



Investigating the relationship between the learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in a selected municipality

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DECLARATION

In this Mini-Dissertation, 'Investigating the relationship between the learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in a selected municipality', I hereby declare that the material is entirely original and has proper citations to all sources consulted. No other university or institution has ever received this work as a prior submission for a degree or exam.

I have provided proper citations and references for all data, figures, and ideas obtained from external sources. I have duly acknowledged any contributions made by others to this work.

Ms Mahlodi Daphne Mamabolo

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of learning organisations in fostering positive employee outcomes has become an increasingly important focus within public sector entities. Learning organisation practices that encourage continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptive change are theorised to enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction. Despite their recognised importance, limited empirical research has examined the relationship between learning organisation practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction in municipal contexts.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate relationships among learning organisation, work engagement, and job satisfaction, within a selected municipality. Furthermore, the study aimed to determine whether work engagement mediates the relationship between learning organisation and job satisfaction, providing insights into the mechanisms through which organisational learning impacts employee engagement and behaviour.

A quantitative research methodology employing a cross-sectional survey design, supported by the positivist philosophy, was applied. Data were collected from 260 respondents using stratified random sampling method from the municipal employee population. Standardised questionnaires assessed learning organisation practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS, including exploratory factor analysis to validate the factor structures, reliability analyses to confirm internal consistency, and correlation, regression, and mediation analyses to investigate the relationships among variables, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

The results revealed that learning organisation practices are moderately implemented within the municipality. Significant positive relationships were found between learning organisation practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Furthermore, work engagement partially mediated the relationship between learning organisation practices and job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of engaging employees to translate organisational learning into higher job satisfaction.

This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence of the role of learning organisation practices in enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction in municipal contexts. The findings underscore the importance of developing learning-

oriented organisational cultures and targeted employee engagement initiatives to improve job satisfaction and overall municipal performance.

Keywords: Learning organisation; Work engagement; Job satisfaction; Employee outcomes; Municipal employees.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
DCSS	Directorate of Corporate Support Services
DTIS	Directorate of Technical and Infrastructure Services
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EMS-REC	Economics and Management Sciences Ethics Committee
H1-4	Hypothesis 1-4
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
IT	Information Technology
JD-R	Job Resources–Demands Model
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LLCI	Lower-Level Confidence Interval
LO	Learning Organisation
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NWU	North-West University
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
POPIA	The Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013
RCC	Revenue Collection Centre
SC	Scientific Committee
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SD	Standard Deviation
SE	Standard Error
SRO 1-4	Secondary Objectives 1-4
ULCI	Upper-Level Confidence Interval

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The concept of a learning organisation (LO) has received significant attention in organisational and management studies for its impact on employee engagement and job satisfaction. Senge's (1990) seminal work defines a LO as one that helps its members learn and keeps transforming itself. This idea is even more relevant today, as rapid technological advancements and globalisation require adaptability and innovation. Research has shown that satisfied and engaged workers contribute positively to organisational performance, demonstrating higher levels of commitment, motivation, and discretionary effort (Kim & Park, 2021:45; Garavan et al., 2022:15).

While global research highlights the benefits of learning organisations in enhancing job satisfaction and engagement, few studies have examined these dynamics within South African municipalities, underscoring the need for further investigation into their impact on service delivery.

Job satisfaction and work engagement are widely seen as key drivers of employee performance and service delivery (Khan et al., 2022:10; Bailey et al., 2015:22). Studies from sectors like healthcare, education, and public administration worldwide, have shown that satisfied and engaged employees are more productive, creative, and focused on customers. This leads to better organisational results (Islam et al., 2016:45; Lau et al., 2020:102). Higher job satisfaction lowers turnover and absenteeism. Work engagement builds commitment and proactive behaviour, both of which are crucial to efficiency and service quality.

In South Africa, the need for effective organisational practices is particularly pronounced, given the socioeconomic challenges such as unemployment, skills shortages, and economic inequality (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020:15).

Municipalities, as critical service providers, are at the forefront of addressing these challenges (Rustenburg Local Municipality, 2020:20). The Rustenburg municipality, located in the North West Province, plays a pivotal role in regional development. However, issues such as low work engagement, job dissatisfaction, and high turnover rates have raised concerns about its operational efficiency (Ndatse et al., 2024:208).

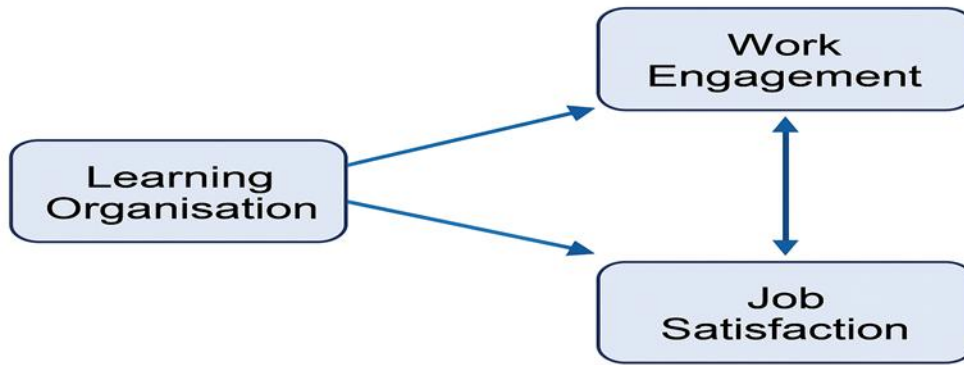
In South Africa's local government, municipalities deliver essential public services. This highlights the importance of work engagement and satisfaction for service delivery. However, many municipalities, including Rustenburg municipality, face ongoing problems, such as skills shortages, low morale, and inefficiencies. These issues limit their ability to meet service demands (Rustenburg Local Municipality, 2020:20; Ndatse et al., 2024:208).

Studies worldwide (Islam et al., 2016:45 & Lau et al., 2020:102) show that LOs improve employees' attitudes, such as organisational commitment, job involvement, and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). For instance, research by Garavan et al. (2022:15) report that a learning culture increases employee motivation and loyalty. Kim & Park (2021:45) also find that LO practices raise job satisfaction and work engagement. However, little research exists on how these findings apply to South African municipalities, especially Rustenburg municipality.

This gap in the literature underscores the importance of this study. While previous research has explored the impact of LOs on employee engagement in developed economies, the unique socio-cultural and economic conditions of South Africa necessitate localised investigations. This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship among LO practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction in the Rustenburg municipality. By achieving these objectives, the research will contribute to the discipline of organisational behaviour and management studies.

The study will show how LOs can influence employee attitudes and improve municipal performance and service delivery. It will also offer valuable lessons applicable to other municipalities in South Africa and beyond.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model



The conceptual model suggests that LOs increase both work engagement and job satisfaction. Engagement and satisfaction, in turn, strengthen each other. Recent studies show that a strong learning culture focused on development, knowledge sharing, and support raises work engagement (Pereira, 2021:10-15; Mohammad, 2024:6-8) and improves employee attitudes overall (Hasan, 2023:285-288).

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in learning organisation theory (Watkins & Marsick, 1997:9) and work engagement theory (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74). The framework proposes that learning organisation practices influence work engagement, learning organisation practices influence job satisfaction and work engagement influences job satisfaction. These relationships are supported by empirical findings (Khan et al., 2022:9; Makambe & Osupile, 2021:127).

Studies show that LOs greatly improve job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can also mediate the effect of LOs on other outcomes such as performance and commitment (Hendri, 2019:1215-1218; Cao, 2024:60-63; Bui, 2024:8-11; Wang, 2022:1096-1100). In parallel, research in different public sector and service contexts has confirmed a strong, positive association between job satisfaction and work engagement, with satisfaction emerging as a significant predictor of engagement (Thokoa et al., 2021:5-7; Thokoa, 2021:9-11), suggesting that employees who are more satisfied with their jobs tend to feel more enthusiastic, dedicated and absorbed in their work. Together, these findings support the links in the diagram: from LO to work engagement, from LO to job satisfaction, and the bidirectional link between work engagement and job satisfaction.

1.2 Problem Statement

The challenges of work engagement and job satisfaction are increasingly significant for organisational performance and efficiency. In South Africa, municipalities are vital to service delivery and community development, yet many face systemic challenges such as low productivity, high staff turnover, and poor morale.

Globally, extensive research has established the link between LOs and positive employee engagement. For instance, recent studies by Garavan *et al.* (2022:23) and Kim and Park (2021:46) demonstrate that fostering a culture of continuous learning improves job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and overall performance. However, the application of these findings to the South African municipal context remains underexplored.

Measuring this problem shows worrying trends. According to a report by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA, 2021:34), more than half of municipal employees across the country are unhappy at work. The report lists limited growth and lack of recognition as reasons. The Auditor-General's report (2022:18) also points to ongoing performance issues in municipalities, often caused by poor employee engagement. These numbers show why improving engagement is urgent for organisational effectiveness.

The Rustenburg municipality in the North West Province is no exception, grappling with inefficiencies stemming from disengaged employees and workforce dissatisfaction. This problem has far-reaching implications, affecting not only municipal operations but also the quality of services provided to the community.

While LO principles have been widely adopted in private and developed sectors, there is a significant gap in understanding how these practices influence work engagement and satisfaction in resource-constrained public sector settings, such as the Rustenburg municipality.

Theoretical frameworks add more complexity. Most like Senge's (1990) LO model, focus on developed countries. They may not fit the socioeconomic and cultural circumstances of South African municipalities. These frameworks need adaptation and testing in South Africa. Studying this problem is important for several reasons. First, greater engagement and satisfaction can improve service delivery, build public trust, and benefit community development.

Second, the study will add to our knowledge of LOs, especially in emerging economies. Finally, by identifying Rustenburg's specific gaps and problems, this research can propose targeted actions and policies, to foster a more motivated workforce.

In conclusion, while previous studies have highlighted the benefits of LOs, their applicability to South African municipalities remains under-researched. This study will seek to bridge this gap by exploring how LO practices influence work engagement and job satisfaction within the selected municipality, providing a foundation for improved organisational performance and community impact.

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

This study will significantly contribute to existing knowledge, practices, and policies by addressing critical gaps in understanding how LO practices influence work engagement and job satisfaction within the South African municipal context. While extensive research has been conducted in developed economies, localised studies focusing on resource-constrained and socio-economically diverse settings, such as municipalities, are limited.

1.3.1 Theoretical contribution

From a theoretical perspective, the study will test and adapt established LO frameworks, such as Senge's (1990) model, in a unique context.

This will enhance the applicability of these frameworks to emerging economies and provide insights into how socio-cultural factors influence employee attitudes. The anticipated outcomes will enrich the academic discourse in organisational behaviour and human resource management.

1.3.2 Practical contribution

In practice, the study will provide recommendations to improve work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipality. These findings can guide municipal managers in implementing effective training and development programmes, as well as organisational policies that foster a culture of learning. Enhanced workforce satisfaction and engagement are expected to improve service delivery, benefiting the broader community.

1.3.3 Social and community contribution

Social groups, including municipal employees and local communities, will benefit from improved service delivery and organisational efficiency. Academically, disciplines such as public administration, organisational psychology, and human resource management will gain valuable insights. This research can benefit industries such as public sector consulting and organisational development by providing evidence-based strategies to address workforce challenges.

Overall, this study seeks to make a meaningful contribution to theory, practice, and policy, while fostering personal growth in understanding the dynamics of LOs and their impact on employee attitudes within a complex socioeconomic environment.

1.4 Demarcation of the Study

1.4.1 Field of study

This study is situated within the field of industrial psychology, specifically within the subfield of Organisational Behaviour (OB). The topics under examination include organisational culture and employee attitudes, focusing on work engagement and job satisfaction.

These areas are integral to understanding how LO practices influence employee outcomes in a municipal setting, aligning with both theoretical frameworks and empirical studies in OB (Robinson & Judge, 2019:45).

1.4.2 Sector under study

The sector of focus is the public sector, specifically local government, with a focus on Rustenburg municipality. This sector was selected because local governments are crucial in public service delivery, and understanding the factors influencing employee engagement and satisfaction can provide significant insights for improving public sector performance (Tata & Prasad, 2020:67). As the study focuses on public administration, this context is relevant for examining how organisational practices impact employees in municipal environments, where service delivery is directly tied to workforce satisfaction and engagement.

1.4.3 Geographical demarcation

The geographic coverage is demarcated to the municipality, located in the North West Province of South Africa. This is a practical decision based on the population's accessibility and the municipality's specific focus on its work environment. Rustenburg municipality has been selected due to its distinct public service structures, where employees' engagement with organisational practices significantly impacts job satisfaction and performance (Statistics SA, 2021).

1.4.4 Delimitations

The study was limited to employees of Rustenburg Local Municipality or local governments outside the municipality, nor does it examine other sectors, such as the private sector or state-owned enterprises and excluded other municipalities within the North West Province. The study focused only on learning organisation practices, work engagement and job satisfaction and did not examine other organisational variables such as leadership style or organisational commitment.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1 Learning organisation practices

Learning organisation practices refer to organisational strategies and behaviours that promote continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptability to change. These practices include creating a supportive learning environment, encouraging collaboration, and integrating learning into daily operations (Garavan *et al.*, 2022:25). In the context of Rustenburg municipality, these practices are operationalised as training programmes, mentoring, and organisational policies designed to enhance employees' skills and knowledge.

1.5.2 Employees attitudes

Employee attitudes encompass the feelings, beliefs, and behavioural tendencies that employees hold towards their organisation, work environment, and colleagues (Robbins & Judge, 2020:56). This study focuses on attitudes concerning commitment, job involvement, and organisational citizenship behaviours within the Rustenburg municipality.

1.5.3 Work engagement

Work engagement is defined as the emotional and cognitive connection that employees have with their organisation, which motivates them to perform at high levels (Schaufeli, 2021:34). For this study, employee engagement within Rustenburg municipality is measured through employees' dedication, vigour, and absorption in their roles, as reflected in surveys and performance evaluations.

1.5.4 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the degree of contentment employees feel about their jobs, including aspects such as the work environment, remuneration, and professional growth opportunities (Kim & Park, 2021:47). In this research, job satisfaction is assessed based on employees' perceptions of their roles and organisational support within the Rustenburg municipality.

1.5.5 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to their organisation, which influences their willingness to remain and contribute to its success (Meyer & Allen, 2021:12). For this study, organisational commitment will be evaluated through employees' expressed loyalty and alignment with the municipality's goals.

1.5.6 Public sector context

The public sector context pertains to the specific organisational environment, culture, and challenges associated with government-run entities. In this study, it is contextualised to the South African municipal framework, with a focus on Rustenburg municipality's resource constraints and socioeconomic challenges (SALGA, 2021:36).

1.5.7 Employee performance

Employee performance is the degree to which employees effectively fulfil their job roles and contribute to organisational goals. This includes measures of task completion, work quality, and innovation (Auditor-General Report, 2022:20). In this study, performance is assessed in relation to engagement and job satisfaction metrics within a selected municipality.

1.6 Research Objectives

1.6.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study will be to explore the influence of a LO on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

1.6.2 Secondary objectives

SRO1: To determine if learning organisation practices are implemented within a selected municipality.

SRO2: To determine the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context.

SRO3: To determine the role of a learning organisation in the variation of work engagement and job satisfaction.

SRO4: To determine if work engagement and its dimensions mediate the relationship between learning organisation practices and job satisfaction.

1.7 Research Questions

1.7.1 Primary research question

The primary research question of this study will be: How do learning organisations practices influence work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality?

1.7.2 Secondary research question

- What learning organisation practices are implemented within a selected municipality?
- What is the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context?
- How do learning organisation practices contribute to variations in work engagement and job satisfaction?
- How do different dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediate the relationship between learning organisation and job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction)?

1.8 Research Hypothesis

- H1: Learning organisation practices are implemented within a selected municipality.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context.
- H3: A learning organisation leads to variations in work engagement among employees and job satisfaction in a selected municipality.
- H4: The dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediate the relationship between learning organisation and job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction).

1.9 Research Philosophy, Method and Methodologies

1.9.1 Research philosophy

This study will adopt a positivist philosophy, which aligns with the principles of objectivity, empirical observation, and the systematic testing of hypotheses.

Positivism is based on the belief that reality is objective, measurable, and independent of human perception (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:7).

This philosophy is well-suited to the present study, which will seek to establish relationships between variables through quantitative methods, ensuring the replicability and generalisability of the findings (Bryman, 2016:30).

The positivist philosophy will be most relevant to this study because it enables the systematic investigation of LO practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction within the Rustenburg municipality. Since the study aims to determine relationships and mediation effects among these variables, a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis was the most appropriate method (Saunders et al., 2019:45).

By adopting a positivist approach, this study will ensure that the findings are objective, reliable, and grounded in empirical evidence, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of how LO practices impact work engagement and job satisfaction in a municipal setting.

1.9.2 Research method

Flowing from the positivist philosophy discussed above, this study adopts a quantitative research method. A quantitative approach is appropriate because it allows for the systematic measurement of relationships among variables, in this case, LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction within the selected municipality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:147).

Quantitative research relies on numerical data, structured instruments (such as surveys), and statistical techniques to test hypotheses and derive objective conclusions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:178).

This study will employ structured questionnaires to collect data from municipal employees and will use statistical analysis methods such as correlation, regression, ANOVA, and mediation analysis to assess relationships between key variables (Bryman, 2016:161).

1.9.3 Research approach

Consistent with the positivist research approach and quantitative research design, this study adopts a deductive research approach. This approach uses existing theories and empirical studies to formulate hypotheses that are then tested using systematic data collection and statistical analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:145; Bryman, 2016:24). Drawing on prior literature on LO, work engagement and job satisfaction, the study specifies hypotheses about the direct and mediating relationships among these constructs and then examines them using survey data from municipal employees. The purpose is, therefore, not to generate new theory from the data, as in an inductive approach, but to test and refine existing theoretical propositions in an objective, replicable manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:59).

1.9.4 Methodological choice

This study adopts a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of LOs on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality. A quantitative design was considered appropriate because the primary objective of the study was to test theoretically derived hypotheses (H1–H4) by examining statistical relationships between clearly defined constructs, rather than exploring individual perceptions in depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:149).

A structured self-administered questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument. This choice aligns with the need to gather standardised data from a relatively large sample of municipal employees (N = 260), enabling the use of advanced statistical techniques such as exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression, mediation and moderation analyses. The use of standardised scales for Los, work engagement and job satisfaction supports reliability, replicability and comparability with prior empirical studies in the public sector and organisational research (Bryman, 2016:166).

The cross-sectional design means that data were collected at a single point in time. While this limits the ability to infer causal relationships, it is suitable for assessing the current status of LO in the municipality (H1), the strength and direction of relationships between LOs, work engagement and job satisfaction (H2), the extent to which LOs predicts variations in these outcomes (H3), and whether work engagement dimensions mediate the relationship between LO and job satisfaction (H4).

Cross-sectional survey designs are widely used in OB research due to their efficiency, cost-effectiveness and suitability for hypothesis testing in real-world work settings (Saunders et al., 2019:179).

Overall, the methodological choice is consistent with the study's positivist orientation, which assumes that organisational phenomena such as learning practices, engagement and job satisfaction can be measured objectively and analysed using statistical procedures to draw generalisable conclusions about the municipal workforce.

1.9.5 Research design

The study will employ a correlational and descriptive research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationships between variables at a single point in time. This design allows the researcher to measure the degree of association between LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction without manipulating the study environment (Saunders et al., 2019:202). The decision to use a descriptive design further complements the quantitative approach by allowing the research to characterise the extent and nature of the variables involved.

This design will be optimal for identifying patterns and relationships in data without requiring complex intervention or experimentation (Saunders et al., 2019:189). The descriptive design ensures that the research findings are clearly structured and easily interpreted, making them applicable to future studies or decision-making within the municipality.

1.9.6 Time horizon

The cross-sectional approach provides a snapshot of variables at a specific point in time, while the correlational approach identifies potential associations and patterns among them.

This design is particularly suited for the study because it balances practical feasibility and the need for rigorous data analysis within the municipal context. The research adopts a cross-sectional time horizon, collecting data at a single point in time to capture the current state of LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

This approach is cost-effective and practical for addressing the research objectives within the available resources and time constraints (Bell et al., 2022:112). Furthermore, a cross-sectional research design is employed because it allows data collection at a single point in time, a practical and efficient approach when the aim is to study relationships between variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:212).

This design is especially appropriate given the study's context, as it enables an overview of current LO practices in the municipality. The cross-sectional design facilitates data collection across a wide sample, providing an accurate snapshot of employees' perceptions and experiences, while remaining cost-effective and time-efficient compared to longitudinal studies.

1.9.7 Rationale for selecting the positivist philosophy, quantitative method, and cross-sectional, descriptive research design

In selecting the positivist philosophy for this study, the main reason will be its alignment with the objective of establishing measurable, generalisable relationships between LO, work engagement, and job satisfaction. The positivist approach is based on the belief

that reality is objective and can be observed, measured, and analysed through empirical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:7).

This is crucial because the study aims to quantify the extent to which specific practices influence employees' engagement and satisfaction. The positivist philosophy supports the use of statistical techniques to test hypotheses and examine causal relationships, which are essential for drawing valid, replicable conclusions (Bryman, 2016:30).

The quantitative method will be chosen for this study due to its ability to provide objective, numerical data that can be statistically analysed to measure relationships among key variables. Quantitative methods allow for the systematic collection of data through structured instruments like surveys, ensuring that findings are reliable, repeatable, and generalisable to a larger population (Saunders et al., 2019:178).

This method is also well-suited for studies that require testing hypotheses and examining statistical relationships, which will be the focus of this research.

Furthermore, a cross-sectional research design is employed because it allows data collection at a single point in time, a practical and efficient approach when the aim is to study relationships between variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:212). This design is especially appropriate given the study's context, as it will provide an overview of the current state of LO practices in the municipality.

The cross-sectional design facilitates data collection across a wide sample, providing an accurate snapshot of employees' perceptions and experiences, while being cost- and time-efficient compared to longitudinal studies.

The decision to use a descriptive design will further complement the quantitative approach by allowing the research to characterise the extent and nature of the variables involved. This design is optimal for identifying patterns and relationships in data without requiring complex intervention or experimentation (Saunders et al., 2019:189). The descriptive design will also ensure that the research findings are clearly structured and easily interpreted, making them applicable to future studies or decision-making within the municipality.

Overall, these choices of positivism, quantitative method, and cross-sectional descriptive design are driven by the need to gather empirical evidence that can be statistically analysed to draw conclusions about relationships between variables.

The selected philosophy, method, and design ensure objectivity, reliability, and generalisability, which will be fundamental in addressing the research objectives and providing actionable insights for policy and practice within the selected municipality.

1.9.8 Research methodologies

1.9.8.1 Study population

The study population consists of employees within a selected municipality, specifically those working in roles where LO, work engagement, and job satisfaction are relevant. These may include municipal officials (managers, supervisors, and department heads), administrative staff (clerks, coordinators, HR personnel), and operational employees (field workers). The population comprised of 800 employees and out of 800 employees, only 260 participated, and the questionnaires were distributed to this subset.

1.9.8.2 Inclusion criteria

The study will include employees who have been with the municipality for at least six months and who have sufficient experience with organisational practices. Employees across different departments and job levels, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of LO practices. Respondents voluntarily consented to take part in the study.

1.9.8.3 Exclusion criteria

The study will exclude the following: Newly hired employees (less than six months of experience), as they may not yet fully understand LO practices. External contractors or consultants, as they do not represent the municipality's internal organisational environment. Employees on extended leave or suspension who are not actively engaged in daily work.

This population is chosen because it directly experiences and interacts with a learning organisation in its workplace. The findings will help determine the relationship among LOs, employee engagement, and job satisfaction, providing insights applicable to similar municipal environments.

1.9.9 Sample method

This study will adopt stratified random sampling, a probability sampling method that ensures representation across different employee categories within a selected municipality.

The municipal workforce consists of diverse employee groups (e.g., managerial, administrative, operational), and stratification will ensure that each category is adequately represented. This method reduces sampling bias and increases the ability to generalise findings across the broader municipal workforce (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Stratification will be based on job role and department, ensuring that responses reflect different organisational experiences. After stratification, random sampling will be applied within each group to ensure fairness and equal selection probability.

1.9.10 Sample size

The appropriate sample size depends on the study's quantitative aspects:

For the Quantitative Component, using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, the study will select 260 employees from the estimated municipal workforce of 800. This size allows for statistical generalisation and maintains a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 5% (Bryman et al., 2021).

Table 1: Table for Determining Sample Size for a known Population, Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384
Note: "N" is Population Size "S" is Sample Size.									

1.9.11 Data collection instrument

The primary data collection instrument for this study will be a structured questionnaire, chosen for its ability to systematically collect quantitative data on the variables of interest: LO practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

Measuring instruments that will be used in this study include:

- **Biographic questionnaire:** Administered to gather demographic information on study participants, including age, gender, and tenure. This information was collected to present the sample's elemental composition and description.
- **Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction will be measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) as adapted by Buitendach and Rothmann (2009) for the South African context. The questionnaire consists of a 17-item scale,

of which eight measure extrinsic job satisfaction. An example of one of the questions measuring extrinsic job satisfaction is 'Being able to keep busy all the time.' (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). In the adapted questionnaire, nine items measure intrinsic job satisfaction, and an example of one of the questions is 'The way company policies are put into practice.' (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). The scale has a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very satisfied (5) to very dissatisfied (1). Buitendach and Rothmann (2009) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86, indicating that the adapted scale is valid and reliable. Sempene et al., (2002) also reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91.

- **Work engagement:** For this study, the shortened nine-item version (UWES9) of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli et al., (2006:707-716) was selected as the measuring instrument for work engagement. This scale was adapted from the original 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002:85). The scale's items represent the work engagement dimension as identified by Schaufeli et al., (2002:74) of vigour, dedication and absorption. It contains three items proposed to reflect each of the three underlying work engagement dimensions and will be measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from one to five. Sample items for each dimension are: 'At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (vigour)', 'My job inspires me (dedication)' and 'I am immersed in my work (absorption).' Respondents higher scores will indicate a larger extent of work engagement experience.
- **The Learning Organisation:** The Dimensions of the Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ), developed by Watkins and Marsick (1997), will be employed to evaluate the extent to which the organisation embodies characteristics of LOs. The shortened scale was originally tested for validity and reliability across 10 countries during its development, of which South Africa was one of the countries (Schaufeli et al., 2006:708-709). Cronbach's alpha for each of the three constructs varied between the ten countries. However, the median of Cronbach's alpha across all ten countries was found to be 0.92. The DLOQ measures seven dimensions namely Continuous Learning (Encouraging ongoing development of employees), Inquiry and Dialogue (Promoting open communication and questioning), Team Learning and Collaboration (Facilitating collective learning and teamwork), Embedded Systems (Establishing systems to capture and share learning),

Empowerment (Enabling individuals to take initiative and make decisions), System Connections (Aligning internal structures with the external environment) and Strategic Leadership (Leadership that supports and reinforces learning). The DLOQ is available in two versions: a comprehensive 43-item questionnaire and a shorter 21-item version. Both versions have demonstrated strong reliability and validity across various contexts. For instance, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the dimensions range from 0.79 to 0.94, indicating high internal consistency (Leufvén *et al.*, 2015). The DLOQ has been effectively utilised in diverse settings to assess and enhance organisational learning practices. These instruments will be selected for their established reliability and validity, ensuring robust measurement of the constructs pertinent to this study.

1.9.12 Data collection/fieldwork

Preceding data collection, the researcher will submit a proposal for formal approval to the People Management Scientific Committee (PMSC) of the NWU Business School. If the Scientific Committee (SC) deems the research scientifically valid and verifies that there are no inherent risks, it will refer the research to the Economics and Management Sciences Ethics Committee (EMS-REC). As part of the Ethical Clearance, the researcher will obtain permission from the organisation where this study will be conducted. Data gathering will commence once the researcher has been permitted to conduct the study and an ethical clearance number has been issued. The researcher will not initiate contact with the respondents. The Human Resources Manager (HRM) will be assigned as the gatekeeper with the permission of the Municipal Managers (MM). Risk will be eliminated since the researcher will not contact the respondents.

The HRM will place a notice of the research on the municipality's internal bulletin board. Those interested in participating in the study can click a link to the consent form. Once the consent has been read and the participant understands and agrees with its content, they can give consent by clicking on the questionnaire. Those who do not provide consent cannot access the questionnaire. The questionnaire on Microsoft Forms can be completed at their convenience and can be stopped and resumed later.

The questionnaires will be created and shared via Microsoft Forms, a web-based tool that enables collecting information from participants via surveys. The acquired data

will automatically be imported into an Excel spreadsheet, where the participants' queries and responses will be collected.

A bulletin board message from the communication officer, including a link to the study and the informed consent form, will be used to recruit respondents. This bulletin board invitation will describe the purpose and context of the study, the duration of the questionnaires and the anticipated completion time. Once the respondent has consented to the study, the questionnaire will automatically proceed. Should respondents refuse consent, they cannot access the questionnaire. The researcher will emphasise their anonymity will be maintained. Respondents will also be informed that they may withdraw from completing the questionnaire if they wish or feel uneasy about any aspect of the process.

1.9.13 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis will be conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2023). Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis) were used to characterise the data distribution. To ensure that the data were normally distributed, a cut-off point of 2.00 was set for skewness (Finch & West, 1997) and 4.00 for kurtosis (Field, 2009). A skewed variable is one whose mean is not at the centre, while a kurtosis variable indicates the presence of clustering of scores (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001:73) stated that examining the skewness and kurtosis of scores before analysis is necessary, as solutions from the analysis are usually degraded if the variables are not normally distributed. Cronbach's alpha coefficients will be calculated to assess the reliability of the constructs measured in this study. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommend a cut-off point of 0.70 as acceptable. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be used to specify the relationship between the variables.

Regarding statistical significance, it will be decided to set the significance level at 95 per cent confidence interval level ($p < 0,05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings.

The parameters 0.10 (small effect), 0.30 (medium effect) and 0.50 (significant effect) indicated the practical significance of the correlations (Steyn, 1999). A cut-off point of

0.30 (medium effect) will be used to assess the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988).

1.9.14 Reliability and validity

1.9.14.1 Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. A value above 0.70 indicates acceptable internal consistency.

1.9.14.2 Validity

Content validity was ensured through the use of established instruments. Construct validity was supported through factor analysis.

1.15 Ethical Considerations

This study recognised the ethical implications of conducting research involving municipal employees and adhered to established ethical standards to protect respondents' rights. The following ethical principles has guided this study.

1.15.1 Informed consent

All respondents received a detailed information sheet outlining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. They were required to provide written consent before responding. Informed consent ensured that respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and understand the scope of their involvement (Creswell & Creswell, 2021:120).

1.15.2 Anonymity

Respondent identities remained confidential. Questionnaires did not collect identifiable information, and responses were coded using unique identifiers to protect anonymity. Anonymity ensured that respondents' personal details are not linked to their responses, safeguarding their privacy (Saunders et al., 2019:240).

1.15.3 Confidentiality

All data was stored securely on password-protected devices and anonymised in reports or publications. Confidentiality prevented unauthorised access to respondents' data and protected their privacy during and after the study (Field, 2020:145).

1.15.4 Voluntary participation and right to withdraw

Respondents participated on a voluntary basis and had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. This principle respected respondents' autonomy and ensured their comfort throughout the research process (Bryman, 2021:78).

1.15.5 Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)

In compliance with South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) of 2013, respondents' personal data were processed lawfully, minimally, and transparently. The study ensured that personal information was only collected for specific research purposes and was not shared or used beyond the scope of the study. Measures such as data encryption and secure storage was implemented to safeguard respondents' personal information from unauthorised access or breaches (Republic of South Africa, 2013).

1.15.6 Avoidance of harm

The study ensured that no psychological, emotional, or professional harm comes to respondents. Survey questions were carefully designed to avoid distress or discomfort, and respondents were informed that they may skip any question they find sensitive.

1.15.7 Approval and oversight

Ethical approval was obtained from the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) prior to data collection. This ensured that the study adhered to ethical research practices and aligned with legal and institutional requirements.

1.15.8 Use of data

The collected data was used solely for the purposes of this research. After the research was completed, the data was securely archived and eventually destroyed in accordance with ethical guidelines.

1.16 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study by outlining the context, problem and purpose of investigating the influence of LOs on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality. It highlighted the challenges faced by South African municipalities, including Rustenburg, and identified a gap in local empirical research on how LO practices shape employee attitudes in this context.

The primary and secondary objectives, research questions and hypotheses (H1–H4) were formulated to guide the investigation of whether LO practices are implemented, how they relate to work engagement and job satisfaction, and whether work engagement mediates these relationships. Key concepts such as LOs, work engagement and job satisfaction were defined, and the field, sector and geographical demarcation of the study were clarified.

The chapter also justified the adoption of a positivist paradigm, a quantitative, deductive approach and a cross-sectional, descriptive and correlational survey design. The population, sampling strategy, measuring instruments, data analysis techniques, and procedures to ensure reliability, validity and ethical compliance were briefly described.

Overall, Chapter 1 has provided the conceptual and methodological groundwork for the study. The next chapter will present a detailed literature review of LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction, and will position the study within the broader theoretical and empirical landscape.

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CHAPTER 2 SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

Title: Investigating the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

2.1 Abstract

The effectiveness of learning organisations in fostering positive employee outcomes, such as work engagement and job satisfaction, is an increasingly important focus within public sector entities. Organisations that encourage continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptive change are theorised to directly enhance employee engagement, thereby improving job satisfaction. However, only minimal empirical research has examined whether and how learning organisation practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction are interconnected in municipal contexts. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship among learning organisations, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality. The study also aimed to determine if work engagement mediates the relationship between learning organisation practices and job satisfaction. These findings provide insights into how organisational learning impacts employee attitudes and behaviour.

A quantitative research methodology was used, employing a cross-sectional survey design supported by the positivist philosophy. Data were collected from 260 respondents.

Overall, the correlation analysis shows moderate to strong positive correlations among the main study variables, suggesting that a positive relationship the learning organisation was positively and significantly correlated with overall work engagement (UWES), its sub-dimensions (vigour, dedication, absorption), job satisfaction. Regression analysis suggests that significant part of the variance in global work engagement was explained by the learning organisation dimensions, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of global work engagement. The learning organisation dimensions also explained a significant part of the variance in vigour, dedication and absorption respectively, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of global work engagement. The learning organisation dimensions also explained a significant part of the variance in job satisfaction, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of job satisfaction.

However, with the inclusion of global work engagement the variance explained in job satisfaction increased with team learning and global work engagement proving to be the only statistical significant predictors of job satisfaction in the model. Mediation analysis suggests that the significant indirect effects of global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction were confirmed. This is confirmed by the exclusion of 0 in the confidence intervals in all four models. This means that global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption are salient in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction. Recommendations are made for the organisation and future related research.

Keywords: Learning organisation; Work engagement; Job satisfaction; Employee outcomes; Municipal employees.

Introduction

The concept of LOs has attracted significant attention in organisational and management studies for its role in enhancing employee engagement and job satisfaction. Originating in Senge's (1990) seminal work, a LO is defined as one that facilitates its members' learning and continuously transforms itself. This concept has become increasingly important today, where rapid technological advancements and globalisation demand adaptability and innovation. Research has shown that satisfied and engaged workers contribute positively to organisational performance, demonstrating higher levels of commitment, motivation, and discretionary effort (Kim & Park, 2021:45; Garavan *et al.*, 2022:15).

Job satisfaction and work engagement are widely recognised as key drivers of employee performance and service delivery (Khan *et al.*, 2022:10; Bailey *et al.*, 2015:22). Studies conducted in various sectors across the globe, including healthcare, education, and public administration, have shown that employees who are satisfied and engaged tend to be more productive, innovative, and customer-focused, leading to improved organisational outcomes (Islam *et al.*, 2016:45; Lau *et al.*, 2020:102). Higher levels of job satisfaction reduce turnover rates and absenteeism, while work engagement fosters commitment and proactive behaviour, both of which are essential for maintaining efficiency and service quality.

Globally, studies (Islam *et al.*, 2016:45; Lau *et al.*, 2020:102) have demonstrated that LOs positively impact employee attitudes, including organisational commitment, job involvement, and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). For instance, research by Garavan *et al.* (2022:15) highlights that fostering a culture of learning enhances employee motivation and organisational loyalty. Similarly, Kim & Park (2021:45) found that LO practices significantly improve job satisfaction and work engagement. However, there is limited research on how these findings apply in the South African municipal context, particularly within a selected municipality.

In South Africa's local government sector, municipalities are responsible for delivering essential public services, making work engagement and satisfaction critical factors in ensuring effective service delivery.

However, many municipalities, including Rustenburg municipality, face persistent challenges such as skills shortages, low morale, and inefficiencies, which hinder their ability to meet service demands (Rustenburg Local Municipality, 2020:20; Ndatse et al., 2024:208).

Despite extensive global research on LOs and employee engagement, there is a lack of studies focused on South African municipalities, highlighting a need for further investigation into their impact on service delivery. South Africa faces pronounced socioeconomic challenges, including unemployment, skills shortages, and economic inequality (IMF, 2020:15). As critical service providers, municipalities address these challenges (Rustenburg Local Municipality, 2020:20).

The Rustenburg municipality in the North West Province plays a leading role in regional development. Issues such as low work engagement, job dissatisfaction, and high turnover rates undermine operational efficiency (Ndatse et al., 2024:208).

This gap in the literature underscores the importance of conducting this study. While previous research has explored the impact of LOs on employee attitudes in developed economies, the unique socio-cultural and economic conditions of South Africa necessitate localised investigations. This study aimed to address this gap by examining the relationships among LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction in the municipality. By addressing these issues, the research will contribute to the discipline of organisational behaviour and management studies. It provided insights into how LOs can enhance employee attitudes, thereby improving municipal performance and service delivery. The findings also have broader implications, offering valuable lessons for other municipalities in South Africa and beyond.

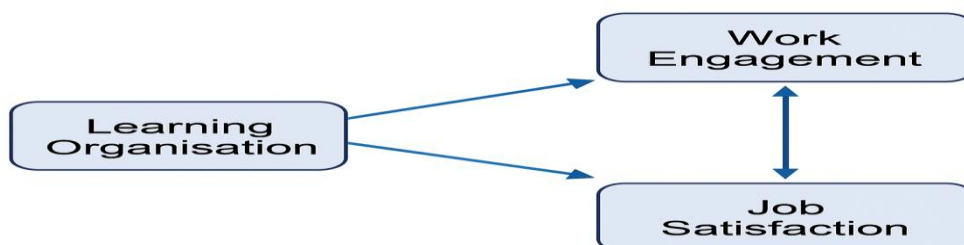


Figure 2.1: *Conceptual Model*

The conceptual model proposes that a LO practice positively influence both work engagement and job satisfaction, and that these two factors reinforce one another.

Recent studies showed that building a strong learning culture increases employee work engagement, and that improve work engagement and job satisfaction are mutually reinforcing (Pereira, 2021:10-15; Mohammad, 2024:6-8; Hasan, 2023:285-288).

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in learning organisation theory (Watkins & Marsick, 1997:9) and work engagement theory (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74). The framework proposes that learning organisation practices influence work engagement, learning organisation practices influence job satisfaction and work engagement influences job satisfaction. These relationships are supported by empirical findings (Khan et al., 2022:9; Makambe & Osupile, 2021:127).

Empirical evidence shows that LO practices significantly enhance job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can also mediate the effect of these practices on outcomes such as performance and commitment (Hendri, 2019:1215-1218; Cao, 2024:60-63; Bui, 2024:8-11; Wang, 2022:1096-1100). Additionally, research confirmed a strong, positive relationship between job satisfaction and work engagement, where job satisfaction predicts higher levels of engagement (Thokoa et al., 2021:5-7; 2021:9-11). Together, these findings support links from LO practices to work engagement and to job satisfaction, and a bidirectional link between work engagement and job satisfaction.

Problem Statement

Globally, extensive research has established the link between LOs and positive employee engagement. For instance, recent studies by Garavan et al. (2022:23) and Kim and Park (2021:46) demonstrate how fostering a culture of continuous learning improves job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and overall performance. However, the application of these findings to the South African municipal context remains underexplored.

The challenges of work engagement and job satisfaction have become increasingly significant for organisational performance and efficiency. In South Africa, municipalities are vital to service delivery and community development, yet many face systemic issues such as low productivity, high staff turnover, and poor morale.

The Rustenburg municipality in the North West Province is no exception, grappling with inefficiencies stemming from disengaged and dissatisfied employees. This problem has far-reaching implications, affecting not only municipal operations but also the quality of services provided to the community.

Quantifying the magnitude of this problem reveals alarming trends. A report by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA, 2021:34) indicates that over 50% of municipal employees across the country are dissatisfied with their jobs, citing limited growth opportunities and lack of recognition. Moreover, the Auditor-General's report (2022:18) highlights persistent performance shortfalls in municipalities, attributing many to poor workforce engagement. Such statistics underscore the urgency of addressing employee engagement to enhance organisational effectiveness.

While LO principles have been widely adopted in the private and developed sectors, there is a significant gap in understanding how these practices influence work engagement and satisfaction in resource-constrained public sector settings, such as the selected municipality.

The theoretical frameworks further complicate the issue. Existing frameworks, such as Senge's (1990) LO model, predominantly focus on developed economies and may not fully capture the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of municipalities in South Africa. As such, there is a need to adapt and test these frameworks in the unique South African context to identify their relevance and impact. Researching this problem is crucial for several reasons. First, addressing work engagement and satisfaction can directly improve service delivery, which is critical for public trust and community development. Second, the findings will contribute to the broader body of knowledge on LOs, offering insights into their application in emerging economies. Finally, by identifying the gaps and challenges specific to the selected municipality, this research can inform targeted interventions and policies, ensuring a more motivated and effective workforce.

In conclusion, while previous studies have highlighted the benefits of LOs, their applicability to South African municipalities remains under-researched. This study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring how LOs can influence work engagement and job satisfaction within the selected municipality, providing a foundation for improved organisational performance and community impact.

Research Objectives

Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to explore the influence of LOs on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

Secondary objective

- SRO1: To determine if LO practices are implemented within a selected municipality.
- SRO2: To determine the relationship between LO, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context.
- SRO3: To determine the role of a LO in the variation of work engagement and job satisfaction.
- SRO4: To determine if work engagement and its dimensions mediate the relationship between LO practices and job satisfaction.

Research questions

Primary research question

The primary research question of this study was: How do LOs influence work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality?

Secondary research question

- What LO practices are implemented within a selected municipality?
- What is the relationship between LO, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context?
- How do LO practices contribute to variations in work engagement and job satisfaction?
- How do different dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediate the relationship between LO and job satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction)?

Literature Review

Learning organisations

The focus of this literature review is on the relationships among LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction, with specific reference to public sector organisations like Rustenburg municipality. The review explores the literature, including empirical studies, and identifies gaps that require further research. Organisations today operate in dynamic environments that require continuous learning and adaptation.

The concept of a Learning Organisations has emerged as a crucial strategy for fostering innovation, improving employee performance, and ensuring long-term sustainability (Senge, 2016:14; Garvin et al., 2018:48). Learning organisations are characterised by systems thinking, shared vision, team learning, mental models, and personal mastery, all of which contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability (Marsick & Watkins, 2018:72). This literature review explores the key characteristics, benefits, challenges, and theoretical foundations of Learning Organisations drawing on recent research.

Theoretical foundations of learning organisations

Several theoretical frameworks explain the development and sustainability of LOs. *Senge's five disciplines* (1990, updated 2019), model remains one of the most influential theories for understanding LOs. These disciplines include personal mastery (encouraging individual learning and self-improvement (Senge, 2019:141), mental models (challenging existing assumptions and perspectives (Senge, 2019:174), shared vision (developing a collective organisational goal (Senge, 2019:206), team learning (enhancing group-based learning and collaboration (Senge, 2019:221) and systems thinking (understanding the interconnectedness of organisational elements (Senge, 2019:68).

Organisational learning theory suggests that learning occurs through the acquisition, interpretation, and application of knowledge at individual, team, and organisational levels (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2019:1125). This theory emphasises the importance of feedback loops, experience-based learning, and adaptation to changing environments. The Dynamic capabilities theory posits that organisations must develop capabilities to sense opportunities, seize them, and transform themselves accordingly

(Teece, 2018:43). Learning organisations thrive by continuously adapting their knowledge base to sustain competitive advantages.

The advantages of adopting a LO approach include improved innovation and adaptability. Organisations that embrace continuous learning are more innovative and resilient to change (Geldenhuis et al., 2020:198). Higher employee performance and satisfaction occur when employees in LOs are more motivated, engaged, and productive (Shuck & Rose, 2019:314). Enhanced knowledge retention includes knowledge-sharing practices to prevent knowledge loss and improve organisational efficiency (Bakker et al., 2021:487). Better decision-making is when data-driven learning approaches improve decision-making and problem-solving (Frazier et al., 2017:133).

Definition of the learning organisation

Senge (1990:3) defines Learning Organisations as where ‘people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together’. A learning organisation promotes continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptability to enhance performance (Marsick & Watkins, 2003:138; Nazir et al., 2021:129). These defining characteristics provide the conceptual basis for H1, as they guide the assessment of whether the selected municipality has such LO practices (e.g., continuous learning, knowledge sharing and leadership support).

In this study, continuous learning is conceptualised as the structured provision of opportunities for skill enhancement, knowledge sharing, and leadership support. Marsick and Watkins (2003:138) emphasise the importance of ongoing opportunities for employees to develop their skills, share knowledge with colleagues, and receive leadership backing to foster a culture of continuous learning. Leaders are expected to both advocate for learning and demonstrate learning behaviours themselves, ensuring that learning remains integral to the organisational culture (Marsick & Watkins, 2003:138).

Components of the learning organisation

Continuous Learning is structured as opportunities for skill enhancement, open platforms for sharing insights, and leadership support where leaders advocate for

learning and model learning behaviours (Marsick & Watkins, 2003:138). Marsick and Watkins (Nazir et al., 2021:128) describe seven dimensions that characterise Learning Organisations: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership. In the context of the present study, these seven dimensions are used as criteria for evaluating the presence of Learning Organisations practices in the municipality, thereby directly informing H1.

Several scholars have identified essential characteristics that define Learning Organisations. A continuous learning culture is one in which a learning organisation promotes an environment where employees are encouraged to acquire new skills, share knowledge, and engage in lifelong learning (Marsick & Watkins, 2018:72). This involves structured training programmes, informal learning opportunities, and leadership support.

Knowledge sharing and collaboration are defining features of LOs, which promote open communication and collaboration across all levels. Knowledge-sharing platforms, mentorship programmes, and team-based learning initiatives are commonly used to foster a culture of knowledge exchange (Örtenblad, 2020:110).

Supportive leadership is the type of leadership which plays a vital role in shaping a learning organisation. Leaders in these organisations act as facilitators of learning, providing support, resources, and motivation for employees to engage in continuous development (Caldwell & Hayes, 2019:55).

Systematic problem-solving is used in LOs to support data-driven approaches, critical thinking, and continuous feedback mechanisms to address challenges and make informed decisions (Garvin et al., 2018:50). This process ensures that employees learn from experiences and apply insights to future problem-solving.

Experimentation and Innovation in LOs encourage risk-taking, allowing employees to experiment with new ideas, test solutions, and implement best practices. This fosters creativity and helps organisations stay competitive in dynamic industries (Chiva et al., 2019:137).

Correlates of the learning organisation

Learning organisations have been found to positively correlate with employee attitudes and outcomes such as job involvement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and organisational commitment. Watkins and Marsick (2019:162) found that organisations fostering continuous learning environments experience higher levels of involvement and satisfaction. Employees in learning-oriented workplaces report greater motivation, commitment, and willingness to contribute to organisational goals (Kahn, 2017:370) . According to Lee & Tjosvold (2019:167), organisational learning has been positively correlated with employee engagement, including OCB.

When employees perceive their organisation as one that supports learning and development, they tend to exhibit higher levels of OCB, such as helping colleagues, going beyond job requirements, and contributing to a positive work environment (Anitha & Suri, 2021:300). Watkins and Marsick (2019:164) found that organisations which promote continuous learning environments experience higher levels of organisational commitment from employees. When employees are provided opportunities for growth and development, they will feel a strong connection and commitment to the organisation (Kahn, 2017:370). While Learning Organisations usually improve employee engagement, the absence of these practices or their poor implementation can lead to negative employee engagement, such as job dissatisfaction, stress, burnout, and disengagement (Edmondson, 2018:118; Bakker & Demerouti, 2021:138).

Work engagement

Work engagement has emerged as a significant area of research in organisational behaviour and human resource management (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018:46). This literature review explores key theories, determinants, and outcomes of work engagement, highlighting its relevance across various occupational contexts.

Theoretical frameworks of work engagement

Several theoretical frameworks have been developed to explain work engagement. One of the most influential is the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:98). According to this model, job resources (e.g., autonomy, social support, and career opportunities) and personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy and resilience) foster work engagement, while excessive job demands can lead to burnout.

Another key theory is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2017:108), which posits that fulfilling intrinsic psychological needs, competence, autonomy, and understanding enhances work engagement. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2016:25) also contributes to the understanding of work engagement by emphasising the role of reciprocity between employees and employers in fostering engagement.

Definition of work engagement

Work engagement is defined as a positive work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption. This definition emphasises that engaged employees are highly energetic, deeply involved in their work, and enthusiastic about their job roles (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74). According to Bakker & Demerouti (2017:278), work engagement is a work-related state of well-being where employees exhibit high levels of energy, mental resilience, and a strong sense of involvement in their tasks. This definition highlights the psychological aspects of work engagement, including enthusiasm, dedication, and focus. This study will adopt the definition by Schaufeli et al. (2002:74) because it provides a structured, measurable approach to work engagement through its three dimensions (vigour, dedication and absorption).

Components of work engagement

Vigour refers to the high levels of energy and resilience at work (Schaufeli et al., 2002:74). Dedication is a sense of significance and enthusiasm about one's work (Demerouti, 2017:278). Absorption is being engrossed and focused on one's tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2002:75). In this study, vigour, dedication and absorption are not only treated as components of work engagement but also as potential mediating mechanisms through which LOs influence employees' intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, as specified in H4.

Correlates of work engagement

Rich et al. (2018:622), found that work engagement positively correlates with organisational commitment, indicating that engaged employees are more likely to remain loyal to their organisations (Nazir et al., 2021:130). This is also confirmed by findings suggesting that engaged employees demonstrate higher job performance, organisational commitment, and overall well-being (Salanova et al., 2019:75).

Moreover, organisations with highly engaged employees report higher productivity and profitability (Harter et al., 2020:45). Saks (2019:22), found that work engagement is positively correlated with job satisfaction, meaning that employees who are more engaged in their work tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Nkosi et al., 2020:7). While Maslach & Leiter (2016:107) found a negative correlation between work engagement and burnout, meaning that employees with higher work engagement are less likely to experience burnout.

Shuck et al. (2017:489) found that work engagement negatively correlates with turnover intentions, meaning that highly engaged employees are less likely to consider leaving their jobs. This is also confirmed by findings suggesting that work engagement is also linked to reduced turnover intentions and absenteeism (Rich et al., 2018:132).

Determinants of work engagement

Several factors contribute to work engagement, including job resources through supportive leadership, job autonomy, skill variety, and learning opportunities, which positively impact engagement (Bakker et al., 2018:146). Personal resources include traits such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy contribute to sustained engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2019:80). Organisational Factors: A positive organisational culture, fair treatment, and career growth opportunities enhance engagement (Saks, 2021:200). Work-Life Balance: Employees who experience work-life balance tend to be more engaged (Taris & Schaufeli, 2020:92). Leadership style: Transformational and supportive leadership enhances engagement (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018:99).

Work engagement varies across industries and job roles. In healthcare, engagement is associated with improved patient outcomes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2020:210). In education, engaged teachers create more interactive learning environments (Klassen & Durksen, 2017:56). In corporate settings, engagement enhances innovation and customer satisfaction (Macey et al., 2018:89). These findings suggest the need for context-specific strategies to foster engagement.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a crucial factor influencing employee performance, organisational commitment, and overall well-being. It is generally defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences (Locke, 1976:130).

Over the years, various theories have been developed to explain job satisfaction, and researchers have identified numerous determinants and outcomes associated with it. This literature review explores the key theories, factors influencing job satisfaction, and its impact on organisations.

Theoretical perspectives on job satisfaction

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain job satisfaction, including Herzberg's two-factor theory.

Herzberg et al. (2017:92) classify job satisfaction into motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition, and growth) and hygiene factors (e.g., salary, working conditions, and company policies).

Motivators lead to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction. Job Characteristics Model (JCM), according to Hackman and Oldham (2016:240), proposes that five job characteristics, including skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback, affect job satisfaction by influencing psychological states such as meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results.

Equity Theory (ET) by Adams (2018) suggests that employees compare their input-output ratio with others and experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on perceived fairness in rewards and treatment (Adams, 2018:45). According to Ryan and Deci (2017:314), SDT argues that job satisfaction is influenced by the fulfilment of intrinsic needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Definition of job satisfaction

According to Locke (1976:1297), job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Job satisfaction is also defined as the extent to which employees feel positively about their work and work environment (Jacobs & Roodt, 2018:12). This study will adopt Locke's (1976) definition of job satisfaction because it captures the emotional and cognitive aspects of how employees perceive their jobs.

Since this study examines the relationship between LO practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction, an emotion-based definition aligns well with engagement theories that focus on motivation and psychological fulfilment.

Components of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction consists of several key components that influence an employee's overall attitude toward their job. The most widely recognised components include intrinsic job satisfaction, extrinsic job satisfaction and work environment. According to Hackman & Oldham (1976:260), job satisfaction is derived from the nature of the work itself, such as personal growth, achievement, and the meaningfulness of the job. Extrinsic job satisfaction comes from external job factors, including salary, benefits, job security, and work conditions (Herzberg et al., 1959:114).

The work environment is the physical and psychological conditions in which employees perform their tasks, including workplace relationships, safety, and infrastructure (Spector, 1997:85).

Correlates of job satisfaction

Hefny (2020:23), found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Employees who were satisfied with their jobs demonstrated higher levels of commitment to their organisations. Hadj (2024:27) found a moderate positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Higher job satisfaction was associated with greater employee loyalty. Hefny (2020:23) reported a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Employees with higher job satisfaction were less likely to intend to leave their organisation. Hadj (2024:27) found that job satisfaction negatively affects employees' intentions to leave, with job satisfaction explaining 29.9% of the variance in voluntary turnover intentions.

Determinants of job satisfaction

Numerous factors influence job satisfaction, including the work environment, a positive organisational climate, supportive leadership, and good working conditions (Spector, 2019:131). Compensation, such as competitive salaries, bonuses, and benefits, contributes to higher job satisfaction levels (Judge et al., 2020:350). Work-life balance, the balance between work and personal life, is associated with higher job satisfaction (Greenhaus & Allen, 2018:15). Career growth and development, creating opportunities for professional development and career advancement, lead to greater job satisfaction (Ng et al., 2019:245). Job security: Employees with secure employment are more satisfied with their jobs (Davis & Smith, 2021:89).

Interpersonal relationships: Positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors improve job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2021:178).

Outcomes of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been linked to several important organisational outcomes, such as employee performance, with satisfied employees tend to be more productive and committed to their tasks (Bakotić, 2016:250). Reduced turnover and absenteeism, higher job satisfaction lowers turnover intentions and absenteeism rates (Lambert et al., 2017:430).

Organisational commitment, employees with high job satisfaction are more likely to exhibit organisational loyalty (Meyer & Maltin, 2018:130). Mental and physical well-being, job satisfaction correlate with overall employee health and reduce stress-related illnesses (Faragher et al., 2019:105). Customer satisfaction, organisations with satisfied employees often provide better customer service and satisfaction ratings (Griffin et al., 2020:76).

Job satisfaction in different sectors

Job satisfaction varies across industries. In healthcare, factors such as patient load and work environment influence satisfaction levels (Shanafelt et al., 2017:125). In education, teacher satisfaction is linked to workload and administrative support (Klassen & Tze, 2019:350). In the corporate sector, job satisfaction is often determined by leadership style and organisational culture (García-Buades et al., 2020:82).

Learning organisations and work engagement

The concept of LOs has evolved significantly in recent years. A learning organisation is one that continually expands its capacity to create desired results through structured learning processes, leadership commitment, and knowledge-sharing cultures (Garvin et al., 2018:109), while work engagement is defined as the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2019:26). Engaged employees demonstrate high energy levels, strong commitment to their roles, and deep involvement in their tasks.

The relationship between learning organisations and work engagement

Recent studies explore how LOs contribute to higher levels of engagement among employees and how LOs foster work engagement. Empowerment and autonomy is when LOs provide employees with opportunities to develop skills and make independent decisions, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement (Deci et al., 2020:56), psychological safety is when LOs create an environment where employees feel safe to express ideas and take risks, which enhances engagement (Frazier et al., 2017:102), leadership and support allow transformational leadership in LOs promotes a shared vision and supports employee development, directly influencing work engagement (Albrecht et al., 2018:76), and opportunities for growth include continuous learning and career development opportunities increase motivation and engagement (Shuck & Rose, 2019:119).

These findings suggested that LOs are important for work engagement, which conceptually supports H2 by proposing a positive association between LO practices and employees' engagement in the municipal context.

Empirical evidence

Several empirical studies support the link between LOs and work engagement. Salanova et al. (2020:182) found that employees in learning-oriented organisations report higher levels of engagement due to increased job resources and supportive leadership. Geldenhuys et al. (2020:95) demonstrated that organisations that emphasises continuous learning and innovation experience lower employee turnover and higher engagement levels.

Bakker et al. (2021:103) confirmed that engaged employees are more likely to contribute to a learning-oriented culture, suggesting a reciprocal relationship between engagement and organisational learning. These empirical patterns indicate that differences in LO practices across organisations are associated with differences in employee engagement levels, thereby supporting the expectation in H3 that LO practices will explain variation in work engagement among municipal employees.

Practical implications

Organisations aiming to enhance work engagement should integrate LO principles into their workplace practices. Key strategies include investing in employee development by providing training programmes, mentorship, and career growth opportunities (Watkins & Marsick, 2019:63). Encouraging knowledge sharing by establishing platforms for collaboration and knowledge exchange (Örtenblad, 2020:59). Fostering inclusive leadership by developing leaders who inspire and support employee learning (Albrecht et al., 2018:76). Finally, promoting work-life balance by ensuring manageable workloads to sustain engagement and prevent burnout (Schaufeli, 2019:29).

Work engagement and job satisfaction

Work engagement and job satisfaction are crucial psychological constructs influencing employee well-being and organisational performance. Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, 2018:25).

Job satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their job, influenced by various intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Judge et al., 2020:61). This literature review explores the theoretical frameworks, determinants, and the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction.

Relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction

Research indicates a strong positive correlation between work engagement and job satisfaction. Engaged employees are more likely to experience job satisfaction due to heightened motivation and fulfilment (Schaufeli, 2018:25).

Studies suggest that work engagement acts as a mediator between job resources and job satisfaction, implying that organisations fostering engagement will also enhance employee satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017:278). On this basis, the current study proposes that the three dimensions of work engagement will mediate the relationship between LO practices (as key job resources) and both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, as formalised in H4. Furthermore, longitudinal studies confirm that higher engagement levels are associated with increased job satisfaction (Tims et al., 2019:93).

Taken together, the literature on the link between LOs and engagement, and between engagement and job satisfaction, indicate that employees in learning-oriented settings are likely to show higher work engagement and, consequently, higher job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction and work engagement at the national treasury

Thokoa et al. (2021:134) assessed job satisfaction and work engagement levels at South Africa's National Treasury. Their study revealed somewhat low levels of both variables. Importantly, job satisfaction was identified as a predictor of work engagement, with non-monetary factors such as communication and access to promotional opportunities being significant contributors. This suggests that, beyond financial incentives, factors such as effective communication and career advancement opportunities are crucial to enhance employee engagement.

Job satisfaction as a predictor of work engagement, job satisfaction is a significant predictor of work engagement, especially when non-monetary factors such as communication and promotional opportunities are present (Thokoa et al., 2021:6).

Ethical climate and employee satisfaction is when a positive ethical climate within organisations is linked to increased work engagement and job satisfaction (Ramajoe et al., 2024:8).

The relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction: Mediation

The interplay between Learning Organisations, work engagement, and job satisfaction has been extensively studied, revealing significant positive relationships among these variables. A learning organisation fosters an environment that promotes continuous learning and development, which in turn enhances work engagement and satisfaction (Malik & Garg, 2017:166; Ebrahimian Jolodar & Ebrahimian Jolodar, 2012:15). Allouzi et al. (2018) explored whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between Learning Organisations practices and work engagement.

Their research indicated that Learning Organisations positively affect job satisfaction, which in turn enhances organisational innovation. Numerous studies have examined the interrelationships between Learning Organisations practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

A study by Eldor and Harpaz (2019:214) found that employees in learning organisations exhibit higher levels of engagement, leading to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions. Similarly, research by Bakker et al. (2020:98) highlighted that organisations that prioritise continuous learning and development foster greater employee engagement, which in turn enhances job satisfaction.

Furthermore, mediation analyses have demonstrated that work engagement significantly resolves the relationship between Learning Organisations and job satisfaction (Zacher & Rosing, 2021:47). Building on these mediation findings, the present study extends prior work by examining whether each feature of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) serves as a distinct mediating pathway between Learning Organisations practices and intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction, as articulated in H4. Furthermore, by positioning Learning Organisations as key job resources, the literature implies that higher or lower levels of such practices will lead to observable variation in work engagement and job satisfaction, which directly motivates H3.

This body of evidence provides theoretical justification for H2, which suggests that Learning Organisations will be positively related to both work engagement and job satisfaction in the selected municipality. This concludes the discussion of the constructs under the study based on the literature. The next section outlines the methodology used to conduct the study.

Research Philosophy, Methods and Methodologies

Research philosophy

This study adopted a positivist philosophy, which aligned with the principles of objectivity, empirical observation, and the systematic testing of hypotheses. Positivism was based on the belief that reality is objective, measurable, and independent of human perception (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:7). This philosophy was well-suited to studies seeking to establish relationships between variables through quantitative methods, ensuring replicability and generalisability of findings (Bryman, 2016:30).

The positivist philosophy was relevant because it enables the systematic investigation of Learning Organisations practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

Since the study aimed to determine relationships and mediation effects among these variables, a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis was the most appropriate method (Saunders et al., 2019:45).

By adopting a positivist approach, this study ensures that the findings are objective, reliable, and grounded in empirical evidence, contributing to a broader understanding of how Learning Organisations practices impact work engagement and job satisfaction in a municipal setting.

Research method

Flowing from the positivist philosophy discussed above, this study adopted a quantitative research method. A quantitative approach is appropriate because it allows for the systematic measurement of relationships among variables, in this case, LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:147). Quantitative research relies on numerical data, structured instruments (such as surveys), and statistical techniques to test hypotheses and derive objective conclusions (Saunders et al., 2019:178).

This study will employ structured questionnaires to collect data from municipal employees and will use statistical analysis methods such as correlation, regression, ANOVA, and mediation analysis to assess relationships between key variables (Bryman, 2016:161). The research proposal was submitted to the institution's ethics committee for approval and permission to gather data for the study. The study was classified as low or minimal risk, and a clearance number (NWU-00826-25-A4) was issued.

Research approach

Consistent with the positivist approach and quantitative research design, this study adopted a deductive research approach. In a deductive approach, existing theories and empirical studies are used to formulate hypotheses that are then tested using systematic data collection and statistical analysis (Saunders et al., 2019:145; Bryman, 2016:24). Drawing on prior literature on LOs work engagement and job satisfaction, the study specifies hypotheses about the direct and mediating relationships among these constructs and then examines them using survey data from municipal employees.

The purpose was therefore not to generate new theory from the data, as in an inductive approach, but to test and refine existing theoretical propositions in an objective, replicable manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:59).

Methodological choice

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of LOs on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality. A quantitative design was considered appropriate because the primary objective of the study was to test theoretically derived hypotheses (H1–H4) by examining statistical relationships between clearly defined constructs, rather than exploring individual perceptions in depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:149).

A structured self-administered questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument. This choice aligns with the need to gather standardised data from a relatively large sample of municipal employees (N = 260), enabling the use of advanced statistical techniques such as exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, multiple regression, mediation and moderation analyses. The use of standardised scales for LOs, work engagement and job satisfaction supports reliability, replicability and comparability with prior empirical studies in the public sector and organisational research (Bryman, 2016:166).

The cross-sectional design means that data were collected at a single point in time. While this limits the ability to infer causal relationships, it is suitable for assessing the current status of LOs in the municipality (H1), the strength and direction of relationships between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction (H2), the extent to which LOs predict variations in these outcomes (H3), and whether work engagement dimensions mediate the relationship between learning organisation and job satisfaction (H4).

Cross-sectional survey designs are widely used in organisational behaviour research due to their efficiency, cost-effectiveness and suitability for hypothesis testing in real-world work settings (Saunders et al., 2019:179).

Overall, the methodological choice is consistent with the study's positivist orientation, which assumes that organisational phenomena such as learning practices, engagement and satisfaction can be measured objectively and analysed using statistical procedures to draw generalisable conclusions about the municipal workforce.

Research design

The study employed a correlational, descriptive research design, which was appropriate for examining the relationships between variables at a single point in time. This design allowed the researcher to measure the degree of association between LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction without manipulating the study environment (Saunders et al., 2019:202). The decision to use a descriptive design further complements the quantitative approach by allowing the research to characterise the extent and nature of the variables involved.

This design was optimal for identifying patterns and relationships in data without requiring complex intervention or experimentation (Saunders et al., 2019:189). The descriptive design also ensured that the research findings are clearly structured and easily interpreted, making them applicable to future studies or decision-making within the municipality.

Time horizon

The cross-sectional approach provided a snapshot of the variables at a specific time, while the correlational focus identified their potential associations and patterns. This design was particularly suited for the study because it balances practical feasibility and the need for rigorous data analysis within the municipal context.

The research adopted a cross-sectional time horizon, collecting data at a single point in time to capture the current state of LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

This approach was cost-effective and practical for addressing the research objectives within the available resources and time constraints (Bell et al., 2022:112).

Furthermore, a cross-sectional research design was employed because it allows data collection at a single point in time, a practical and efficient approach when the aim is to study relationships between variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:212).

This design was especially appropriate given the study's context, as it enables an overview of the current state of LOs within a selected municipality. The cross-sectional design facilitates data collection across a wide sample, providing an accurate snapshot of employees' perceptions and experiences while being cost-effective and time-efficient compared to longitudinal studies.

Study population

The population of this study consisted of employees within a selected municipality, specifically those working in roles where LOs, work engagement, and job satisfaction are relevant. These may include municipal officials (managers, supervisors, and department heads), administrative staff (clerks, coordinators, HR personnel), and operational employees (field workers). The population comprised 800 employees. The questionnaires were printed manually and out of 800 employees, only 260 participated, and the questionnaires were distributed to this subset.

Inclusion criteria

The study included employees who had been with the municipality for at least six months, ensuring they have sufficient experience with organisational practices. These employees were from different departments and at job levels, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of LO practices. Respondents who volunteered consented to take part in the study.

Exclusion criteria

The study excluded newly hired employees (less than six months of experience), as they may not yet have a full understanding of LO practices. External contractors or consultants, as they do not represent the municipality's internal organisational environment and employees on extended leave or suspension.

This population was chosen because it directly experiences and interacts with a LO in its workplace. The findings helped determine the relationships among learning organisations, employee engagement and job satisfaction, providing insights applicable to similar municipal environments.

Sample method

This study used stratified sampling, a probability sampling method that ensures representation across different employee categories within a selected municipality. The municipal workforce consists of diverse employee groups (e.g., managerial, administrative, operational), and stratification will ensure that each category is adequately represented. This method reduced sampling bias and increased the ability to generalise findings across the broader municipal workforce (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Stratification was based on job role and department, so responses reflected different organisational experiences.

After stratification, random sampling was applied within each group to ensure fairness and equal selection probability.

2.7.11 Sample size

The appropriate sample size depends on the study's quantitative aspects:

For the Quantitative Component using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, the study selected 260 employees from the estimated municipal workforce of 800. This size allows for statistical generalisation and maintains a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error (Bryman et al., 2021).

Table 2: Table for Determining Sample Size for a known Population, Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	26	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384
Note: "N" is Population Size "S" is Sample Size.									

Data collection instrument

The primary data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire, chosen for its ability to systematically collect quantitative data on the variables of interest: LO practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction.

Measuring instruments used in this study include:

- **Biographic questionnaire:** This was administered to gather demographic information about the study participants, such as age, gender, and tenure. This information was collected to present the composition and description of the sample.
- **Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction was measured using the MSQ, adapted by Buitendach and Rothmann (2009) for the South African context. It consists of a 17-item scale, of which eight items measure extrinsic job satisfaction. An example

question measuring extrinsic job satisfaction was 'Being able to keep busy all the time.' (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). In the adapted questionnaire, nine items measure intrinsic job satisfaction, and an example of a questions is 'The way company policies are put into practice.' (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). The scale has a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very satisfied (5) to very dissatisfied (1). Buitendach and Rothmann (2009) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.86, indicating that the adapted scale was valid and reliable. Sempane et al. (2002) also reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91.

- **Work engagement:** For this study, the shortened nine-item version (UWES9) of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli et al. (2006:707-716) was selected as the measure of work engagement. This scale was adapted from the original 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002:85). The items of the scale represent the work engagement dimension identified by Schaufeli et al. (2002:74) of vigour, dedication and absorption. It contains three items to reflect each of the three underlying work engagement dimensions and was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from one to five. Sample items for each dimension are: 'At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (vigour)', 'My job inspires me (dedication)' and 'I am immersed in my work (absorption)'. Higher scores selected by respondents will indicate a greater degree of work engagement.
- **The Learning Organisation:** The DLOQ, developed by Watkins and Marsick (1997), was employed to evaluate the extent to which the organisation embodies characteristics of a learning organisation. The DLOQ measures seven dimensions namely, Continuous Learning (Encouraging ongoing development of employees), Inquiry and Dialogue (Promoting open communication and questioning), Team Learning and Collaboration (Facilitating collective learning and teamwork), Embedded Systems (Establishing systems to capture and share learning), Empowerment (Enabling individuals to take initiative and make decisions), System Connections (Aligning internal structures with the external environment) and Strategic Leadership (Leadership that supports and reinforces learning). The DLOQ was available in two versions: a comprehensive 43-item questionnaire and a shorter 21-item version. Both versions have demonstrated strong reliability and validity across various contexts. For instance, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the

dimensions range from 0.79 to 0.94, indicating high internal consistency (Leufvén et al., 2015). The DLOQ has been effectively utilised in diverse settings to assess and enhance organisational learning practices. These instruments have been selected for their established reliability and validity, ensuring robust measurement of the constructs pertinent to this study.

Data collection procedure

- Permission was obtained from municipal management.
- Ethical clearance was secured.
- Questionnaires were distributed to selected employees.
- Participants were informed of voluntary participation.
- Completed questionnaires were collected after two weeks.
- Follow-up reminders were issued to increase response rate.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2023). Descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) determined the data distribution pattern. To ensure that the data were normally distributed, a cut-off point of 2.00 was set for skewness (Finch & West, 1997) and 4.00 for kurtosis (Field, 2009). A skewed variable is one whose mean is not at the centre, while a kurtosis variable indicates the clustering of scores (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001:73) state that examining the skewness and kurtosis of scores before analysis is necessary, as solutions from the analysis are usually degraded if the variables are not normally distributed. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the reliability of the constructs measured in this study. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommend a cut-off point of 0.70. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables.

Regarding statistical significance, it was decided to set the confidence interval at 95% ($p < 0,05$). Effect sizes (Steyn, 1999) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings.

The parameters 0.10 (small effect), 0.30 (medium effect) and 0.50 (significant effect) were set for the practical significance of the correlations (Steyn, 1999). A cut-off point of 0.30 (medium effect) indicated the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988).

Results

This section reports the demographic characteristics of the sample. It includes an overview of the descriptive statistics showing the outcomes of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), along with the results related to reliability and validity. It also presents the correlations among factors, multiple regression, and the mediation and moderation analyses.

Demographics

This study engaged 260 respondents from the selected municipality to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. The demographic attributes of the respondents, including age, gender, department and level of service, are reported in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Demographic profile of respondents

Variable	Category	Count	% of Total	Cumulative %
A1. Age	18–25 years	23	8.8%	8.8%
	26–35 years	75	28.8%	37.7%
	36–45 years	68	26.2%	63.8%
	46–55 years	41	15.8%	79.6%
	56 and above	53	20.4%	100.0%
A2. Gender	Female	128	49.2%	49.2%
	Male	132	50.8%	100.0%
A4. Years of Service	Less than 1 year	23	8.8%	8.8%
	1–10 years	75	28.8%	37.6%
	11–20 years	68	26.2%	63.8%
	21–30 years	41	15.8%	79.6%
	More than 30 years	53	20.4%	100.0%

Table 2. illustrates that (28.8%) respondents were aged 26–35 years, (26.2%) were aged 36–45 years, (20.4%) were aged 56 and above years, (15.8%) were aged 46–55 years and (8.8%) were aged 18–25 years, while (50.8%) were male and (49.2%) were females. The respondents have been employed for 1–10 years of service

(28.8%), 11–20 years of service (26.2%), 21–30 years of service (15.8%), less than 1 year of service (8.8%) and more than 30 years of service (20.4%).

Exploratory factor analysis and descriptive statistics of constructs

This section presents the results of the EFA and descriptive statistics for the main constructs in the study, namely Learning Organisations, work engagement, job satisfaction, and task performance. These analyses were conducted to assess the underlying factor structure, internal consistency reliability, and distributional properties of the scales, and to evaluate whether they are suitable for subsequent correlation, regression, mediation and moderation analyses (Hair et al., 2019:10).

As shown in Table 2.2, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values for all multi-item scales were above the recommended minimum of 0.60, with overall KMO values ranging between 0.77 and 0.98, indicating sampling adequacy for factor analysis (Field, 2018:1022). Bartlett's tests of sphericity were highly significant ($p < .001$) for all constructs, confirming that the correlation matrices were not identity matrices and that factor analysis was appropriate (Pallant, 2020:192).

For the Learning Organisations construct (21 items), a single strong component emerged with an eigenvalue of 19.01, accounting for 90.52% of the total variance. Similarly, the seven sub-dimensions, continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded systems, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership each produced dominant first components with eigenvalues between 2.78 and 2.83, explaining more than 92% of the variance in all cases (see Table 2.2). These results indicate that the LO scale is unidimensional at the higher level, with clearly defined and internally coherent sub-dimensions. This pattern is consistent with previous validations of the DLOQ in public sector and service settings, where strong single-factor solutions and high communalities were reported (Song et al., 2019:4; Imran et al., 2021:3).

The work engagement scale (UWES-17) also showed excellent psychometric properties. The overall work engagement factor produced an eigenvalue of 15.26, accounting for 89.75% of the variance, while the higher-order factor (F1) comprising seven aggregated items yielded an eigenvalue of 5.73 and explained 81.92% of the variance (Table 2.2). The three sub-dimensions vigour, dedication and absorption, exhibited means around 2.36–2.38 and standard deviations between 0.75 and 0.77,

indicating moderate engagement levels with relatively low dispersion among employees. These results are in line with recent studies using the UWES in the South African public sector, which report good factorial validity and moderate mean scores on vigour, dedication and absorption (Mostert, 2020:145; De Beer & Bianchi, 2019:6).

The job satisfaction scale (10 items) produced a first component with an eigenvalue of 8.98, explaining 89.80% of the variance, and demonstrated very high internal consistency (Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω = 0.987). The task performance construct (5 items) also yielded a strong single factor (eigenvalue = 4.56; 91.28% variance explained), with reliability coefficients above 0.97 (Table 2.2).

These findings are consistent with contemporary evidence showing that well-established job satisfaction and performance measures often yield high internal consistency and clear one-factor solutions in organisational samples (Judge et al., 2020:63; Bowling & Khazon, 2019:38).

All constructs demonstrated excellent reliability, with Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega coefficients mostly exceeding 0.95, above the recommended minimum of 0.70 for research purposes (Taber, 2018:1278; Kline, 2016:77). The skewness and kurtosis values for the main variables ranged from approximately 0.54 to 0.25, indicating acceptable differences and supporting the use of parametric techniques such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression (Field, 2018:237).

Taken together, the EFA, KMO, Bartlett's test results, eigenvalues, variance explained and reliability coefficients in Table 2.2 provide strong empirical support for the psychometric soundness of the measurement instruments within the selected municipality. Importantly, all seven dimensions of the Learning Organisations emerged as robust, coherent factors with high reliability, suggesting that Learning Organisations practices are not only conceptually present but are also consistently perceived and experienced by employees. This provides initial quantitative evidence in support of H1, which posits that Learning Organisations practices are implemented within the selected municipality. The observed factor structure aligns with prior research demonstrating that public sector organisations can successfully embed learning-oriented practices, such as continuous learning, inquiry and team learning, despite bureaucratic constraints (Camps & Rodríguez, 2021:5; Kim & Park, 20)

Table 2.2: Factor analysis and descriptive statistics of all variables (N=260)

Variable	No. of items	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω	KMO	Bartlett's χ^2 (df), p	1st Component Eigenvalue	% Variance Explained
Learning Organisation	21	2.40	0.793	0.205	-0.212	0.995	0.995	0.987	11323 (210), < .001	19.01	90.52%
Continuous Learning	3	2.41	0.818	0.244	-0.300	0.971	0.971	0.778	1027 (3), < .001	2.83	94.50%
Inquiry and Dialogue	3	2.41	0.807	0.184	-0.231	0.963	0.963	0.782	908 (3), < .001	2.80	93.17%
Team Learning	3	2.39	0.798	0.236	-0.196	0.963	0.963	0.780	908 (3), < .001	2.79	93.13%
Embedded Systems	3	2.39	0.807	0.223	-0.201	0.963	0.963	0.782	908 (3), < .001	2.79	93.15%
Empowerment	3	2.39	0.807	0.199	-0.252	0.965	0.965	0.783	932 (3), < .001	2.80	93.49%
System Connection	3	2.38	0.798	0.182	-0.247	0.961	0.961	0.777	880 (3), < .001	2.78	92.69%
Strategic Leadership	3	2.40	0.801	0.140	-0.265	0.963	0.964	0.782	911 (3), < .001	2.80	93.20%
Job Satisfaction	10	2.45	0.768	0.117	-0.216	0.987	0.987	0.977	4514 (45), < .001	8.98	89.80%
Work Engagement – total (UWES,	17	2.37	0.752	-0.046	-0.434	0.993	0.993	0.983	8611 (136), < .001	15.26	89.75%
Vigor	?	2.38	0.768	-0.050	-0.467	0.977	0.977	0.945	2507 (15), < .001	5.48	91.33
Dedication	?	2.38	0.754	-0.045	-0.439	0.974	0.975	0.924	1846 (10), < .001	4.54	90.76
Absorption	?	2.36	0.750	-0.032	-0.443	0.980	0.980	0.945	2533 (21), < .001	5.73	81.9

Correlation analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine the associations between LOs, work engagement (and its dimensions), job satisfaction and task performance. Overall, the correlation matrix (Table 2.3) shows moderate to strong positive correlations among the main study variables, providing initial empirical support for the proposed relationships in the research model and support for H2, which posits a positive relationship between Learning Organisations, work engagement and job satisfaction in the municipal context.

Specifically, learning organisation was positively and significantly correlated with overall work engagement (UWES), its sub-dimensions (vigour, dedication, absorption), job satisfaction. This pattern suggests that employees who perceive higher levels of Learning Organisations practices (such as continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, and strategic leadership) report being more energetic and dedicated to their work, more satisfied and performing better. The dimensions of work engagement also showed strong positive intercorrelations, as expected, and were each positively associated with job satisfaction and task performance. Similarly, job satisfaction showed moderate to strong positive correlations with work engagement.

The correlation results provide preliminary support for H2, demonstrate that Learning Organisations practices are positively associated with both work engagement and job satisfaction within the selected municipality.

Table 2.3: Correlation analysis: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables (N = 260)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Learning Organisation	—											
2. Continuous Learning	.954***	—										
3. Inquiry and Dialogue	.965***	.969***	—									
4. Team Learning	.961***	.965***	.967***	—								
5. Embedded Systems	.953***	.969***	.961***	.960***	—							
6. Empowerment	.958***	.966***	.970***	.970***	.967***	—						
7. System Connection	.964***	.970***	.969***	.969***	.966***	.970***	—					
8. Strategic Leadership	.299***	.281***	.269***	.272***	.274***	.266***	.295***	—				
9. Job Satisfaction	.397***	.400***	.368***	.395***	.397***	.394***	.390***	.477***	—			
10. Work Engagement	.492***	.504***	.475***	.506***	.500***	.509***	.504***	.444***	.504***	—		
11. Vigor	.486***	.495***	.467***	.498***	.491***	.501***	.494***	.441***	.502***	.993***	—	
12. Dedication	.495***	.505***	.478***	.508***	.501***	.511***	.508***	.449***	.498***	.992***	.977***	—
13. Absorption	.486***	.501***	.471***	.501***	.496***	.504***	.500***	.434***	.502***	.994***	.979***	.980***

Note. *CLearn* = Continuous learning; *Inquiry* = Inquiry and dialogue; *TLearn* = Team learning; *Systems* = Embedded systems; *Empower* = Empowerment; *SConnect* = System connection; *StratL* = Strategic leadership; *LearnO* = Learning organisation (overall score); *JobS* = Job satisfaction; *UWES* = Work engagement (overall score); *F1* = higher-order work engagement factor; *TaskP* = Task performance; *Vigour*, *Dedication*, *Absorption* = *UWES* sub-dimensions. All items were measured on a 3-point Likert-type scale (1 = disagree, 2 = neutral, 3 = agree). Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω values indicate excellent internal consistency for all multi-item scales ($\alpha, \omega \geq .96$). KMO values are above .77, and Bartlett's tests of sphericity are significant ($p < .001$), confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The first component eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained show strong one-dimensionality for each construct. $N = 260$.

Regression analysis

The study was also interested in the impact of the Learning Organisation dimensions as predictors of work engagement and job satisfaction. According to Uyanık and Güler (2013), regression analysis is a statistical technique used to model the relationship between one or more independent variables (predictors) and a dependent variable (outcome). Regression analysis also allows for hypothesis testing to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is statistically significant. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.4. below.

Table 2.4: Regression Analysis with Learning Organisation (IV), Work Engagement (DV) and, Job Satisfaction (DV) (N = 260)

Predictor	UWES	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption	Job Satisfaction	Job Satisfaction
Continuous Learning	0.10	0.14	0.09	0.05	0.36	0.32
Inquiry and Dialogue	0.29	0.28	0.26	0.33	0.40	0.27
Team Learning	-0.73*	-0.74*	-0.72*	-0.72*	-0.75*	-0.46†
Embedded Systems	0.27	0.28	0.25	0.26	0.17	0.06
Empowerment	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.04	0.13	0.12
System Connection	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.38	0.17	0.02
Strategic Leadership	0.16	0.09	0.22	0.16	-0.08	-0.14
Work engagement	—	—	—	—	—	0.39***
Job Satisfaction	—	—	—	—	—	—
R	.531	.523	.533	.527	.429	.542
R ²	.282	.273	.284	.277	.184	.294
Adj. R ²	.262	.253	.264	.257	.161	.272
F(df1,df2)	14.1*** (7,252)	13.5***	14.3***	13.8***	8.11*** (7,252)	13.1*** (8,251)

† p ≈ .06–.07 (marginal). * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. / UWES = overall work engagement; Coefficients are standardized betas (β) where reported.

Inspection of table 2.4 suggest that 28.2% of the variance in global work engagement was explained by the learning organisation dimensions, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of global work engagement. The learning organisation dimensions also explained 27.3%, 28.4% and 27.7% of the variance in vigour, dedication and absorption respectively, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of global work engagement.

The learning organisation dimensions also explained 18.4% of the variance in job satisfaction, with team learning proving to be the only statistical significant predictor of job satisfaction. However, with the inclusion of global work engagement the variance explained in job satisfaction increase by 11% to 29.4%, with team learning and global work engagement proving to be the only statistical significant predictors of job satisfaction in the model.

Mediation analysis

This study was also interested in determining the mediating effects of global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction. In line with contemporary mediation procedures, indirect effects were tested using bootstrapping, which is recommended over traditional causal steps for detecting indirect effects in organisational research (Hayes, 2022:112). In addition, the exclusion of 0 in the confidence intervals was also considered to determine mediation effects. The results of the mediation analysis with global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption are presented in Table 2.5 to Table 2.8 below.

Table 2.5: Mediation Analysis (Global work engagement)

Path / Effect	b	SE	95% CI		z	p
			Lower	Upper		
Learning Organisation → Work Engagement (a_1)	0.48	0.05	0.39	0.57	10.10	<.001
Work Engagement → Job satisfaction (b_1)	0.42	0.07	0.28	0.53	6.37	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c, total effect)	0.39	0.05	0.28	0.49	7.34	.002
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c' , direct effect)	0.19	0.06	0.07	0.31	3.04	.002
Indirect effect via Work Engagement (a_1b_1)	0.20	0.04	0.13	0.27	5.46	<.001
Proportion of total effect mediated (%)	51.3%	—	—	—	—	—

Table 2.6: Mediation Analysis (Vigour)

Path / Effect	b	SE	95% CI		z	p
			Lower	Upper		
Learning Organisation → Vigour (a_1)	0.48	0.05	0.40	0.58	10.20	<.001
Vigour → Job satisfaction (b_1)	0.40	0.07	0.27	0.54	6.06	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c, total effect)	0.39	0.05	0.29	0.50	7.15	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c' , direct effect)	0.19	0.06	0.08	0.32	3.11	.002
Indirect effect via Vigour (a_1b_1)	0.20	0.04	0.13	0.27	5.00	<.001
Proportion of total effect mediated (%)	51.3%	—	—	—	—	—

Table 2.7: Mediation Analysis (Dedication)

Path / Effect	b	SE	95% CI		z / t	P
			Lower	Upper		
Learning Organisation → Dedication (a_1)	0.48	0.05	0.40	0.58	10.21	<.001
Dedication → Job satisfaction (b_1)	0.41	0.06	0.28	0.53	6.33	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c, total effect)	0.39	0.05	0.27	0.49	7.41	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c' , direct effect)	0.19	0.06	0.07	0.30	3.16	.002
Indirect effect via Dedication (a_1b_1)	0.20	0.04	0.13	0.28	5.12	<.001
Proportion of total effect mediated (%)	51.3%	—	—	—	—	—

Table 2.6: Mediation Analysis (Absorption)

Path / Effect	b	SE	95% CI		z / t	P
			Lower	Upper		
Learning Organisation → Absorption (a_1)	0.48	0.05	0.38	0.57	10.02	<.001
Absorption → Job satisfaction (b_1)	0.41	0.07	0.28	0.54	6.21	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c, total effect)	0.39	0.05	0.27	0.49	7.41	<.001
Learning Organisation → Job satisfaction (c' , direct effect)	0.19	0.06	0.07	0.31	3.16	.002
Indirect effect via Absorption (a_1b_1)	0.20	0.04	0.12	0.28	4.90	<.001
Proportion of total effect mediated (%)	51.3%	—	—	—	—	—

Table 2.5 to Table 2.8 suggest that the significant indirect effects of global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction were confirmed. This is confirmed by the

exclusion of 0 in the confidence intervals in all four models. This means that global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption are salient in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the influence of learning LO practices on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected South African municipality. The study further considered work engagement and its dimensions as mediators in the relationship between the LO and job satisfaction

The four main hypotheses and secondary research objectives (SROs) were:

- **H1 / SRO1:** LO is positively related to work engagement and job satisfaction.
- **H2 / SRO2:** LO leads is associated with variations in work engagement and job satisfaction.
- **H3 / SRO3:** Work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediates the relationship between LO and job satisfaction (and task performance)..

Relationships between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction (H2 & SRO2)

H2 and SRO2 posited that there is a positive relationship among Learning Organisations, work engagement and job satisfaction. The correlation matrix (Table 2.3) reveals that the overall Learning Organisations construct is moderately and positively correlated with work engagement and job satisfaction. The Learning Organisations dimensions also show consistent positive associations with UWES and Job Satisfaction. These findings are in line with the JD–R model, which suggests that organisational resources such as learning opportunities, empowerment and supportive leadership promote engagement and positive work attitudes (Lesener *et al.*, 2019:79). Recent studies also report that organisational learning climates and supportive HR practices significantly predict both engagement and satisfaction across sectors (Buil *et al.*, 2019:22; Çınar *et al.*, 2019:148). Therefore, the correlation results provide strong empirical support for H2 and SRO2: in this municipality, higher perceptions of Learning Organisations practices are associated with higher work engagement and higher job satisfaction.

Learning organisation as a driver of work engagement and job satisfaction (H3 & SRO3)

H3 and SRO3 proposed that Learning Organisations lead to variations in work engagement and job satisfaction. This is supported by the regression analyses (Table 2.4). For work engagement (UWES) and its dimensions, the regression models including the Learning Organisations dimensions showed statistically significant overall model fit ($p < .001$). Although multicollinearity among Learning Organisations dimensions is high (given extremely strong inter-correlations), the models indicate that the Learning Organisations explains a meaningful proportion of variance in UWES, vigour, dedication and absorption.

Interestingly, team learning displays a negative coefficient in several regressions, while other Learning Organisations dimensions tend to be positive but non-significant when entered simultaneously. This likely reflects suppression or multicollinearity effects rather than a true negative impact, as the bivariate correlations between Team Learning and engagement are positive. Such patterns are common when conceptually overlapping predictors are included together (Podsakoff et al., 2019:884).

For Job Satisfaction, Learning Organisations dimensions jointly explain around 18–29 per cent of variance, depending on whether mediators (UWES, are included. Learning Organisations direct effect on Job Satisfaction becomes weaker once engagement is controlled, suggesting that part of Learning Organisations influence on satisfaction is indirect through this variable.

These results indicate that while individual Learning Organisations components show complex patterns in multivariate models, the overall Learning Organisations environment is a significant driver of engagement and satisfaction levels, consistent with recent empirical work in public administration and municipal settings (Mayer, 2021:11; Park et al., 2020:10). Thus, H3 and SRO3 are broadly supported, with Learning Organisations contributing to meaningful variance in both work engagement and job satisfaction.

Mediation of the learning organisation outcomes relationship (H4 & SRO4)

H4 and SRO4 argued that the dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediate the relationship between Learning Organisations and job satisfaction. The mediation analyses (Table 2.5) suggest that the significant indirect effects of global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction were confirmed. This is confirmed by the exclusion of 0 in the confidence intervals in all four models. This means that global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption are salient in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction.

This is consistent with recent evidence showing that vigour, dedication and absorption jointly mediate the relationships between organisational resources and outcomes (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:393; Lesener et al., 2019:91). Overall, the mediation results strongly support H4 and SRO4: work engagement and its dimensions are key mechanisms through which LO practices translate into higher job satisfaction.

Managerial Implications

The findings have several practical implications for municipal management:

Institutionalise learning organisation: The consistently high Learning Organisations scores and strong factor structure indicate that Learning Organisations practices are already recognisable. Managers should formalise continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, and team learning routines (e.g., structured reflection sessions, cross-departmental learning forums) to maintain and enhance these practices. Such systemic learning structures are critical in public organisations facing complex service demands (Mayer, 2021:14).

Use Learning Organisations as levers for engagement and satisfaction: Since Learning Organisations significantly predict work engagement and job satisfaction (H2, H3), municipal leaders can use Learning Organisations practices as a strategic tool to enhance employees' enthusiasm, dedication and fulfilment at work (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:392). Managers should therefore pair Learning Organisations initiatives with engagement-enhancing practices, such as autonomy, feedback, recognition and job crafting opportunities (Saks, 2019:30).

Target low-engagement groups for Learning Organisations interventions: Moderation results suggest that Learning Organisations has the strongest effect on job satisfaction for employees with lower engagement. Municipal managers could prioritise Learning Organisations related interventions (coaching, learning networks, mentoring) in units or teams with relatively low-engagement scores, thereby maximising impact.

Integrate learning with performance management: Because learning-related factors performance management systems should explicitly recognise and reward learning behaviours such as sharing knowledge, reflecting on mistakes, and collaboratively solving problems (Buil et al., 2019:24).

It should also be noted that despite the benefits, several challenges exist in transforming into learning organisations, including employee resistance to change and reluctance to adopt to new learning practices (Wombacher & Felfe, 2019:1260). Lack of leadership commitment: without leadership support, learning initiatives often fail (Caldwell et al., 2021:92). Time and resource constraints: implementing a learning culture requires significant investment in time, technology, and training (Kim & Beehr, 2021:411). Difficulty in measuring learning impact: organisations struggle to assess the direct impact of learning on performance (Salanova et al., 2020:150).

Drawing from these studies, the selected municipality can consider the following strategies to cultivate learning organisations, and improve work engagement and job satisfaction, encourage job crafting (empower employees to tailor their job roles, aligning tasks with their strengths and interests, thereby enhancing engagement (De Beer et al., 2016:412), enhance communication and career development (implement transparent communication channels and provide clear pathways for career progression to boost job satisfaction (Thokoa et al., 2021:134), and promote transformational leadership (develop leadership programs that emphasise transformational leadership qualities to foster a positive organisational climate and increase job satisfaction (McCallaghan et al., 2019:288).

If such learning-supportive and engagement-enhancing practices are present to varying degrees in the municipality, it is reasonable to expect corresponding differences in work engagement and job satisfaction levels among employees, which underpins H3. By integrating these approaches, the municipality can move towards becoming a learning organisation, leading to a more engaged and satisfied workforce. Job crafting and engagement involve employees who proactively modify their roles to improve their positions (De Beer et *al.*, 2016:405).

Recommendations for organisations

Based on the empirical evidence, the following recommendations are made for municipalities and similar organisations:

Develop a comprehensive learning strategy by drafting and implementing Learning Organisations policies that link continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and innovation to strategic municipal objectives. This should include clear roles for line managers as learning champions and indicators to monitor Learning Organisations practices.

Strengthen leadership for learning by investing in leadership development programmes that emphasise coaching, feedback, psychological safety and support for experimentation. Strategic leadership is a crucial Learning Organisations dimension and a central resource in the JD–R framework (Lesener et *al.*, 2019:88).

Embed learning in systems and processes by integrating learning into daily operations through mechanisms such as after-action reviews, communities of practice, digital knowledge repositories and collaborative platforms. Evidence from public-sector digitalisation research shows that system-level learning capabilities enhance service quality and citizen satisfaction (Caputo et *al.*, 2021:2).

Monitor engagement and satisfaction regularly by conducting regular surveys, using UWES and validated satisfaction scales, and linking results to Learning Organisations indicators. Data-driven feedback loops can guide targeted interventions and resource allocation (Saks, 2019:34).

Promote job crafting and employee voice by encouraging employees to proactively shape their roles (job crafting) and to voice improvement ideas. Such behaviours are associated with both Learning Organisations climates and higher engagement (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:398).

Limitations

The study was limited to one municipality, which may limit generalisability to other contexts.

The use of self-report questionnaires may have introduced response bias.

To mitigate these limitations, validated instruments were used and anonymity was maintained.

Recommendations for future research

To build on the current findings, future research should:

Adopt longitudinal and multi-wave designs to track Learning Organisations, engagement, and satisfaction over time to establish causal pathways and examine whether changes in Learning Organisations precede changes in engagement and performance.

Use multi-source and objective indicators to combine self-report data with supervisor ratings, administrative performance indicators, and citizen feedback to reduce common-method bias and strengthen validity.

Explore multilevel and cross-level effects by applying multilevel modelling to examine how unit-level Learning Organisations climates influence individual engagement and satisfaction, and whether team-level LO moderates individual relationships (Caputo et al., 2021:16).

Compare different municipalities and sectors to replicate the study in multiple municipalities or across public and private organisations to assess the robustness and generalisability of the findings.

Examine additional mediators and moderators to investigate other psychosocial mechanisms (e.g., psychological safety, meaningful work) and contextual moderators (e.g., leadership style, digital maturity) that may strengthen or weaken the chain of LOs, engagement, and satisfaction.

Future studies should focus on the impact of digital transformation on Learning Organisations as emerging technologies continue to reshape how organisations acquire, share, and apply knowledge (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016:357). Additionally, research is needed to develop sector-specific models of Learning Organisations, considering that industries such as healthcare, education, and public administration face unique learning dynamics (Örtenblad, 2020:118). The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in organisational learning also warrants further exploration, particularly in enhancing decision-making, automating knowledge processes, and personalising employee learning experiences (Marouf & Khalil, 2020:90).

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Learning Organisations practices on work engagement and job satisfaction in a selected municipality. The findings confirm that Learning Organisations practices are strongly embedded, psychometrically robust, and perceived as coherent by employees (Table 2.2).

Learning Organisations is positively associated with work engagement and job satisfaction (Table 2.3) and explains significant variance in both outcomes (Table 2.4), thereby supporting the JD–R perspective that organisational resources foster positive work states.

Crucially, the mediation analyses (Table 2.5) demonstrate that work engagement and its dimensions like vigour, dedication and absorption are key mechanisms through which Learning Organisations translates into higher job satisfaction.

Overall, the study provides robust evidence for all four hypotheses (H1–H4) and secondary objectives (SRO1–SRO4). It highlights Learning Organisations practices as a strategic lever for municipal leaders seeking to enhance employee engagement

and job satisfaction while also laying a foundation for more advanced longitudinal and multilevel research in public-sector learning and engagement.

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CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this study was to examine the influence of learning LO practices on work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected South African municipality. The study further considered work engagement and its dimensions as mediators in the relationship between the LO and job satisfaction.

The four main hypotheses and secondary research objectives (SROs) were:

- **H1 / SRO1:** LO is positively related to work engagement and job satisfaction.
- **H2 / SRO2:** LO leads is associated with variations in work engagement and job satisfaction.
- **H3 / SRO3:** Work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediates the relationship between LO and job satisfaction (and task performance).

This chapter discusses the empirical findings (Tables 2.2–2.6), draws out theoretical and managerial implications, provides recommendations for organisations, outlines limitations, suggests directions for future research, and concludes the study.

3.2 Discussion of Results

3.2.1 Relationships between Learning organisation, engagement and job satisfaction (H1 & SR1)

H2 and SRO2 posited that there is a positive relationship among Learning Organisations, work engagement and job satisfaction. The correlation matrix (Table 2.3) reveals that the overall Learning Organisations construct is moderately and positively correlated with work engagement and job satisfaction. The Learning Organisations dimensions also show consistent positive associations with UWES and Job Satisfaction. These findings are in line with the JD–R model, which suggests that organisational resources such as learning opportunities, empowerment and supportive leadership promote engagement and positive work attitudes (Lesener *et al.*, 2019:79). Recent studies also report that organisational learning climates and supportive HR practices significantly predict both engagement and satisfaction across sectors (Buil *et al.*, 2019:22; Çınar *et al.*, 2019:148).

Therefore, the correlation results provide strong empirical support for H2 and SRO2: in this municipality, higher perceptions of Learning Organisations practices are associated with higher work engagement and higher job satisfaction.

3.2.2 Learning organisation as a driver of work engagement and job satisfaction (H2 & SRO2)

H3 and SRO3 proposed that Learning Organisations lead to variations in work engagement and job satisfaction. This is supported by the regression analyses (Table 2.4). For work engagement (UWES) and its dimensions, the regression models including the Learning Organisations dimensions showed statistically significant overall model fit ($p < .001$). Although multicollinearity among Learning Organisations dimensions is high (given extremely strong inter-correlations), the models indicate that the Learning Organisations explains a meaningful proportion of variance in UWES, vigour, dedication and absorption.

Interestingly, team learning displays a negative coefficient in several regressions, while other Learning Organisations dimensions tend to be positive but non-significant when entered simultaneously. This likely reflects suppression or multicollinearity effects rather than a true negative impact, as the bivariate correlations between Team Learning and engagement are positive. Such patterns are common when conceptually overlapping predictors are included together (Podsakoff et al., 2019:884).

For Job Satisfaction, Learning Organisations dimensions jointly explain around 18–29 per cent of variance, depending on whether mediators (UWES, are included. Learning Organisations direct effect on Job Satisfaction becomes weaker once engagement is controlled, suggesting that part of Learning Organisations influence on satisfaction is indirect through this variable.

These results indicate that while individual Learning Organisations components show complex patterns in multivariate models, the overall Learning Organisations environment is a significant driver of engagement and satisfaction levels, consistent with recent empirical work in public administration and municipal settings (Mayer, 2021:11; Park et al., 2020:10). Thus, H3 and SRO3 are broadly supported, with Learning Organisations contributing to meaningful variance in both work engagement and job satisfaction.

3.2.5 Mediation of the learning organisation–outcome relationships (H3 & SRO3)

H4 and SRO4 argued that the dimensions of work engagement (vigour, dedication, absorption) mediate the relationship between Learning Organisations and job satisfaction. The mediation analyses (Table 2.5) suggest that the significant indirect effects of global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction were confirmed. This is confirmed by the exclusion of 0 in the confidence intervals in all four models. This means that global work engagement, vigour, dedication and absorption are salient in the relationship between the learning organisation and job satisfaction.

This is consistent with recent evidence showing that vigour, dedication and absorption jointly mediate the relationships between organisational resources and outcomes (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:393; Lesener et al., 2019:91). Overall, the mediation results strongly support H4 and SRO4: work engagement and its dimensions are key mechanisms through which LO practices translate into higher job satisfaction.

reflecting a resource substitution or buffering mechanism (Lesener et al., 2019:95).

3.3 Managerial Implications

The findings have several practical implications for municipal management:

- Institutionalise learning organisation: The consistently high Learning Organisations scores and strong factor structure indicate that Learning Organisations practices are already recognisable. Managers should formalise continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, and team learning routines (e.g., structured reflection sessions, cross-departmental learning forums) to maintain and enhance these practices. Such systemic learning structures are critical in public organisations facing complex service demands (Mayer, 2021:14).
- Use Learning Organisations as levers for engagement and satisfaction: Since Learning Organisations significantly predict work engagement and job satisfaction (H2, H3), municipal leaders can use Learning Organisations practices as a strategic tool to enhance employees' enthusiasm, dedication and fulfilment at work (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:392). Managers should therefore pair Learning

Organisations initiatives with engagement-enhancing practices, such as autonomy, feedback, recognition and job crafting opportunities (Saks, 2019:30).

- Target low-engagement groups for Learning Organisations interventions: Moderation results suggest that Learning Organisations has the strongest effect on job satisfaction for employees with lower engagement. Municipal managers could prioritise Learning Organisations related interventions (coaching, learning networks, mentoring) in units or teams with relatively low-engagement scores, thereby maximising impact.
- Integrate learning with performance management: Because learning-related factors performance management systems should explicitly recognise and reward learning behaviours such as sharing knowledge, reflecting on mistakes, and collaboratively solving problems (Buil et al., 2019:24).
- It should also be noted that despite the benefits, several challenges exist in transforming into learning organisations, including employee resistance to change and reluctance to adopt to new learning practices (Wombacher & Felfe, 2019:1260). Lack of leadership commitment: without leadership support, learning initiatives often fail (Caldwell et al., 2021:92). Time and resource constraints: implementing a learning culture requires significant investment in time, technology, and training (Kim & Beehr, 2021:411). Difficulty in measuring learning impact: organisations struggle to assess the direct impact of learning on performance (Salanova et al., 2020:150).
- Drawing from these studies, the selected municipality can consider the following strategies to cultivate learning organisations, and improve work engagement and job satisfaction, encourage job crafting (empower employees to tailor their job roles, aligning tasks with their strengths and interests, thereby enhancing engagement (De Beer et al., 2016:412), enhance communication and career development (implement transparent communication channels and provide clear pathways for career progression to boost job satisfaction (Thokoa et al., 2021:134), and promote transformational leadership (develop leadership programs that emphasise transformational leadership qualities to foster a positive organisational climate and increase job satisfaction (McCallaghan et al., 2019:288). If such learning-supportive and engagement-enhancing practices are present to varying degrees in the municipality, it is reasonable to expect corresponding differences in

work engagement and job satisfaction levels among employees, which underpins H3. By integrating these approaches, the municipality can move towards becoming a learning organisation, leading to a more engaged and satisfied workforce. Job crafting and engagement involve employees who proactively modify their roles to improve their positions (De Beer et al., 2016:405).

3.4 Recommendations for Organisations

Based on the empirical evidence, the following recommendations are made for municipalities and similar organisations:

- Develop a comprehensive learning strategy by drafting and implementing Learning Organisations policies that link continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and innovation to strategic municipal objectives. This should include clear roles for line managers as learning champions and indicators to monitor Learning Organisations practices.
- Strengthen leadership for learning by investing in leadership development programmes that emphasise coaching, feedback, psychological safety and support for experimentation. Strategic leadership is a crucial Learning Organisations dimension and a central resource in the JD–R framework (Lesener et al., 2019:88).
- Embed learning in systems and processes by integrating learning into daily operations through mechanisms such as after-action reviews, communities of practice, digital knowledge repositories and collaborative platforms. Evidence from public-sector digitalisation research shows that system-level learning capabilities enhance service quality and citizen satisfaction (Caputo et al., 2021:2).
- Monitor engagement and satisfaction regularly by conducting regular surveys, using UWES and validated satisfaction scales, and linking results to Learning Organisations indicators. Data-driven feedback loops can guide targeted interventions and resource allocation (Saks, 2019:34).
- Promote job crafting and employee voice by encouraging employees to proactively shape their roles (job crafting) and to voice improvement ideas. Such behaviours are associated with both Learning Organisations climates and higher engagement (Bakker & de Vries, 2021:398).

3.5 Limitations

The study was limited to one municipality, which may affect generalisability.

The use of self-report questionnaires may introduce response bias.

To mitigate these limitations, validated instruments were used and anonymity was ensured.

3.6 Recommendations for Future Research

To build on the current findings, future research should:

- Adopt longitudinal and multi-wave designs to track Learning Organisations, engagement, and satisfaction over time to establish causal pathways and examine whether changes in Learning Organisations precede changes in engagement and performance.
- Use multi-source and objective indicators to combine self-report data with supervisor ratings, administrative performance indicators, and citizen feedback to reduce common-method bias and strengthen validity.
- Explore multilevel and cross-level effects by applying multilevel modelling to examine how unit-level Learning Organisations climates influence individual engagement and satisfaction, and whether team-level LO moderates individual relationships (Caputo et al., 2021:16).
- Compare different municipalities and sectors to replicate the study in multiple municipalities or across public and private organisations to assess the robustness and generalisability of the findings.
- Examine additional mediators and moderators to investigate other psychosocial mechanisms (e.g., psychological safety, meaningful work) and contextual moderators (e.g., leadership style, digital maturity) that may strengthen or weaken the chain of LOs, engagement, and satisfaction.
- **Future studies** should focus on the impact of digital transformation on Learning Organisations as emerging technologies continue to reshape how organisations acquire, share, and apply knowledge (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016:357). Additionally, research is needed to develop sector-specific models of Learning Organisations, considering that industries such as healthcare, education, and public administration face unique learning dynamics (Örtenblad, 2020:118).

- The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in organisational learning also warrants further exploration, particularly in enhancing decision-making, automating knowledge processes, and personalising employee learning experiences (Marouf & Khalil, 2020:90).

3.7 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of Learning Organisations practices on work engagement and job satisfaction in a selected municipality. The findings confirm that Learning Organisations practices are strongly embedded, psychometrically robust, and perceived as coherent by employees (Table 2.2). Learning Organisations is positively associated with work engagement and job satisfaction (Table 2.3) and explains significant variance in both outcomes (Table 2.4), thereby supporting the JD–R perspective that organisational resources foster positive work states.

Crucially, the mediation analyses (Table 2.5) demonstrate that work engagement and its dimensions like vigour, dedication and absorption are key mechanisms through which Learning Organisations translates into higher job satisfaction.

Overall, the study provides robust evidence for all four hypotheses (H1–H4) and secondary objectives (SRO1–SRO4). It highlights Learning Organisations practices as a strategic lever for municipal leaders seeking to enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction while also laying a foundation for more advanced longitudinal and multilevel research in public-sector learning and engagement.

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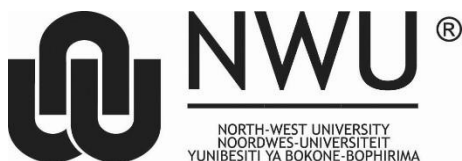
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Annexure A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



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Senate Committee for Research Ethics

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05 August 2025

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **North-West University Economic and Management Sciences**

Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) on 5 August 2025, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title:	Investigating the relationship between the learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.														
Study leader/Supervisor (Principal investigator/Researcher:	Prof L.T.B Jackson							University no.:	11209658						
Student:	M.D Mamabolo							University no.:	23500026						
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	0	8	2	6	-	2	5	-	A	4
Institution Study number Year Status Status: S = Submission; R = Re-submission; P = Provisional authorisation; A = Authorisation															
Application type:	Single study-Postgraduate research							Risk level:	Low/minimal risk						
Commencement date:	8/5/25														
Expiry date:	8/5/26														

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMSREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process; – withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *EMS-REC can be contacted for further information or any report templates through the secretariat. Botlenyana Maluleka (Botlenyana.Maluleka@nwu.ac.za/ +27 18 2852436) or the chair Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout (Diana.Viljoen@nwu.ac.za / +27 16 9103403).*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

**Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics
Committee**

ANNEXURE B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

DEAR PARTICIPANT

INFORMED CONSENT TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY

You are invited to take part in a research study that forms part of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to say no to participating, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the North-West University and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study.

Title of the project: Investigating the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.

Institution: NWU Business School

Ethics Reference Number: NWU-00826-25-A4

Names and contact details of project staff

	Supervisor	Researcher		
Title, name & surname	Prof Leon Jackson	Ms	M.D,	Mahlodi Mamabolo
Full Names	Leon Jackson	Mahlodi Mamabolo		Daphne
Function in Project	Principle Investigator	Researcher		

Telephone	0828401135	0738162518
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What is this research study all about?

This research study examines learning organisation, work engagement, and job satisfaction in the municipality.

It explores whether the municipality fosters a culture of continuous learning, knowledge sharing, and adaptability and how these factors influence employees' motivation and overall job satisfaction.

The study aims to determine the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement, and job satisfaction while also assessing whether work engagement mediates this relationship. Using structured questionnaires and statistical analyses such as correlation, regression, and mediation analysis, the research seeks to provide insights into how fostering a learning organisation can enhance employee engagement and satisfaction. The findings are expected to offer both theoretical contributions and practical recommendations for improving workplace dynamics within the municipal sector.

What will be expected of you?

You will be expected to:

- Complete the questionnaire, which should take approximately 1 hour of your time.
- Respond to the questions in an open and honest manner.

Please note that your responses are completely anonymous and no personally identifiable data will be collected.

DECLARATION

Declaration by participant

By selecting the option below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: **Investigating the relationship between learning organisation, work engagement, and job satisfaction within a selected municipality.**

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that as I have completed the study anonymously it will not be possible to remove any information I have provided, as you will not be able to identify me in any way.
3. I understand that individuals from the University may look at anonymous research data collected during the study, to ensure that the study is conducted appropriately.
4. I agree that my anonymous information can be shared with individuals from the project team detailed above.

I agree to take part in the above study

Yes	No
1	2

Annexure C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Survey

Demographic Information **(Will only be used to describe the sample)**

A1. Age	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56 and above
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A2. Gender	Male	Female	Non-Binary	Prefer not to say
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A3. Department	Administration	Finance	Human Resources	Public Works	Other: _____ Specify
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A4. Years of service	Less than 1 year	1-10 years	11-20 years	21-30years	More than 30yrs
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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding learning practices within the municipality:

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Dimension / Statement	1	2	3	4	5
B1	People help each other learn.	1	2	3	4	5
B2	The organisation creates opportunities for continuous learning.	1	2	3	4	5
B3	People are given time to support learning and development.	1	2	3	4	5
B4	People are encouraged to openly discuss mistakes to learn from them.	1	2	3	4	5
B5	People feel free to ask 'why' regardless of rank.	1	2	3	4	5
B6	People give open and honest feedback to one another.	1	2	3	4	5
B7	Teams/groups have the freedom to adapt and make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5

B8	Teams/groups discuss ways to improve organisational performance.	1	2	3	4	5
B9	Teams/groups revise work processes based on what they learn.	1	2	3	4	5
B10	Systems to access and share learning are available (e.g., databases, meetings).	1	2	3	4	5
B11	The organisation makes its lessons learned available to all employees.	1	2	3	4	5
B12	The organisation regularly collects and shares information on performance.	1	2	3	4	5
B13	People are involved in setting organisational goals.	1	2	3	4	5
B14	People feel responsible for improving organisational performance.	1	2	3	4	5
B15	People have input into decisions affecting their work.	1	2	3	4	5
B16	The organisation is able to adapt to changes in the external environment.	1	2	3	4	5
B17	The organisation is connected to its communities and stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5
B18	The organisation encourages employees to think from a broader, systems-wide perspective.	1	2	3	4	5
B19	Leaders model behaviours that support learning.	1	2	3	4	5
B20	Leaders believe that employee learning contributes to organisational success.	1	2	3	4	5
B21	Leaders provide opportunities for employees to learn and grow.	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. Please note that the scale has change</i>						
1		2		3		4
Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often
						Always
C1	I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time	1	2	3	4	5
C2	My planning is optimal	1	2	3	4	5
C3	I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work	1	2	3	4	5

C4	I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work	1	2	3	4	5
C5	I was able to perform any work well with minimal time and effort	1	2	3	4	5
D1	I receive recognition for a job well done					
D2	I feel close to the people at work	1	2	3	4	5
D3	I feel good working at this company	1	2	3	4	5
D4	I feel secure about my job	1	2	3	4	5
D5	I believe management is concerned about me	1	2	3	4	5
D6	On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health	1	2	3	4	5
D7	My wages are good	1	2	3	4	5
D8	All my talents and skills are used at work	1	2	3	4	5
D9	I get along with my supervisors	1	2	3	4	5
D10	I feel good about my job	1	2	3	4	5

*The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. **Please note that the scale has change***

Never	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6				
E1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E2	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E3	Time flies when I'm working			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E5	I am enthusiastic about my job			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E6	When I am working, I forget everything else around me			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E7	My job inspires me			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E8	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work			0	1	2	3	4	5	6

E9	I feel happy when I am working intensely	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E10	I am proud on the work that I do	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E11	I am immersed in my work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E12	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E13	To me, my job is challenging	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E14	I get carried away when I'm working	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E15	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E16	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
E17	At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
F1	I am committed to this organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Thank you for participating in this research

Annexure D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

RUSTENBURG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

DIRECTORATE: CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

UNIT: HUMAN RESOURCES

P.O. Box 16, Rustenburg, 0300, North-West Province, South Africa
Tel: (014) 590 3443 Email: bmtytotja@rustenburg.gov.za



Ref: Personnel
Enq: Mr Mtyotja

02 June 2025

REF: 4/5/1/2

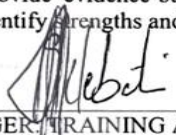
REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT: Ms MAHLODI MAMABOLO (MASTER'S DEGREE)

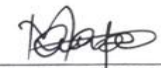
Attached is a request for approval from the above-mentioned Student from North West University Business School to conduct research in Rustenburg Local Municipality and submit a dissertation to fully qualify as a graduate.

According to the motivational letter from the student the study will be conducted around the following area:

- *"Learning organisation practices, work engagement, and job satisfaction in Rustenburg Municipality: A quantitative study".*

The study will provide evidence-based solutions to enhance work engagement, improve job satisfaction and identify strengths and weaknesses in organisational learning.


ACTING MANAGER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
Mr LI MOLEBATSI


DIRECTOR: CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICE
Ms MP. MAAPE

 Approved/not approved.

Comments:


MUNICIPAL MANAGER
Adv A. KHUDUGE

18/06/2025
DATE

Annexure E: LANGUAGE EDITOR CERTIFICATION

93 Hunters Village

Knysna 6570

Tel: 0835906762

imarion100@gmail.com

24 November 2025

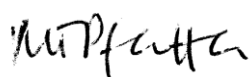
DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

Document Title: Investigating the relationship between the learning organisation, work engagement and job satisfaction in a selected municipality

I declare that I have edited and proofread this document. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings and layout, captions and Table of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content. The writer was provided with the corrections/amendments which required action. The corrected document was subsequently proofread and a number of additional corrections were advised.

The undersigned takes no responsibility for corrections/amendments not carried out in the final copy submitted for examination purposes. The use of any AI in the creation of this document is the sole responsibility of the author.

Sincerely,



Marion Pfeiffer

Freelance Copy-editor and Proofreader

Professional Member, CIEP UK

Full member, PEG and SAFREA

Professional
EDITORS 
Group