

# **THE EFFECTS OF RESILIENCE TRAINING AS A COMPONENT OF STRENGTHS-FOCUSSED TRAINING ON TEAM PERFORMANCE - A CASE STUDY IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGES MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Orientation**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Training is an important intervention that is used by any organisation to develop the employees of that organisation. It is therefore important for any organisation to determine the effects that those training interventions have on the performance of the organisation. This study researches the effects that strengths-focussed training has on team performance in an organisation within the food and beverages manufacturing industry.

#### **1.2 RATIONALE**

Education, Training and Development (ETD) as an occupation has developed significantly over the last few years. This is due to the need for skilled people in organisations across Southern Africa. Continuous development of employees play a crucial role in any organisation's ability to improve productivity as well as the bottom line for that organisation - economic growth. The field of Human Resource Development (HRD) has evolved to become an important business imperative to ensure the enhancement of competitiveness as well as the performance of that business (Mabaso, Meyer & Lancaster 2001:2).

##### **1.2.1 Human Resource Development and training in organisational context**

HRD involves the development of those human resources which contribute to the performance of the organisation in which they are employed. This development is done by the utilisation of all systems, processes, programmes, policies and

procedures available to the organisation. The HRD field therefore comprises of both training and non-training interventions (Mabaso et al 2001:2).

In accordance with the above mentioned, Buckingham and Clifton (2001:9) of the Gallup organisation also referred to systems and tools to assist in managing their human resources. These tools include 360-degree survey, training needs analysis, individual development plans, competency standards or job specifications, to name a few of the tools available.

Training tends to be the intervention used to address deficiencies in most of the Human Resources Management (HRM) systems. Competency standards is one of the tools utilised whereby the individual's deficiencies in performance are identified against a standard. For the same reason, performance management as well as 360-degree feedback mechanisms are used. Training is one of the interventions used by business to improve employees' performance, competencies and skills and thereby eliminate the deficiencies mentioned above. Training is also extensively used as a motivating tool. Career discussions and development plans are further systems used in HRM with retention and motivation as primary reasons. Again training is the intervention used to retain employees, fulfill aspirations and enhance careers (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:9).

### **1.2.2 Strengths-focussed training versus traditional approaches to training**

The tools used to determine training needs mentioned in 1.2.1 all have one thing in common - they tend to focus on the negative, on those skills the employee lacks. They are mostly "focused on the fixing of the employee's weaknesses rather than building on the employee's strengths" (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:9).

This research, therefore, aims to add a more balanced and sustainable approach to the training of employees by focusing on the positive, namely on the strengths of individuals. As human beings we intuitively know that we do things well that we enjoy, but also enjoy what we do well. This concept of focusing on an individual's strengths to enhance the total training experience is the focus of this research. This approach is supported by the self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1986:26, 88) and Skinner's operant conditioning model for achievement situations (1953).

Bandura's self-efficacy theory is also supported by Skinner's operant theory, which essentially specifies that positive reinforcement strengthen behaviour. Skinner's operant theory is further defined as follows: "Positive reinforcement is the process of strengthening a behaviour by contingently presenting something pleasing" (Kreitner & Kinicki 1998:465, 467). The researcher therefore makes the assumption that if an individual knows his or her strengths within the team and focuses on these, it will support the individual's self-esteem and self-efficacy and have an effect on overall performance as well.

Self-efficacy as a construct has provided significant insight into the effectiveness of training and the correlation between self-efficacy and performance has been broadly established (Frayne & Latham 1987; Gist, Schwoerer & Rosen 1989; Gist, Stevens & Bavetta 1991). Training is known to vary in scope and emphasis. Organisations invest in more comprehensive and broadly targeted training to prepare participants for a range of experiences but also to build motivation as well as skills. As self-efficacy is a key component in performance, organisations may want to pay more attention to building self-efficacy within their training interventions (Schwoerer, May & Hollensbie 1999:1).

The field of psychofortology concerns itself with stress and its effect on the workplace. Psychofortology can also be referred to as the psychological well-being of individuals or the coping behaviour of individuals within the workplace. Two of the six processes of this well-being that indicate high inter-correlation between each other are *self-efficacy* and *learned resourcefulness* (Coetzee &

Cilliers 2001:1, 2). Research indicated that self-efficacy has a high correlation with both learned resourcefulness (Coetzee & Cilliers 2001:1, 2) and performance (Frayne & Latham 1987; Gist et al 1989; Gist et al 1991). Constructs related to the maintenance and enhancement of psychological well-being are considered to be the following: “..... constructive thinking, satisfaction with life, emotional intelligence, reality organisation, self-actualisation, resilience, toughness, coping, social support, dispositional optimism, personal causation, self-directedness, social interest and sense of humour” (Coetzee & Cilliers 2001:3). Self-efficacy and learned resourcefulness, as well as the constructs relating to psychological well-being mentioned above, have a strong resemblance with the content of the resilience training programme in which employees were trained as part of this study.

### **1.2.3 Training expenditure and training effectiveness within organisations**

With regard to training and its effectiveness it can be understood why progressive organisations who spend huge sums of money on training in an attempt to improve their efficiencies and business processes are asking: “What is the return on my investment?” More and more evidence is being produced to prove that the majority of the training solutions that we invest in today does not deliver the sustainable results that we would like them to have. It can therefore be expected that organisations, which are performance and output driven, will place a definite emphasis on the Return On Investment (ROI) of training. This emphasis has eradicated the notion that training is done because it is “fashionable” and “expected” of successful organisations. Like all other investments, training has to contribute to the financial success or the bottom line of the organisation. The effectiveness of training has therefore increasingly come under the spotlight (Fitz-enz 1998:17-23, Gordon 1991:20, Little 1999:30 –31, Bickerstaffe 1993: 48, Geber 1993, Campbell 1994:32 - 38 & Chaddock 1995:22- 26).

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opinion that by giving the employees the skills to deal with these situations it would be a way that they as directors could invest in the employees. Resilience training would supply the employee with skills which they would be able to both utilise in the workplace as well as at home and in their communities should they desire.

The intervention within the organisation created the platform from which interest in this study was generated. This exploratory study investigated the possibility that should training create an environment in which individuals could explore and confirm their strengths, rather than weaknesses, this type of training could be a more productive way of training for a organisation. It could equip the individuals to perform better within their respective teams. As indicated earlier (see 1.2.2) the correlation between self-efficacy and performance has been broadly established. The researcher, however, did not want to focus in-depth on self-efficacy or wellness of the individual as such since these aspects are very comprehensive on their own. Therefore, the researcher decided to focus more in-depth on resilience as a construct. Resilience includes these two aspects but also comprises additional psychological strengths which the researcher could explore and utilise as a component of strengths-focussed training.

Consequently, it was decided to adopt resilience training as a component of strengths-focussed training and explore the effect that it could have on team performance. The resilience training programme that was conducted addressed many of the constructs mentioned by Coetzee and Cilliers (2001:3). It did not have only self-efficacy or self-esteem as a basis, but a combination of these, amongst others. The researcher judged this a more holistic approach to strengths-focussed training and therefore the further investigation of this matter in this study.

### **1.2.5 Resilience training programme in didactic context**

Strengths-focussed training aims to create an atmosphere conducive for the learners to discover or confirm their strengths relating to the learning content of the resilience training programme. These strengths in return will support the learners to acquire the skills, insights and competencies to enable them to live their lives in a more meaningful and purposeful way.

The learning outcomes of the resilience training programme is five-fold:

- To understand what resilience is;
- To recognise the resilient capacity that the learner already has;
- To use this resilient capacity in a systematic way;
- To determine what aspects impact on the learner's resilience and why; and
- To build transformational resilient capacity in the learner and in relation to others.

Resilience training is used as an example of strengths-focussed training. Resilient people are considered to have the inherent skill and the capacity to be robust under conditions that are characterised by enormous stress and change or even the ability to bounce back better than before due to the fact that the individual has learnt from his or her experiences. This enables the individual to thrive and not just survive after this adversity or trauma.

The resilience training programme methodology leads the learner on an experiential journey to discover his or her strengths as well as skills that will enable the learner to change and live his or her life in a more meaningful and purposeful way. This is achieved through a facilitator exposing the learner to knowledge (theory) and experiential scenarios and allows for self-reflection, which leads the learner to do self-reflection on that which has been learnt. The training includes different "tools" or facilitated learning interventions, which aid the learner to acquire different skills. These tools include:

- Understanding of the way "life scripts" are formed in every learner's life and how these life scripts can be changed. A life script briefly is the foundation of

an individual's beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions that have been formed since birth and manifest in the way individuals behave. These life scripts determine the way an individual experiences life and situations. The resilience training equips the learners to challenge beliefs and to dispute those negative thoughts, perceptions, etc. resulting from trauma, to be able to change these life scripts and to have more control over their lives.

- The identification of various roles individuals acquire during interaction with a team member, family member, etc. whether it is a conversation or relationship, is described by what is known as the Karpman Drama Triangle (see 5.2.1.3). How to engage in that conversation or relationship to ensure a win-win outcome is a skill that the learners are equipped with during the resilience training.
- Understanding change and the various stages that learners will experience when change occurs.
- Various learning facilitation interventions that the learners take part in to determine or confirm known strengths.

These strengths are then added to a "well-spring", which is a list of all their strengths. Learners have to keep this list updated during the training as well as during the times that they do self-reflection.

The training methodology provides for a period of approximately seven to ten days after each two-day training session, during which the learner can utilise the break to go back and apply the different tools and strengths, which were discovered or confirmed during each training session. This also gives the learner a chance to internalise the information derived from the training, identify application opportunities in the workplace and determine any problems in transferring the learning to the workplace. When the learner attends the second training session, questions are answered, home exercises are revised to ensure understanding and problems in the application are addressed, where necessary. These areas of application could also be applied at home or in the community but it is primarily important that the results ultimately manifest in the workplace.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes attained during the training session are then facilitated both by the facilitator and the learners on their individual journey where the learners can discover their inherent resilience strengths from which they can learn to make meaningful change(s) and create purpose in both their lives and the workplace.

The resilience training programme further adheres to adult education principles, as the learner is actively and purposely involved in the training the whole time and opportunities are created to ensure that understanding, contextualisation and functionalisation of the underpinning knowledge of the learning content are achieved. Opportunities are further given to ensure the learning outcomes of the training are achieved meaningfully by giving the learner the opportunity to apply the newly learnt knowledge, skills and attitudes not only in the workplace but also at home or the community where the learner feels at liberty to apply them.

The specific learning facilitation methods that were used to allow the adult learner to achieve the learning outcomes of the training included the following:

- Interviews;
- Practical and experiential exercises in both groups and individually;
- Group and individual discussions; and
- Formal training sessions

For the purpose of this study, research is done on the resilience training as well as the effects of the *implementation* of such a strength-focused training programme. It is hoped that the topic of this study will provide ground for further research on the effectiveness of training in general.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A common trend in conducting human resource development of employees in organisations is to provide education, training and development practices based on determining performance deficiencies in individual employees. Once this diagnostic assessment and a training needs analysis are complete, an individual training plan is drawn up to rectify the deficiencies. This approach tends to focus on the negative – on those skills that the employee lacks. Resultant training is then aimed at fixing the employee's weak points rather than building on the employee's strengths. This study researches how strengths-focussed training will affect team performance more positively as opposed to the traditional development interventions which merely concentrate on the performance deficiencies of the individual learner within the organisational context. The study also investigates the possible appropriateness of using strengths-focussed training rather than training focusing on performance deficiencies to enhance employee performance. In this respect no substantial research has been conducted before regarding the relationship between strengths-focussed training, resilience, behaviour and motivation as performance variables within organisations.

The main research question with regard to this research topic is:

*What is the effect of resilience training as a component of strengths-focussed training on team performance?*

For the purpose of this study resilience training is considered as an example of strengths-focussed training. Resilience training was conducted with a target group of senior managers in a specific organisational context and the study reports on the possible impact and implications of this employee development approach – the strengths-focused training - on the performance of the team within the organisation.

#### **1.4 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM**

In most training environments the first phase of determining performance deficiencies commences with a detailed needs analysis to determine the skills gaps that individuals have, either within a group or in a single person. A needs analysis is done when the individual and the manager or the training practitioner get together in a session and consider the requirements of the individual's job. The areas that the individual feels that he or she can do well are noted. The areas wherein the individual feels that he or she will need further support and development are the areas that are highlighted. These development areas are included in a plan by the manager to ensure that the individual's development skills and performance needs or gaps are addressed. This development plan could address reaching either short-term or longer-term performance goals. A needs analysis is seen to be that analysis which discovers training needs of prospective learners. This supports the trainer to develop and deliver an effective training course to meet the needs of the targeted learner (Mabaso et al 2001:26).

The performance gaps or agreed weaknesses of the individual or group are used in the methodology to draw up either the training programme or the development plan. The desired outcome from this is the elimination of the weaknesses of the individual or group and their conversion into strengths (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:7).

In contrast to the above is the following approach. The Gallup organisation reasons that great organisations must "acknowledge the fact that each employee is different" (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:3 - 5). The organisation should "capitalise on these differences". It suggests furthermore that there should be a constant search for clues showing each employee's talents. This should then lead to the transformation of these talents into "bona fide strengths". They argue that the global practice in schools and in the workplace whereby people are encouraged to identify, analyse and correct their weaknesses is misguided,

although the advice is well intended. They state that weaknesses, faults and failures deserve study. Strengths, however, have their own patterns and the study of faults reveals little about strengths (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:3 - 5).

The Gallup organisation (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:7) has been doing research on discovering people's strengths for the last 25 years. They contend that most organisations build their assumptions about people on the following two aspects:

- (a) Each person can learn to be competent in almost anything.
- (b) Each person's greatest room for growth is in his or her areas of greatest weakness.

When considering these statements it seems as though organisations take their employees' strengths for granted and focus on minimising the weaknesses. The organisation is hardly ever in the position to capitalise on the strengths of their employees. In researching the question of whether the employee has the opportunity "to do what I do best" with 1.7 million employees in 101 organisations from 63 countries, the result was that 20 % of employees globally felt that their strengths were utilised on a daily basis. It can be deduced from this that 80% of employees working within organisations are not utilised to their full capacity. The logical conclusion is therefore that those organisations lose 80% of the capacity of strengths that could be developed and utilised to the benefit and improvement of the organisation (Buckingham & Clifton 2001:6).

This research envisages to ascertain whether creating an environment whereby individuals can discover, explore or confirm their own strengths could enhance the whole training experience as well as assist to improve the effectiveness of training in general. As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.4), resilience training will be pursued as a component of strengths-focussed training for the purpose of this research.

In contrast to traditional and conventional approaches, the focus on discovering and utilising employees' strengths, as part of the organisational training

environment, and more specifically resilience training as an example of strengths-focussed training within an organisation in the food and beverages manufacturing industry, has not been researched before. For this reason the researcher wants to reiterate the need for an exploratory study in the field of resilience training and the effect that it may have on team performance in an organisation.

## **1.5 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The following general aim and specific objectives are pursued in this study with the intention to solve the research problem.

### **1.5.1 General aim of the study**

The general aim of this study is:

To determine the effects of resilience training, as a component of strengths-focussed training, on team performance.

### **1.5.2 Specific objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of this study to achieve the above general aim are four-fold:

- To establish a theoretical foundation for using strengths-focussed training to improve performance;
- To identify parameters and criteria for determining the effects of resilience training on the individual within the team;
- To gain new insight on how people who have undergone resilience training, as a component of strengths-focussed training, experienced the training;
- To gain new insight on whether the people who have undergone resilience training, as a component of strengths-focussed training, implemented the training within the workplace or organisation.

It must also be stated that for the purpose of this study, the team as such with all its structural dimensions and dynamics will not be researched. The team will serve as a framework or the environment in which the individual has to perform against specific performance goals. The team and team performance will also serve as the didactic context for the outcomes of the resilience training discussed in the study.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

This research entails a literature review to determine the relationship between strengths-focussed training, resilience, behaviour and motivation as performance variables within an organisation. The literature review is followed by an empirical component, which is qualitative by nature and uses action research as the framework in which the study is executed.

### **1.6.1 Research design**

This study is qualitative and exploratory in nature and uses the action research model as an alternative to traditional models. This model fits the purpose and supports the problem statement of this study. This model is also described as a form of self-reflective investigation (Carr & Kemmis in McNiff 1988:2).

### **1.6.2 Research method**

A literature study is done to establish a theoretical foundation for strengths-focussed training and to identify parameters and criteria for determining the effect of strengths-focussed training on team performance.

Resilience training (see 1.2.4) was decided upon as a divisional training intervention for all the different sites in South Africa, within an organisation in the food manufacturing industry. The training was conducted with trained psychologists as learning facilitators for the middle management and senior management teams.

Although all the employees on one of the sites were trained, the senior management team was selected for the purpose of achieving the specific objectives and ultimately the general aim of this study. To select the managers within this team, purposive sampling was used. Four individuals out of the management team of seven were chosen in the following way: Two of these team members represent core business departments and the other two represent service departments to those core departments mentioned. All four of these individuals have roles and responsibilities within a team of seven employees, which form the management team for a site within the food manufacturing industry with which the researcher is associated. Each of the members has team goals against which their performance is measured within the team.

The participants in the study were informed about the reason for the research. Questions were answered and concerns were addressed, where applicable. Each participant's consent was received for the participation in the research. Each participant was also assured of confidentiality in the research process.

All four individuals attended a four-day resilience training session, which is divided into two two-day sessions. In addition to this a physical resilience session of two hours was presented as part of a more holistic approach. This session had both a theoretical and a practical component. The theoretical component addressed the importance of physical well-being and the important role that exercise should play in an individual's daily life. The practical session gave the learners the opportunity to actually perform some of these suggested exercises. This physical resilience session created the understanding that physical well-being should be seen as part of a lifestyle.

Action research was chosen as a method because it caters well for the reflection, application and readdressing of personal training issues, where applicable. Continuous learning within the workplace is important for the development of functional knowledge, skills and values. This in turn will support the employee in

attaining the learning aims, objectives, goals and outcomes of the training that takes place. The individual is then expected to implement the learning from the training in the workplace within his or her respective team. The learning will then not only be implemented within the management team and the team's different departments but also at home or in the community, whichever is applicable.

This study does not make the assumption that all individuals know their personal strengths, as many people within the organisational environment have not been exposed to situations where they could have become familiar with their strengths. The training situation provides the environment in which the individual employees are exposed to exploring their strengths. Where the employees have been exposed to their strengths before, it is foreseen that the training will then confirm what the employees already know. It is anticipated that the employees will discover other strengths that they either did not know about or rediscover those strengths that they had forgotten.

### **1.6.3 Data collection**

Four methods of data collection were used:

- Literature review. The approach for the literature study undertaken for the purposes of this study was deductive, in that a literature review preceded the empirical research.

In Chapter two, the literature review studied different motivational theories, the bio-ecological theory and resilience as a construct. The different concepts of strengths and the effects that a strengths-focussed environment has on the employee were addressed. The effect that strengths-focussed training has on the environment - which includes the team, family, organisation, the community as a system - of the employee, once this change is experienced due to the training, is discussed by using examples of Bandura's model of reciprocity and Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory. In the process

parameters and criteria to determine the effects of resilience training on the individual within the team are identified.

In Chapter 3 the literature reviews training, learning and performance within an organisational context to address the identification of parameters and criteria for determining the effect of strengths-focussed training on team performance.

- Written sketches. In a written sketch, the participants in the study wrote a brief account giving their opinion or their experience on a specific topic or question related to the study. It was therefore important that the participants in the research were briefed beforehand about what would be expected in the written sketches. For the purpose of this study, the participants were asked to give an account of how they experienced the resilience training over the four-day period.
- Individual interviews. Open-ended interviews on how the participants experienced the four-day resilience training and how it affected their daily lives and more specifically, the effect on their performance within their team, were held with all four of the individuals who were purposefully selected. An example of the interview protocol is attached as Annexure C.
- Observation report. The production manager submitted an observation report after the resilience training. The report reflected on the four individuals' performances within the team before and after the resilience training. As such it is an evaluation report, which addresses the effects that the training had on the individuals' performance within the team.

A follow-up report was compiled whereby an evaluation was conducted against specific parameters and indicators for a more specific evaluation of the effects of the resilience training.

#### **1.6.4 Data processing**

The sketches from every participant in this study were collected directly on completion of the resilience training. The interviews were recorded by using a tape recorder after acquiring permission from the participants. These tapes were transcribed ad verbatim. An example of the format in which permission is obtained to record the interview is attached as Annexure B. The production manager was informed that his report would serve as an evaluation of the implementation of the training that was done, as well as the effect it had on the individual's performance within the team. It was collected four weeks after completion of the last two-day session of training. Observation was initially done on a more open basis to establish what changes were observed with the employees who attended the training. A follow-up report was then compiled to evaluate and address more specific parameters and indicators.

All these transcriptions from the sketches, interviews and the observation report were analysed according to specific patterns. The data results were recorded, interpreted and related to the parameters and criteria identified in the literature review. Due to the sensitive nature of the content of the interviews they are not attached to the study report.

### **1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

The concepts central to the study are discussed in more detail.

#### **1.7.1 Strengths-focussed training**

When considering the definition of training many researchers and writers address various aspects (Hornby 1995:1268; Quiñones & Ehrenstein 1996:1). These definitions address various aspects that include the following concepts:

- Teaching a person to do a skill or job well;
- Teaching a person to behave in a specific way;

- Transmission of knowledge and skills to people in need; and
- Learning experiences that considers a more permanent change in the person that will affect the ability of the person in doing his or her job.

Strengths-focussed training relates to a form of psychological training. Schoeman (1985:1) describes psychological training as training, which is focused on the prevention of mental problems and the development of human potential. It is aimed at the training of individuals and groups in skills, insights and competencies to enable them to live their lives in a more meaningful and purposeful way.

For the purpose of this research strengths-focussed training will be defined as: Training aimed at creating a training atmosphere conducive for the individual or group to discover or confirm their strengths relating to the topic which forms the content of the training. These strengths in return will support the individual or groups to acquire the skills, insights and competencies to enable them to live their lives in a more meaningful and purposeful way.

### **1.7.2 Strengths**

Strengths are defined as “an attribute making for strength of character” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990:1206).

For the purpose of this study Buckingham and Clifton’s definition of strengths will be adopted. Buckingham and Clifton (2001:29) state that the following are combined to create any individual’s strengths:

- (a) Talents, which are defined as the individual’s “naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling or behavior”;
- (b) Knowledge, which consists of the “facts and lessons” that the individual has learned; and
- (c) Skills, which are “the steps of an activity”.

### **1.7.3 Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy describes the individual's belief whether he or she will be able to successfully complete a specific task at hand (Kreitner & Kinicki 1998:127). For this study Bandura's definition is adopted, where self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (1986:391).

### **1.7.4 Resilience**

Various definitions are attributed to resilience, across the spectrum of both researchers and writers (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990:1024; Freiberg 1993:365; Coutu 2002:52; Carver 1998:245; Egeland, Carlson & Sroufe 1993: 517 – 528; MacFarlane 1998:4; Higgins 1994:1; Valliant 1993:284). A resilient individual can generally be described as a person who reacts positively to adverse situations but also recovers from shock, depression or trauma very readily. In other words, it can be said that people have the skill and the capacity to be robust under conditions that are characterised by enormous stress and change or even the ability to bounce or snap back better than before due to the fact that the individual has learnt from his or her experiences. This enables the individual to thrive and not just survive after this adversity or trauma.

In this study the definition of Friedman (2003:8) is adopted: "thriving with significant resourcefulness in a world characterised by competitive individualism and in the face of extreme and daily challenge".

### **1.7.5 Effect**

This concept includes a component of consequences or results of a specific action. In this study the following definition for effect will be relevant: Effect is the change that is produced by an action or cause, i.e. a result or outcome (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990:374; Hornby 1995:369).

### **1.7.6 Team**

The team is defined in various ways and includes aspects of more than one individual. These individuals are seen to have complementary skills and can interact interdependently and even adapt in their working approach towards a common goal, purpose, objective, dream, vision or mission. This interdependence further refers to a shared commitment as well as agreement between these individuals that binds, motivates them and creates synergy that you would not find if it were only two or more separate individuals. These members are also mutually accountable towards the above-mentioned goals, purpose, objective, etc. This team could have a limited lifespan as members of a team come and go. This happens especially within organisations where employees within teams either get promoted, resign or are retrenched. These team members can also be assigned to form different teams within peak periods where extra teams have to be formed to address the additional volume within the organisation. These periods will also vary depending on the different needs in the variety of organisations within the manufacturing industry (Cannon-Bowers & Salas 1998:83; Hornby 1995:1225; Ivancevic & Matteson 1999:659; Losoncy 1997:1; Stout, Salas & Fowlkes 1997:170; Katzenbach 1998:9).

The definition of a team that will be used and will form the basis of this study therefore is: A formal set of two or more people with complementary skills who interact interdependently and interchangeably with each other. They have a shared commitment to a common purpose or goal(s). They each have specific assigned roles and functions within the team, hold themselves mutually accountable and have a limited life span of membership.

### **1.7.7 Team performance**

The concept of performance includes the component of results or achievement that relates to whether the action executed was successful or not (Ivancevic & Matteson 1999:657; Hornby 1995:860). In this study team performance will be

viewed as the attainment of learning outcomes and the actioning thereof against a common and committed purpose or goal determining the success, or not, as the outcome. This study focuses both on the individual within the team as well as the individual's contribution to the performance of the team.

### **1.7.8 Development**

Development is the continuous learning process in which the learner attains functional knowledge, skills and attitudes. The learner in this case is seen to be an employee who functions within various systems like the social context (i.e. family, community, etc.) as well as the organisational context (i.e. the employee's organisation, department and team, etc.). Since this study focuses on the organisational context, the organisation also takes the total well-being of the individual into consideration. That is, understanding that there is a direct correlation between the employee's happiness or well-being at home and the workplace or organisation. The converse is also true: if the employee is happy at work, it will have a positive influence on the social context wherein the employee functions. The workplace refers to the organisation at which this study is conducted.

## **1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS**

### **CHAPTER 1**

An overview and rationale of this research are stated in Chapter one. This includes the problem statement, analysis of the problem, aims of this study, design and method of this research, as well as the definitions of the various concepts pertaining to this study. This chapter contextualises a theoretical foundation for using strengths-focussed training to improve performance.

## **CHAPTER 2**

In this chapter an overview and critical summary of all the different motivational theories are given. The motivational theories will be used to explain the reasoning behind using resilience training as an example to support the concept of strengths-focussed training mentioned in the problem statement. Therefore resilience as a construct is reviewed to enable a more holistic understanding of the construct in this context. In the process parameters and criteria are identified for determining the effect of strengths-focussed training on the individual within the team.

## **CHAPTER 3**

Chapter 3 provides a literature review of training, learning and performance within organisational context with specific focus on psycho-education, adult learning and team performance. In the process parameters and criteria are identified for determining the effect of strengths-focussed training on the performance of the team.

## **CHAPTER 4**

This chapter gives a report on the empirical phase of this study. The report includes a description of the basic research design with a description of the research method, data collection and data processing methods employed during each of the various phases of action research.

## **CHAPTER 5**

This chapter contains the findings of the empirical investigation. It commences with a description of the composition of the research sample and then proceeds with a report of results, which includes findings from the different interviews, personal sketches and the observation report from the production manager. The findings include what participants experienced regarding the strengths-focussed

training, the consequences of the application or implementation of the strengths-focussed training as well as the observed evaluation of performance after the training took place.

## **CHAPTER 6**

This chapter provides the conclusions, recommendation and limitations of both the theoretical framework and empirical investigation of this research. The conclusions serve as an attempt to answer the main research question, namely, *What is the effect of strengths-focussed training on team performance?* It also reports on meeting both the general aim of this study, which is: *To determine the effects of strengths-focussed training on team performance*, and the following specific objectives of the study, which are four-fold:

- To establish a theoretical foundation for using strengths-focussed training to improve performance;
- To identify parameters and criteria for determining the effects of resilience training on the individual within the team;
- To gain new insight on how people who have undergone resilience training, as a component of strengths-focussed training, experienced the training; and
- To gain new insight on whether the people who have undergone resilience training, as a component of strength focused training, implemented the training within the workplace or organisation.

The only limitation provided for in this study is the fact that since this study is applicable to a case study, it cannot be generalised to the food and beverage manufacturing industry as a whole, or to strengths-focussed training in general.