; Mathebula, 2018; Thusi & Selepe, 2023). Targeted training programmes, workshops, and mentoring initiatives for municipal managers are priorities to make municipalities more functional and effective in delivering expected services by their communities.

Indeed, Leadership learning has been identified as a key strategy for improving leadership effectiveness. In the case of the local municipality where this study was conducted, several leadership learning interventions have been implemented to ensure that leaders are equipped with the capacity to facilitate the delivery of adequate services to communities. However, it seems that these leadership learning interventions were not targeted to the specific needs of the managers. Hence, despite these interventions, there has been a marked decline in the standards of governance and service delivery, resulting in repeated service delivery protests in the area in demand of effective service delivery. The observed decline is consistent with the findings of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2020:18-19) which reveal that most communities in South Africa have experienced a worrisome decrease in the levels of basic service delivery from municipalities. Not surprisingly, Makalela (2017) found that in practice, local government in South Africa has had difficulties in facilitating the delivery of important social services, resulting in most communities expressing their anger at the absence of basic service delivery. Above using the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) to structure the work of municipalities (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018; Maake, 2016; Makalela, 2017; Mathebula, 2018), suggest that there seems to be a need to cater for

the developmental needs of the municipal senior managers because the service delivery challenges in municipalities have persisted (Dikotla et al., 2014; Thusi & Selepe, 2023), leading to assertions by some scholars that if the developmental needs of senior managers are addressed through developmental interventions, the performance of municipalities could be enhanced (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Dlamini & Reddy, 2018; Mathebula, 2018). Against this background, the study aims to explore the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions in the municipality to suggest workable solutions to the current problems the municipality faces.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish the effectiveness of the leadership learning interventions for the local municipality to achieve their desired goals and objectives, Isabirye's adapted conceptual framework is relevant. According to Explorance (2023), effective training interventions are implemented in four phases, namely: Orientation, Learning, Skills Acquisition, and Performance phases.   If the intervention must achieve its objectives, Isabirye (2015) argues that it must be supported by the policies, resources, and practices of the organisation; and each of the phases must be evaluated. Furthermore, ample time must be allowed to ensure that effective orientation, training, and refinement of competencies for effective performance are realised. This is reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1: *Isabirye's Conceptual Framework.*

Source: Adapted from Isabirye (2015:217)

Orientation as a phase of a training intervention

According to Isabirye (2015), any training intervention should never come as a surprise to the participants. During the orientation period, the significance of the intervention is emphasised. This is important because adult learners are not only relevance- and goal-oriented but are also motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic goals to learn (Anane, 2020; D. Xie & Zong, 2024) Orientation programmes are not only motivating (Anane, 2020; Harini et al., 2023; D. Xie & Zong, 2024), but they also expose programme participants to what is required of them while learning. B Blanchard and Thacker (2023) assert that this phase be used for needs assessment, goal setting, programme design, and establishing participant expectations. According to Isabirye (2015), D. Xie and Zong (2024), it is during the orientation session of the intervention that participants seek clarification regarding the applicability of any training to their real-world contexts. In the context of this study, the orientation phase would be the perfect time to explain to participants how the training would help them as managers, how it would apply to their roles, and how it would enhance their performance. Furthermore, according to D. Xie and Zong (2024), this phase enables the socialization processes, such as networking opportunities, peer support, and mentorship, in facilitating successful onboarding and integration of managers into the learning intervention.

At this stage, facilitators must comprehend the motivations for participants' participation in the learning intervention. According to Broek et al. (2023), while self-esteem, achievement, competence, self-confidence, and self-actualization play a significant part in motivating adult learners like the senior managers in this context, their incentives to learn are mostly internal. It is important, therefore, that the facilitator identifies the primary incentive for the learners' engagement in the training intervention during this orientation phase, following the principles of andragogy (Anane, 2020; Kim & Dooley, 2019). This will assist the facilitator in addressing the factors that led them to sign up for the programme. Indeed, Isabirye (2015), D. Xie and Zong (2024), and Harini et al. (2023) argue that the significance of an orientation phase in any development intervention lies in the fact that it paves the way for trainees to have fruitful learning experiences. Apart from that, orientation marks the beginning of a process of continuous improvement while developing participants' devotion to the training intervention. Furthermore, according to D. Xie and Zong (2024), orientation promotes socialization among participants by giving them a sense of acceptance from their peers and a sense of belonging. Xie and Zong's (2024), views echo the finding of a study by Isabirye (2015) that revealed that participants in a training intervention later feel that they need communities of practice for continuous support. If the orientation phase facilitated socialization and acceptance among

the participants, such support structures may be established and deployed without much difficulty later (Kim & Dooley, 2019; D. Xie & Zong, 2024).

Given the foregoing views, it can be contended that an orientation phase of any training intervention assists learners not only in forming a favourable first impression of the training intervention but also ignite their excitement about the programme. It is this excitement that keeps the participants involved in the intervention until the trainees attain the necessary skills and competencies (Anane, 2020; Isabirye, 2015; Romero-Mas et al., 2024) While the initial day of orientation is important for creating a pleasant learning experience, an effective orientation programme needs to last for several weeks or even months (Knoke, 2012; Mohzana, 2024). Orientation further gives participants time to network, get to know all their facilitators, and generally become more comfortable with the entire training intervention. Indeed Malik (2021), B Blanchard and Thacker (2023) assert that planners must create a thorough orientation plan that includes information about the intervention's goals, the tasks participants must complete, and how they will be evaluated, as well as deadlines, performance manuals, internet or intranet sites, and other information sources.

During the orientation sessions, trainees are made aware of the intervention to understand what will be covered during training and the crucial skills that will come out of it. All programme-related conversations and decisions should involve the trainees. Details like the number of hours the intervention will run each day and the general house rules that will be followed during the training period need to be worked out and agreed upon (; O'Leary & O'Donovan, 2021) (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023; Harini et al., 2023; Jones & Foster, 2020; Romero-Mas et al., 2024). Additionally, it is important to find out if potential trainees have received complete and accurate information about the intervention if their specific concerns have been addressed, and if they are aware of the advantages of participating in the training (Värlander & Karlsson, 2018). The trainers must ascertain the participants' prior knowledge and whether they are committed to the full endeavour. Indeed, B Blanchard and Thacker (2023); Harini et al. (2023); Romero-Mas et al. (2024); Jones and Foster (2020); O'Leary and O'Donovan (2021); V Värlander and Karlsson (2018), are of the view that this phase is for managing participant expectations, clarifying goals, and establishing a shared understanding of the intervention's purpose to enhance engagement and outcomes in the learning process.

The learning phase of the intervention

Apart from orientation, Isabirye's (2015) framework of staff development recommends a learning phase. This is a phase when trainees acquire knowledge, understanding, and concepts, of leadership and management. During this phase, trainees are subjected to real, genuine, or practical tasks that support learning. To assist trainees, in developing the required skills and competencies, instructors make sure that trainees are exposed to real-world learning challenges. Such activities should emphasise problem-solving and have an impact on the workplace environment (Sikandar, 2015; Yang, 2024; Yasar & Atay, 2023). Since The trainees in this case are adults, H Hultman and Giddings (2019), Yasar and Atay (2023) assert that during this phase facilitators need to allow some self-directed learning; allowing participants to control their developing learning processes. H Hultman and Giddings (2019), Yasar and Atay (2023) indicate that facilitators should embrace strategies that encourage self-directed learning, collaborative learning methods, and feedback mechanisms to maximise learning. J Jorda-Molina and Palacios-Marqués (2018), and Qureshi et al. (2023) reveal that collaboration fosters social connections, trust, and information sharing among participants to facilitate the transfer of knowledge gained during the intervention into practical work contexts. G Garcia-Holgado et al. (2019), Yasar and Atay (2023) emphasise the need for the facilitators to grant some autonomy to the participants for it is this autonomy that fosters self-directed learning behaviours among participants.

To further develop their independence, responsibility, and capacity for self-directed learning, it is crucial that throughout this period, in keeping with the principles of adult learning, their active participation in the learning process is encouraged (Livingston & Cummings-Clay, 2023; Santos-Meneses et al., 2023). However, participation in learning should also be accompanied by collaboration and interaction. According to Qureshi et al. (2023), interactive professional development events are essential for developing social support networks and relationships among coworkers in addition to improving knowledge and skill acquisition. These connections can serve as the foundation for academic collaboration and future career development.

It is important to acknowledge that each manager's learning experience could be different. It is, however, the facilitator's responsibility to determine which manager has what kind of experience by asking each of them to describe what they know about the subject being taught and work with each of them to identify any shortcomings that may have been present in their previous experiences (Anane, 2020; O'Leary, & O'Donovan, 2021; Livingston & Cummings-Clay, 2023; Santos-Meneses, et.al., 2023) (Anane, 2020; Livingston & Cummings-Clay, 2023; Santos-Meneses et al., 2023).

Since attending a training class does not guarantee the acquisition of skills or competencies (Isabirye, 2015), any training intervention must have a skills acquisition phase. This is important because factors such as the quality of the training, the motivation of the trainee, and the relevance of the training to the trainee's job role can all affect whether the learner acquires new skills or not.

The acquisition phase

Competencies acquisition refers to developing practical abilities to perform tasks, activities, and jobs effectively and efficiently. In the context of this study, this is the phase in which the senior managers are empowered with Leadership skills and competencies such as effective communication, motivational skills time management, and problem-solving, they become strategic thinkers, can apply financial management skills, become astute communicators, and effective problem solvers (Isabirye, 2015; Santos-Meneses et al., 2023). With the acquired leadership skills, managers should be able to inspire, motivate, and guide employees toward a common goal. Meanwhile, as strategic thinkers, they should have the ability to analyze complex local and national government issues and develop long-term plans for the municipality.

Regarding financial management skills, managers should be able to develop, manage, and monitor municipal budgets effectively (Moloto & Lethoko, 2018). While communication skills allow them to communicate effectively with stakeholders and the public, problem-solving skills enable the participants to identify problems, evaluate potential solutions, and implement the most effective solution. On the other hand, the acquisition of Interpersonal skills places the trainees in a position where they can build and maintain effective working relationships with team members, elected officials, and the public. Concerning Decision-making, this phase prepares the trainees and gives them the ability to make informed decisions based on data and analysis of information provided by employees, the community, and regional and national governments (Button et al., 2020). Button et al. (2020) indicate further that this phase equips trainee managers with political acumen; enabling them to navigate political landscapes and work effectively with elected officials both at local and national levels. Given that managers are also project managers, it is expected that the acquisition phase will give them the ability to manage multiple projects concurrently and meet established timelines for the completion of projects. Furthermore, phase 4 empowers them with the ability to keep up to date on new trends, regulations, and best practices in local government management.

The performance phase of the intervention (Practice-based learning)

The performance phase of the intervention emphasizes practice-oriented learning. This is a phase when senior managers prioritize practical application

and hands-on experience in addition to theoretical knowledge. According to Annan-Prah and Andoh (2023), this is a phase when managers actively engage in real-world scenarios, tasks, or problem-solving note that the performance phase of learning aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice by immersing the managers in practical situations, that enhance their skills, improve critical thinking abilities, and help them develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. While senior managers may already have substantial practical experience, learning during this phase can provide them with opportunities to further enhance their skills, update their knowledge, and adapt to new and evolving challenges in their field (Hanu et al., 2023; Mann et al., 2021). Mann et al. (2021) further indicate during this phase trainees can engage in practical workshops, attend conferences and seminars, participate in case studies, collaborate with peers, mentor junior staff, or undertake specific projects to broaden their perspectives and acquire new practical insights. Putri et al. (2023), and Bassot (2024) add that this is a phase of reflection where participants often reflect on their experiences, analyze their thought processes, and identify areas for improvement. This reflective process helps consolidate their learning and develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, this phase often involves collaboration and teamwork, as participants work together to solve problems or complete tasks (Bassot, 2024). This promotes the development of interpersonal skills, communication abilities, and the ability to work effectively in a team environment. Continuous learning and staying abreast of best practices and innovative approaches are crucial for senior managers to remain effective and adaptable leaders in local government. During this phase of learning it is vital to establish whether the managers can apply the leadership skills learned (Bassot, 2024).

Evaluation of the learning intervention phases

According to Isabirye (2015), evaluation is essential in each of the four phases; for it provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the intervention, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures that the desired outcomes are achieved. In line with Isabirye (2015), B Blanchard and Thacker (2023) assert that it is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme across all its phases, from the initial orientation to the final performance-based learning phase. Evaluating each phase of the learning intervention can provide valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the learning experience. During the orientation phase, evaluation is necessary to assess if the newly enrolled managers have a clear understanding of the intervention's purpose, objectives, and expectations (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023). Evaluating this phase can help ensure participants have a clear understanding of the purpose and structure of the

intervention, which is essential for their engagement and motivation (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023; Imansari et al., 2023; Isabirye, 2015). Evaluation can be done through pre-training assessments or surveys to gauge participants' knowledge and expectations. Additionally, feedback sessions or focus group discussions can be held to allow participants to raise any concerns or seek clarification (Alavi & Priem, 2019; Blanchard & Thacker, 2023).

Regarding evaluation during the learning or training phase, B Blanchard and Thacker (2023); and Imansari et al. (2023) indicate that it is designed to determine the effectiveness of the training programmes and materials used. Evaluation during this phase helps in assessing whether the content is relevant, engaging, and aligned with the participants' needs (Isabirye, 2015). Thus, evaluating this phase can provide insights into the effectiveness of the instructional methods, the quality of the learning materials, and the level of learner comprehension (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023). This information can inform future iterations of the learning intervention and help ensure that the content is delivered in a manner that maximizes learning. Additionally, trainers should ascertain whether training methods and subject matter were adequately addressed and properly handled. Isabirye (2015) indicates that evaluation during this phase is influenced by questions about whether the facilitator accommodated the various learning preferences of the participants and whether the training provided the skills and knowledge it was intended to provide. A positive response to these questions suggests that participants' attitudes, knowledge, and skills have changed and that they are prepared to go on to the performance phase (; Imansari et. al.; 2023) (Alavi & Priem, 2019; Blanchard & Thacker, 2023).

According to Isabirye's (2015) framework of staff development, the need to establish whether trainees have acquired the necessary skills, competencies, and knowledge cannot be overemphasised. In this regard, it will be possible to determine the effectiveness and success of the training intervention, identify areas where trainees may be lacking, provide an opportunity for individual managers to understand their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas where further training is required, recognize high performers, provide additional growth opportunities, and determine the return on investment. Indeed, in the skills acquisition phase, evaluation helps gauge whether managers are successfully acquiring the desired skills and if they are applying them appropriately. B Blanchard and Thacker (2023) confirm that evaluation during the skills acquisition phase is structured to determine the extent to which participants have successfully transferred their learning to real-world situations or simulated environments This evaluation can inform the design of future interventions and identify areas where additional support or practice may

be needed (Hill, 2023). Patterson et al. (2019) indicate that in this phase, evaluation methods can include practical assessments, case studies, role-plays, or simulations that mimic real-life scenarios. Assessing participants' performance against predefined criteria allows for unbiased feedback on their skill development progress.

Unlike in the last three phases, in the performance phase of the intervention, evaluation measures the actual application of newly acquired skills in real work situations and determines the impact on individual and organisational performance (Annan-Prah & Andoh, 2023; Garg & Rathore, 2018; Hanu et al., 2023). It is necessary to establish whether the learning interventions have translated into improved work outcomes, productivity, or employee satisfaction (Alavi & Priem, 2019; Blanchard & Thacker, 2023; Hanu et al., 2023; Isabirye, 2015). According to Alavi and Priem (2019), Various evaluation techniques can be employed, such as job performance reviews, self-assessment tools, employee surveys, or feedback from supervisors and team members.

Overall, evaluation in each of the four phases is crucial to ensure that the learning interventions for managers in the local municipality are effective. It helps identify any gaps or shortcomings, allows for necessary improvements, and ensures that the goals and objectives of the intervention are being met. By employing diverse evaluation methods, including assessments, surveys, observations, and feedback sessions, a comprehensive evaluation process can be established to provide valuable insights and enhance the intervention's effectiveness (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023; Hanu et al., 2023; Heijden et al., 2020). This holistic approach to evaluation is essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of learning interventions across various educational and professional contexts.

It is important to select or design appropriate evaluation instruments that align with the specific goals and objectives of the leadership learning intervention. Additionally, combining multiple assessment methods provides a comprehen-sive evaluation of the intervention's impact (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023; Isabirye, 2015). In this case, Surveys questionnaires, and Performance assessments could be used as evaluation instruments. Whilst surveys and questionnaires can be administered before, during, and after the intervention to gather participants' perceptions, attitudes, and self-assessments; performance assessments can measure changes in leadership skills, knowledge, and behaviours.

The need for supportive policies and practices from the municipality

The success of these training programmes greatly depends on the presence of policies and practices, within the organisation (Kravariti et al., 2023). Leaders are more willing to apply the knowledge and expertise acquired through training

when the organisational culture encourages learning and development (Akdere & Egan, 2020). A crucial aspect of fostering an environment is implementing policies that support and facilitate learning opportunities (Kesavan, 2021). This involves regulations that allow access to training opportunities and offer rewards for participating in learning programmes. The municipal environment should also allow for flexible work arrangements to accommodate training schedules (Akdere & Egan, 2020) for the participants. Additionally putting in place policies that recognize and encourage the use of skills and knowledge can significantly enhance the importance of continuous training, among leadership teams (Kravariti et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the training and learning interventions become more effective when the municipality's practices and organisational culture play a role. Supportive policies also contribute to this improvement (Soomro et al., 2021). When leaders receive encouragement and backing from their superiors and colleagues to engage in learning initiatives, they are more likely to commit to and prioritize the process (Akdere & Egan, 2020). Regular input and guidance from mentors along with opportunities for sharing knowledge and working together are proven strategies to achieve this objective (Kravariti et al., 2023). Furthermore, it should be clear that the municipality is committed to education and development by allocating resources such as dedicated financial support and time as well as making specialists in the area more accessible. Leaders are often more eager to engage in training and educational Programmes when they feel that the organisation appreciates their advancement and is willing to invest in their growth (Akdere & Egan, 2020).

To maximize the impact of a training programme's effectiveness it is essential to make sure it fits well within the municipality's rules and procedures (Hayes & Smith, 2021). According to Leithwood et al. (2021), the Programme must be designed in harmony with the municipality's policies and goals, for success. Considering the municipality's goals and mission is vital to ensure that the Programme not only complements but also advances them along their intended path.   One way to achieve this is by examining the policies of the local government and pinpointing the important areas where educational initiatives can help support those policies effectively.   Before creating any learning programmes as suggested by B Blanchard and Thacker (2023) and Imansari et al. (2023) assert that it is crucial to evaluate to determine the exact skills and competencies needed by municipal leadership. This assessment should also consider any discrepancies, between the existing performance standards and the desired levels of performance. When the intervention is tailored to meet the needs of the managers and the municipality, it becomes more relevant and valuable to the managers and the municipality.

Local government backing could also show up in engaging stakeholders effectively by involving figures from the municipality like top executives and relevant departments' personnel, for defining the goals and scope of the educational effort and align it with the municipality's priorities to garner needed support (Leithwood et al., 2021). According to Ritz and Auh (2020) it is important for the intervention to blend smoothly with the practices and procedures within the local government body to minimize obstacles or opposition to change and increase the likelihood of a successful rollout. For instance, If the local government already utilizes performance management systems incorporating the training intervention, into these systems can help strengthen and facilitate skill enhancement and performance enhancements.

 Leithwood et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of making sure that the learning programme is not a single occurrence but a continuous and lasting effort. The key is to integrate the knowledge and abilities into everyday work routines by consistently reinforcing them with follow-up activities. This long-term sustainability hinges on backing and dedication from the local government's leadership as well as incorporation, into career growth and succession planning initiatives. In conclusion, if the intervention is tailored to match the municipality's goals the training becomes more meaningful and effective resulting in results, for both managers and the municipality. Businesses can enhance leadership training effectiveness by fostering a culture of learning and implementing supportive policies and procedures (Akdere & Egan, 2020; Ellinger & Ellinger, 2021). As a result of this process, can lead to the development of leaders with improved abilities, adaptability, and dedication. This allows them to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities, within the organisation (Ellinger & Ellinger, 2021).

The need for time to ensure the effectiveness of the learning intervention

The effectiveness of a learning or training programme does not just depend on the content or delivery method as captured in Isabirye's (2015) training model. Aligning with this observation, recent research (Golzari et al., 2023;) (Essa, 2023; Mcgrew, 2023) emphasises the importance of time in training. Referring to Gagne's model of training, for example, Golzari et al. (2023), suggest that training Programmes which allow participants time to engage with the material actively and practice their new skills while receiving feedback tend to be more effective, in improving performance and retaining knowledge compared to shorter Programmes. The researchers argue that there is often an underestimation of the time needed for learners to fully grasp and apply the training content leading to suboptimal outcomes. Exploring Carroll's theory of school learning, for example, Mcgrew (2023) highlighted the importance of the time taken by a learner to grasp a particular task; indicating that there should be

adequate time for needs assessment, programme design, learning and learner assessment. Mcgrew (2023) concludes that if these stages are rushed through, the training may not fully meet the needs of the intended audience resulting in reduced relevance and effectiveness.

In addition, when discussing Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory, Essa (2023) emphasises the importance of allowing time for the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills by participants in their personal or professional lives." The writer argues that without time for practice and guidance, after training sessions the full benefits of the Programme may not be realised since learners could struggle to integrate new behaviours into their everyday routines.

Against the above backdrop, Eby et al. (2019) emphasised the importance of providing time for leadership training Programmes to allow leaders to fully participate and engage in the learning process effectively. A rushed or poorly planned training session may impede participants' capacity to grasp and incorporate information and abilities as noted by Brown and Gist (2019). Indeed, Brown and Gist (2019) recommend setting dedicated time for such interventions to increase the Programmes' overall efficacy. Stevens and Gist (2019) add that ineffective time management and related issues can affect educational initiatives The authors emphasise the significance of offering assistance and resources to trainees to help them better manage their time Along with this they stress the need, for training programmes that cater to individuals time preferences to enhance the successful application of newly gained skills.

Leaders must dedicate time to honing their skills through application methods like case studies and simulations to truly excel and build confidence in using their knowledge effectively (Stevens & Gist, 2019). Allowing time, for hands-on practice enables participants to refine their abilities and connect theoretical concepts to their real-world responsibilities within the municipal setting. By reflecting and considering the specific context at hand individuals can adjust and tailor acquired knowledge to better address the distinct obstacles and situations encountered in their roles as leaders. This process enhances comprehension and significance of the learning material rendering it more practical and influential, in their professional endeavours (Essa, 2023).

Available literature further indicates that allowing time for follow-up sessions, discussions, and ongoing support post-intervention is crucial for reinforcing learning and sustaining its impact. In this regard, municipal managers need opportunities to revisit and reinforce the key takeaways, share challenges and successes, and seek guidance and support from trainers and peers. Continuous engagement over time helps embed the learning into their management practices, ensuring its long-term effectiveness (Eby et al., 2019; Huber &

Gockel, 2020). Sufficient time is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the management learning intervention. Regarding this, time is needed to collect feedback from participants, analyze the impact on leadership practices, and make necessary adjustments for future programmes. Rushed evaluations can overlook critical insights and hinder the ability to identify areas for improvement. Allocating enough time for comprehensive evaluation ensures the ongoing success and refinement of future interventions.

In essence, time plays a vital role in guaranteeing the effectiveness of a management training initiative. It enables learning, reflection, practice, application, contextualization, reinforcement, and assessment. By allocating enough time to the intervention, it can significantly improve leaders' skills enhance their management strategies and ultimately drive the municipality's overall success.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative case study design, with a purposively chosen sample, was used (Nikolopoulou, 2022; Yin, 2014). From a population of 17 local municipalities in the Mpumalanga province, one municipality was selected with seven participants for in-depth semi-structured interviews. The seven (7) participants consisted of (i) the municipal manager; (ii) five (5) senior officials, heading various departments within the municipality, and one senior administrator. Five of the selected participants were men and two were females. The common feature shared by the selected participants was the expectation that they would drive service delivery to local citizens in the area, based on their knowledge of roles and responsibilities, and their experience having been in their portfolios for over five (5) years. The seven participants addressed sample adequacy because they were all senior employees, expected to have a proven record of good governance and fiancé management and had undergone leadership intervention training to contribute meaningful insights to the study. Thus, using semi-structured interviews, data were collected from seven participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stahl & King, 2020; Vijayamohan, 2024). All participants were code-named P1 to P7 for ethical reasons, with P1 being the first and P7 the seventh and last participant to be interviewed. This method ensured participant identity and confidentiality, per research ethics. Participants had 45-60-minute one-on-one interviews. The semi-structured interviews followed a guide but allowed for open-ended discussion and topic exploration. All interviews were audio recorded with the participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim. The transcripts served as the primary data source.

The qualitative analysis of the collected data involved a detailed examination of the transcriptions, seeking to identify emerging patterns and themes related to

the effectiveness of leadership learning (Fullstory, 2024) as illustrated in Figure 2 below:
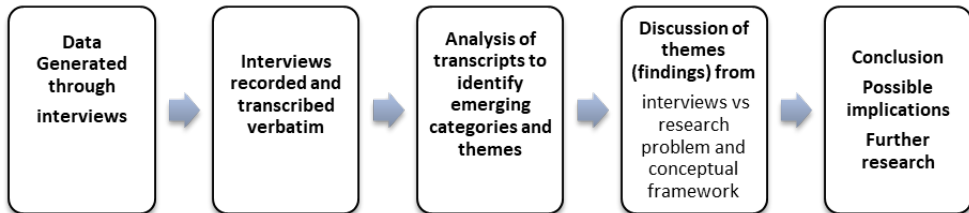

Figure 2: *A schematic representation of the data collection and analysis processes*

The coding process involved two researchers independently analysing the transcripts.   Initial coding required reading over the transcripts and giving preliminary codes to text portions. Codes were generated through an inductive approach, as opposed to the quantitative deductive approach; allowing themes to emerge directly from the data (Delve et al., 2023). These codes indicated the basic concepts and patterns found in the data. The next step was to identify sub-themes. Subthemes are clusters of related codes as reflected in Table 1. The subthemes addressed more precise and detailed facets of the topic under investigation. Formulation of subthemes entailed reviewing the initial codes and categorising them according to their similarities, differences, and relationships. Following the construction of the sub-themes was the development of significant themes; and it entailed going through the subthemes and looking for wider patterns, trends, or overarching notions that linked and encompassed them. Through a process of constant comparison and consensus, the researchers refined and organised the codes into broader themes that captured the essence of the participants' experiences and perceptions (Stahl & King, 2020).   The themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis constitute the findings of this study. These themes shed light on the effectiveness of the leadership learning interventions within the municipality context, providing insights into the strengths, limitations, and potential areas of improvement for such interventions. The identified themes, as captured in Table 1, offer a higher-level comprehension of the study, and encapsulate the effectiveness of the learning interventions in the municipality. They also contribute to the understanding of leadership development efforts and offer practical implications for future interventions in similar settings.

Table 1.

Themes, sub-themes, and operational definitions

Theme	Sub-themes	Operational definitions of the themes
Efficacy and Positive results of the learning intervention	● Improved leadership skills and competencies better decision-making capabilities ● Increased employee motivation and engagement ● Positive influence on organisational performance and service delivery ● Enhanced communication and collaboration within the municipal departments	Positive outcomes of the learning intervention
Challenges in implementation	● Insufficient resources (financial, human, or infrastructure ● Resistant towards Change by Municipal Employees ● Municipal leaders' lack of time and heavy workload ● Challenging to integrate learning interventions with the strategic objectives of the organisation ● Lack of management support for the learning initiatives	Challenges in Implementing Learning Interventions
Strategies for improving learning intervention	● Ensure leadership buy-in and commitment ● Link learning interventions to the municipality's strategic goals ● Involve workers in the design and execution of the training programmes ● Give enough funding and resources for the training initiatives ● Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the learning interventions ● Encouraging learning and professional development within the municipality	Initiatives to ensure the effectiveness of learning interventions

While the researchers aimed to explore the efficacy of the educational interventions implemented in the local municipality, two additional themes, the difficulties associated with implementing the learning interventions, and the suggested solutions to improve their effectiveness, arose and are captured in Table 1 too. The sub-themes outlined in Table 1 offer more intricacy and comprehension of the three primary themes. The three major themes are now explained, discussed, and interpreted against the theoretical framework and the explored literature in the section that follows.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explored the effectiveness of leadership interventions in a local municipality, with a focus on their impact on municipal managers' leadership abilities, problem-solving skills, management knowledge, performance, communication, efficiency, productivity, growth, career development, change management, and customer service delivery. The findings of the study revealed a range of positive outcomes resulting from the leadership interventions; confirming that to a larger degree, the interventions were effective. However, all partici-

pants agreed that despite the interventions' benefits, several challenges must be addressed to make the interventions even more effective. Considering the challenges, respondents proposed strategies to overcome the identified challenges. These issues are now presented and discussed as the findings of this study.

The Benefits and Effectiveness of the Learning Intervention

When asked whether they thought that the learning interventions they were exposed to were effective and beneficial, all participants reported enhanced leadership skills, including improved decision-making, strategic thinking, and team management. Secondly, the interventions positively influenced problem-solving abilities, equipping managers with effective tools and techniques to address complex challenges faced by local municipalities. Moreover, participants noted significant growth in their management knowledge, expanding their understanding of various areas such as financial management, project planning, and organisational development.

Indeed, when asked what they thought of the learning interventions in terms of their effectiveness, P1 indicated, "For me, I do feel the learning was effective. I feel the workshops helped me to develop essential leadership. I must say am a better communicator, and decision-maker and I can manage the team effectively". In line with P1, P2 went ahead to state, "I think am a better manager as I can engage my team members. I can motivate them, and we all work together." As for P3, "The training strengthened my knowledge of management. I feel confident now that I will communicate better with our stakeholders, unlike before when we only focussed on delivering services without communicating to the communities. Programmes of this nature may assist us to develop useful skills that are relevant to our roles and responsibilities if provided more often." These results are in line with Dlamini's and Reddy's (2018); and Maake's (2016) observation that learning interventions are vital for municipal managers if they must enhance their leadership.

Participants indicated further that the interventions had a direct impact on their performance as municipal managers. Participants reported improved efficiency and productivity in their daily tasks, leading to enhanced service delivery to the community. The interventions also played a pivotal role in strengthening communication skills among managers, fostering effective collaboration among teams, and enhancing stakeholder engagement. Importantly, the leadership interventions contributed to the professional growth and career development of municipal managers. Participants expressed increased confidence in their roles, expanded networks, and opportunities for advancement within the municipality as they participated in the learning. Furthermore, managers were transformed into better change agents, equipped with the skills and mindset

necessary to navigate and lead organisational change effectively. P4 narrates "I enjoyed working with my colleagues in addressing problems that we face in our workplace. Sometimes things were hard because we did not always agree on solutions to some of the leadership challenges we face in the municipality." Adding to the comments by P4, P5 said, "I think most of my expectations were met by this programme." Asked what those expectations were, he indicated that when he attended the first session, he needed to learn how to work well with others, especially within his directorate where he experienced some resistance from his subordinates." Participants felt that apart from being equipped with leadership skills through the learning interventions, the group-work methods that the developmental programme used provided them with opportunities to interact and work together as colleagues.

When asked whether they were going to use the competencies and skills they had learned, the participants expressed their intentions to do so. P2 for instance stated, "The practical experiences I had when I started attending the programme, and experiences I have gone through in this training are going to assist us in leading our directorates more effectively and efficiently." Echoing P2, P3 indicated that, "there is no way I am not going to try the new knowledge in practice. I expect the way of doing things to change in my directorate." Asked what he meant, he added that, "In my directorates, all activities used to be centred on my decisions and how I wanted things done. As a result, the voice of my subordinates was not given a chance to contribute to the running of the directorate. They were only available to take my instruction. This was wrong because it limited the achievements of the directorate to my efforts as an individual. This robbed the directorate of any possibility of collective efforts." P5 indicated that the training programmes got them to talk openly about the municipality and service delivery challenges they experienced. He identified low worker morale as a challenge in most directorates; revealing that most employees in his directorate were demoralised and, due to lack of communication. P5 indicated that the lack of a communication platform in his directorate frustrated most of the employees; however, "with these new ideas [from the training] we should be able to create some form of a platform to facilitate effective communication and encouraged teamwork within and across directorates."

While the interventions demonstrated several benefits, participants acknowledged several limitations and challenges encountered during their implementation as discussed in the section that ensues.

Challenges

The findings shed light on the following key challenges encountered during the implementation of the learning interventions. For instance, participants highlighted the scarcity of resources as a major constraint in fully utilising the potential benefits of the interventions. Insufficient funding, limited access to training materials, and inadequate technological infrastructure hindered the effectiveness of the interventions. Participant 3's aptly captured the respondents' frustration about inadequate or the absence of material content for financial management knowledge and skills. In her own words, the participant stated thus, "My expectations were that the intervention would help me with some ideas on how I can improve expenditure in my department as for the past two financial years, my department underspent resulting in budget moved to other departments during budget reviews." Unfortunately, the respondent observed, to her chagrin, that her expectations about financial management content were not addressed. This limitation underscores the need for adequate resource allocation to support comprehensive leadership development initiatives; and the need for an orientation phase of a training intervention, a phase where participants' expectations are addressed (Isabirye, 2015).

Secondly, time constraints faced by trainees emerged as a significant challenge. Municipal managers often face heavy workloads and demanding schedules, leaving limited time for them to fully engage in the interventions. Furthermore, there was also time for longer sessions to allow the managers to reflect on the concepts, theories, and practices introduced during the intervention. More time would also provide an opportunity for participants to internalise the information, critically analyse its relevance to their roles, and consider how it can be applied within the municipality. Without adequate time for reflection and application, the learning may remain superficial and fail to translate into tangible improvements in management practices. Raising the challenge of time, P6 indicated that, "time for attending all training sessions or workshops was not there due to my demanding roles and workloads." In line with P6, P3 added, "We would have done more if it was not for the limited time allocated for each session of the intervention, but still, a lot has been done." This constraint may have affected the depth of knowledge and skill acquisition, potentially hindering the overall effectiveness of the learning interventions. Indeed, Isabirye (2015) argues that the success of a training intervention requires enough time. Thus, allocating sufficient time for the management learning intervention and to the participants allows leaders to fully engage and immerse themselves in the learning process. A rushed or haphazardly scheduled intervention can hinder the ability of participants to absorb and internalise new knowledge and

skills. Scheduling dedicated time for the intervention shows a commitment to learning and enhances the programme's overall effectiveness. Sufficient time is also necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of each phase of management learning intervention (Isabirye, 2015). This includes collecting feedback from participants, analysing the impact on leadership practices, and making necessary adjustments for future programmes. The idea of sufficient time is further captured by B Blanchard and Thacker (2023). suggestion that after a training and development programme has been implemented, it is important to make sure that the competencies, knowledge, and skills learned are transferred and applied in the workplace to bring about positive change (longitudinal evaluation). However, this method of evaluation requires an extended period because it can only be effectively conducted over a time wherein senior managers would have to be observed implementing and using the learned competencies and skills.

Furthermore, the study revealed instances of resistance among certain managers toward participating in the learning interventions. Resistance may have stemmed from a variety of factors, including scepticism about the value of the interventions, perceived disruption to daily work routines, or a lack of belief in the effectiveness of training programmes. In the words of P7, "The programmes are okay, but they honestly interfere with our daily routines and there is quite a lot to accomplish on our tables as managers." Addressing this resistance is crucial to ensure the widespread adoption and acceptance of leadership learning interventions. Additionally, participants expressed concerns about the lack of customisation of the interventions to meet the specific needs of individual managers and their unique roles within the municipality. P5 for instance indicated that while he appreciated the efforts by the municipality to train them, he would have liked to be trained in what he wanted to learn and not everything management thought they should learn. Isabirye (2015) argues in this regard that an effective learning intervention should have an orientation phase, a phase where facilitators endeavour to establish participants' prior knowledge, needs, and expectations. It is evident from this finding that the municipality employed a one-size-fits-all approach. Such an approach may limit the relevance and applicability of the interventions, potentially impacting their effectiveness. Tailoring the interventions to align with the diverse needs of municipal managers could enhance their impact.

The study identified a lack of sustainability as a significant limitation of the interventions. Many participants noted that the benefits gained during the intervention period were not adequately reinforced or supported in the long term. Sustained support and follow-up mechanisms are crucial to ensure that the acquired knowledge and skills are integrated into everyday practices and yield lasting improvements in leadership effectiveness. According to Isabirye's

(2015) staff development framework, successful training interventions should have total management support. However, participants in this study expressed concerns about the lack of support from some of senior managers within the municipality. The absence of visible endorsement and active involvement of senior management and the lack of political support for the interventions may have hindered their effectiveness. Strong leadership commitment and support are essential to creating a culture of continuous learning and development.

Indeed, Isabirye (2015) notes that if senior management does not fully support or actively participate in the learning interventions, it can create a negative perception among other managers. Lack of support from senior management may lead to a lack of commitment or enthusiasm towards the interventions, reducing their overall impact

These findings highlight the importance of addressing these limitations to maximize the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions in local municipalities. Allocating sufficient resources, providing flexibility in scheduling, addressing resistance, customizing interventions, ensuring sustainability, and securing support from senior managers are key areas that require attention to overcome the identified challenges and enhance the overall impact of leadership development initiatives. Addressing these limitations would contribute to the development of more robust and effective leadership learning interventions that can empower municipal managers and foster positive change within local municipalities.

Proposed strategies

Considering the challenges, the respondents proposed solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the learning interventions. One key suggestion put forth by respondents was the adoption of tailored approaches to learning. In this regard, P6, an employee in the finance department, indicated that she would have preferred learning material specifically connected with finance. In her own words, "What we learned did not serve my purpose. We could not spend our budget last year and the money was returned. How should my department ensure that every coin is spent? For me, this was my issue but nothing was done about it." From the above comment, it is evident that a one-size-fits-all approach might not be suitable for all managers, as they come from diverse backgrounds, and directorates and possess varying skill sets. Therefore, customizing the interventions to address individual managers' specific needs and preferences could significantly enhance their effectiveness. This finding is supported by various authors (; Xie,et. al, 2019) (Isabirye, 2015). Li and Wong (2021). Isabirye (2015) and Xie et al (2019) advocate for a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the specific learning needs and skill gaps to ensure that the interventions are targeted and aligned with organisational goals.

Additionally, participants indicated the need for continuous evaluation of each phase of the interventions to ensure that managers mastered the skills and knowledge they were supposed to master. This was consistent with the staff development framework as presented by Isabirye (Isabirye, 2015). Isabirye (2015) argues that monitoring and assessing the progress and outcomes of the interventions at various intervals would enable the facilitators to identify any shortcomings or areas for improvement. Such shortcomings would be identified and addressed promptly, ensuring a more efficient and effective intervention.

Furthermore, respondents emphasised the importance of increased support from the local administration. It was acknowledged that leadership learning interventions require a supportive organisational culture and structure to thrive. Active involvement and support from senior management and the municipality in the learning interventions can be a sign of commitment to continuous learning and development. This eventually motivates reluctant managers and employees to participate and value the importance of learning. However, in the words of P5, "If this training must be effective all managers and the municipality should be for it. Unfortunately, some of our colleagues seem to be forced to attend. And I think the entire municipality should see and appreciate the value of the workshops. This does not seem to be the case." What this implies, is that by garnering the support and involvement of the entire municipality, trainees would feel empowered and motivated to fully engage with the interventions, leading to better outcomes. This is in line with Isabirye's (2015); Admiraal et al's. (2021) observation that a successful staff development intervention must have the organisation's backing.

This research also revealed the absence of post-training support within the municipality, a crucial factor that contributed to the ineffectiveness of the interventions. According to Lyon et al. (2022), Learning does not end with the completion of a training programme. It requires ongoing reinforcement and application in the workplace. This requires appropriate support mechanisms in place, such as coaching, mentoring, or follow-up sessions, the managers struggled to translate their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practical outcomes. However, the following excerpts indicated that this was not the case in the municipality.

P3: Not much was done after our training to assist us in reinforcing our training.

P4: Many of us struggled to implement everything that we learned.

P6: There were no follow-up sessions after the end of the programmes.

P5: I needed more training even after the end of the workshops.

Considering the above responses, respondents proposed that there was a need for the municipality to implement post-training support mechanisms to reinforce learning and facilitate the application of new knowledge and skills.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are nine provinces in South Africa, however, a local municipality government in the Mpumalanga province was selected for the study. This study adopted a qualitative paradigm and interviewed seven municipal managers selected from the Mpumalanga province. This is a small sample. Using one research paradigm, the qualitative approach limits the generalisation of the findings to a broader population, as would have been the case if the quantitative approach had been used. The results of this study may only be relevant to a group of local government officials and leaders within the municipality area where the study was conducted. It should be noted that the study was based on interviews with a selected group of participants which may introduce some bias and subjective interpretations. The findings might not capture all viewpoints on the effectiveness of leadership learning interventions in other local governments in Mpumalanga province or South Africa at large. Implementing other measures such as performance metrics before and after evaluations could offer deeper insights into the effectiveness of leadership training Programmes instead of just assessing the design and delivery of these interventions along with their results as highlighted in the research in this study. Thus, the findings are centred on the participants' perspectives only. A comprehensive analysis might uncover strengths weaknesses and areas for enhancement. Furthermore, Potential bias in selecting participants might have influenced how well the sample represented the broader population and how conclusions from the study were drawn. Lastly, no examination was done on factors like organisational dynamics political context or economic conditions. These factors could impact leadership development initiatives, in local government settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Considering the study findings, it is suggested that upcoming training initiatives and resources be customized to address the requirements and challenges of the municipality—especially concerning financial operations—to guarantee their applicability and effectiveness. Additionally, it is advised that leadership development Programmes undergo assessments to evaluate their effectiveness and implement necessary enhancements as needed. This may involve seeking input from participants and monitoring the effects, on organisational productivity. The study highlighted the importance of support from municipality leaders and administrators, for effective and enduring leadership training

Programmes the municipality must allocate adequate funds and commitment to foster the growth of municipal managers. The research findings indicated that the length of leadership training sessions might not be enough; henceforth further studies should explore the optimal time allocation to enhance learning outcomes and successful results attainment.

This study focused on the perspectives of municipal managers involved in leadership training programmes. Further research should investigate the viewpoints and encounters of other stakeholders like elected representatives, citizens and external service providers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these programmes. Additionally, future researchers should broaden this study by including more municipal governments either in Mpumalanga or, across different regions. Such research could offer insights into how leadership development Programmes perform differently in various situations and help pinpoint top strategies to develop more impactful solutions. By following these recommendations new studies could add to a deeper comprehension of what factors boost the impact of leadership training programmes, in local government settings resulting in boosting organisational efficiency and community service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of leadership training programmes was examined in the context of a local government Municipality in Mpumalanga. From the views of the senior managers who participated in the study, leadership training interventions provided both advantages and disadvantages. The research highlighted areas that could be enhanced such as the absence of tailored Programmes and resources to address individual requirements like financial management and inadequate time allocation, for learning activities. The participants recognized the advantages of the interventions but also pointed out areas that could be enhanced. Considering the findings and views of the participants, the researchers recommended various strategies and techniques. These included emphasizing personalized approaches the need for evaluation, collaboration, with the local government body and allowing ample time to ensure successful outcomes. This research adds insights to the existing knowledge on cultivating leadership skills; and presents practical suggestions, for local government bodies aiming to improve leadership effectiveness and organisational performance through educational initiatives.

REFERENCES

(n.d.). Government Printers: Pretoria.

Admiraal, W., Schenke, W., Jong, L. D., Emmelot, Y., & Sligte, H. (2021). (Vol. 47).

Akdere, M., & Egan, T. (2020). Transformational leadership and human resource development: Linking employee learning, job satisfaction, and organisational performance. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *31*(4), 393–421.

Alavi, H., & Priem, R. L. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of learning interventions for municipal managers: A study of best practices. *Public Administration Review*, *79*(4), 564–574.

Anane, E. (2020). A Multiple Mediation Analysis of the Effect of Prior Performance on Academic Achievement Through Student Teachers' Motivational. *Orientations. Higher Education Research*, *5*(4), 118–130.

Annan-Prah, E. C., & Andoh, R. P. (2023). Effects of customised capacity building on employee engagement, empowerment, and learning in Ghanaian local government institutions. *Public Administration and Policy*, *26*(2), 228–241.

Bassot, B. (2024). The reflective journal. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Blaik-Hourani, R. (2022). Enhancing leadership capacity in local government: An evaluation of a tailored training programme. *Public Administration Review*, *82*(3), 421–433.

Blanchard, P. N., & Thacker, J. W. (2023). SAGE Publications.

Broek, S., Linden, J. V. D., Kuijpers, M. A. C. T., & Semeijn, J. H. (2023). What makes adults choose to learn: Factors that stimulate or prevent adults from learning. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, *29*(2), 620–642.

Brown, T. C., & Gist, M. E. (2019). Leveraging time in training interventions: A review and integration of related research streams. *Journal of Management*, *45*(5), 1808–1835.

Button, C., Seifert, L., Chow, J. Y., Davids, K., & Araujo, D. (2020). *Dynamics of skill acquisition: An ecological dynamics approach*. Illinois: Human Kinetics Publishers.

Carvajal, A. L. P., & Sanchez, R. D. (2024). Probing the Leadership Qualities of Local Chief Executives (LCEs) in Creating Competitive Creative Communities: Basis for Leadership Framework and Development Plan. *International Journal of Open-access*, *3*(1), 380–400.

Cummings, G. G., Lee, S., Tate, K., Penconek, T., Micaroni, S. P., Paananen, T., & Chatterjee, G. E. (2021). The essentials of nursing leadership: A systematic review of factors and educational interventions influencing nursing leadership. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *115*, 103842–103842.

Delve, H. O., Limpaecher, L., & A. (2023). Retrieved from https://delvetool.com/blog/inductive-content-analysis-deductive-content-analysis.Accessed

Dikotla, M. A., Mahlatji, M. R., & Makgahlela, L. A. (2014). Knowledge management for the improvement of service delivery in South Africa's municipalities. *Journal of Public Administration*, *49*(3), 847–859.

Dlamini, B., & Reddy, P. S. (2018). Theory and practice of integrated development planning: a case study of Umtshezi Local Municipality in the KZN Province of South Africa.

African Journal of Public Affairs, *10*(1), 1–24.

Eby, L. T., Allen, T. D., & Lentz, E. (2019). The critical importance of context for training effectiveness: A qualitative exploration of frontline employee perspectives. *Personnel Psychology*, *72*(4), 745–777.

Ellinger, A. D., & Ellinger, A. E. (2021). (Vol. 28).

Essa, A. (2023). Back to bloom: Why theory matters in closing the achievement gap. *Data Analytics and Adaptive Learning*, 110–127.

Explorance. (2023).

Fullstory. (2024). What is qualitative data? How to understand, collect, and analyze it? *Available at: What is Qualitative Data? Types, Examples & Analysis | Fullstory*, 28–28.

Garcia-Holgado, A., Martinez-Moreno, E., & Reyes, A. (2019). Promoting self-directed learning in the learning phase of learning interventions for municipal managers: An empirical study. *Public Administration*, *97*(1), 136–152.

Garg, S., & Rathore, S. (2018). Effectiveness of learning interventions for municipal managers: A review and proposed evaluation framework. *Public Personnel Management*, *47*(4), 479–505.

Hanu, C., Amegbe, H., Yawson, M. D. T. A., & Mensah, P. (2023). Differential impact of work-based learning on employee agility, ambidexterity and proactive goal generation. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *35*(1), 92–111.

Harini, H., Lestari, I. D., Adisel, A., Yuni, Y., & Perkasa, D. H. (2023). Assessing Professional Development Training for Library Leader Candidates. *JIP) STKIP Kusuma Negara*, *15*(1), 32–46.

Hayes, J. A., & Smith, C. D. (2021). Creating effective training programmes for managers in local municipalities: The role of supportive policies and practices. *Public Administration Review*, *81*(2), 243–257.

Heijden, B. I. V. D., Szamosi, L. T., & Bozionelos, N. (2020). Evaluating the impact of learning interventions for municipal managers: A multilevel perspective. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*(7), 965–985.

Hill, L. H. (2023). What and Why of Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability in Adult Education. *Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability in Adult Education*, 3–17.

Huber, S., & Gockel, C. (2020). Timing matters: The impact of time on successful training programmes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(3), 273–285.

Hultman, J., & Giddings, L. (2019). Enhancing the learning phase of a learning intervention for municipal managers: A systematic review. *Public Personnel Management*, *48*(3), 297–317.

Imansari, N., Kholifah, U., & Sasono, A. M. (2023). Evaluation of Programmemable Logic Controller Training Implementation Using Kirkpatrick (4 Levels). *SAR Journal*, *6*, 73–77.

Isabirye, A. K. (2015).

Jones, F., & Foster, D. (2020). Enhancing the orientation phase of learning interventions for

municipal managers: A case study approach. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, *33*(7), 825–841.

Jorda-Molina, O., & Palacios-Marqués, D. (2018). Enhancing knowledge transfer in the learning phase of learning interventions for municipal managers: The role of social capital. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *38*(4), 513–534.

Kesavan, P. (2021). *Enablers of Organisational Learning, Knowledge Management, and Innovation*. Berlin: Springer Books.

Kim, S., & Dooley, R. S. (2019). The role of socialization in the orientation phase of learning interventions for municipal managers. *Public Administration Review*, *79*(1), 116–126.

Knoke, G. (2012). *Managing Human Resource Development: A strategic learning approach* (M. M. and, Ed.). Durban: LexisNexis.

Kravariti, F., Tasoulis, K., Scullion, H., & Alali, M. K. (2023). Talent management and performance in the public sector: the role of organisational and line managerial support for development. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *34*(9), 1782–1807.

Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., & Steinbach, R. (2021). Leadership and other conditions which foster organisational learning in schools. In *Organisational learning in schools* (pp. 67–90). Taylor & Francis.

Li, K. C., & Wong, B. T. M. (2001). Features and trends of personalised learning: A review of journal publications from. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *29*(2), 182–195.

Litz, D., & Blaik-Hourani, R. (2020). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.631

Livingston, M., & Cummings-Clay, D. (2023). Advancing adult learning using andragogic instructional practices. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*, *8*(1), 29–53.

Lyon, A. R., Liu, F. F., Connors, E. H., King, K. M., Coifman, J. I., Cook, H., & Mccauley, E. (2022). How low can you go? Examining the effects of brief online training and post-training consultation dose on implementation mechanisms and outcomes for measurement-based care. *Implementation Science Communications*, *3*(1), 1–15.

Maake, M. T. (2016).

Makalela, K. I. (2017). Integrated Development Planning as a Strategy for Poverty Alleviation: The Dilemma Within the Ambit of South Africa. *Conference Proceedings.International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives (IPADA*, 9–15.

Malik, P. (2021).

Mann, L., Chang, R., Chandrasekaran, S., Coddington, A., Daniel, S., Cook, E., & Smith, T. D. (2021). From problem-based learning to practice-based education: A framework for shaping future engineers. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, *46*(1), 27–47.

Mathebula, N. E. (2018). Integrated development plan implementation and the enhancement of service delivery: Is there a link? In *International Conference on Public*

Administration and Development Alternatives 04-06.

Maxwell, J. C. (2024). *Available at: Talent Is Never Enough Summary PDF* (. J. C. M. (bookey.app, Ed.).

Mcgrew, K. S. (2023). Carroll's three-stratum (3S) cognitive ability theory at 30 years: Impact, 3S-CHC theory clarification, structural replication, and cognitive-achievement psychometric network analysis extension. *Journal of Intelligence*, *11*(2), 32–32.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Moghaddam, N. G., Mehdinezhad, V., & Manesh, Z. (2023). Comparison the Effect of Gagne's Educational Model and Keller's Educational-Motivational Model on Academic Motivation and Achievement of Seventh Grade Students. *Iranian journal of educational sociology*, *6*(1), 92–102.

Mohzana, M. (2024). The Impact of the New Student Orientation Programme on the Adaptation Process and Academic Performance. *International Journal of Educational Narratives*, *2*(2), 169–178.

Moloto, K. A., & Lethoko, M. X. (2018). Municipal Financial Viability and Sustainability in South Africa: A Case of Molemole Local Municipality. In *International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternatives* (pp. 4–06). Stellenbosch University.

Nikolopoulou. (2022).

O'leary, M., & Donovan, B. (2021). The orientation phase of learning interventions for municipal managers: A qualitative study. *Public Administration Quarterly*, *45*(1), 39–72.

Patterson, F., Naswall, K., & Lange, A. D. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of learning interventions for municipal managers: The importance of a comprehensive approach. *Public Administration*, *97*(3), 624–640.

Putri, D. K., Hidayah, R., & Yuwono, Y. D. (2023). Problem-Based Learning: Improve Critical Thinking Skills for Long-Life Learning. *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA*, *9*(7), 5049–5054.

Qureshi, M. A., Khaskheli, A., Qureshi, J. A., Raza, S. A., & Yousufi, S. Q. (2023). Factors affecting students' learning performance through collaborative learning and engagement. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *31*(4), 2371–2391.

Ritz, A., & Auh, S. (2020). Supportive practices for managerial training in local municipalities: A multi-level analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *30*(3), 392–412.

Romero-Mas, M., Cox, A. M., Ramon-Aribau, A., & Gómez-Zúñiga, B. (2024). Knowledge sharing in virtual communities of practice of family caregivers of people with Alzheimer's. *BMC Geriatrics*, *24*(1), 577–577.

Santos-Meneses, L. F., Pashchenko, T., & Mikhailova, A. (2023). Critical thinking in the context of adult learning through PBL and e-learning: A course framework. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *49*, 101358–101358.

Schoenberg, N. E., Bowling, B., Cardarelli, K., Feltner, F., Mudd-Martin, G., Surratt, H. L., & Kern, P. A. (2021). The Community Leadership Institute of Kentucky (CLIK): A collaborative workforce and leadership development programme. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, *15*(1), 95–105.

Shilangu, L. (2019). Enhancing local economic development through effective leadership and service delivery in South African Municipalities. *International Conference on Public Administration and Development Alternative (IPADA)*.

Sikandar, A. (2015). John Dewey and his philosophy of education. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, *2*(2), 191–205.

Soomro, B. A., Mangi, S., & Shah, N. (2021). Strategic factors and significance of organisational innovation and organisational learning in organisational performance. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, *24*(2), 481–506.

Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Developmental Education*, *44*(1), 26–28.

Stevens, C. K., & Gist, M. E. (2019). (Vol. 18). Academy of Management Learning & Education.

Thusi, X., & Selepe, M. M. (2023). The impact of poor governance on public service delivery: A case study of the South African local government. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, *6*(4), 688–697.

Värlander, S., & Karlsson, T. (2018). Aligning expectations in the orientation phase of learning interventions for municipal managers: A mixed-methods study. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *41*(13), 1077–1089.

Vijayamohan, P. (2024).

Xie, D., & Zong, Z. (2024). How orientation training socializes newcomers: The mediating role of learning in reducing turnover and boosting performance among new salespersons. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *28*(3), 255–274.

Xie, H., Chu, H. C., Hwang, G. J., & Wang, C. C. (2007). Trends and development in technology-enhanced adaptive/personalized learning: A systematic review of journal publications from. *Computers & Education*, *140*, 103599–103599.

Yang, B. (2024). Application of practice-based learning and improvement in standardized training of general practitioners. *BMC Medical Education*, *24*(1), 214–214.

Yasar, M. Ö., & Atay, D. (2023). Evaluating Learner Autonomy during the COVID-19: An Examination of Student Teachers' Self-Directed Learning Readiness for MOOCs. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, *8*(1), 29–46.

Yin, R. K. (2014). Case study research: Design and methods. Sage.