LEARNERSHIPS IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENT AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE AND SATISFACTION

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Having the privilege of completing my masters has been such a wonderful experience. This year has been filled with many milestones that I will remember fondly for years to come.

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ABSTRACT

The South African economy is hindered by high unemployment, partly due to a lack of required skills in the country. Learnership programmes were implemented to contribute to skills development however there is limited research into the scope, magnitude and outcomes of these programmes. Previous research into learnerships has highlighted the importance of building support structures into these programmes in order to ensure their effectiveness. This study considered the role that workplace adjustment (self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance) has on the relationship between social support (co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors) and job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. Results indicated that co-worker, supervisor and mentor support are related to performance via their link with workplace adjustment and that family support is related to job satisfaction via its link with workplace adjustment. This research aimed to create awareness about the internal processes and benefits of support personnel within South African learnerships. The results revealed that the quality rather than the number of support sources provided is important. Positive perceptions of support from co-workers, family, supervisors and/ or mentors was related to higher levels of job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. Additionally, learners who perceived the quality of support offered as high were more adjusted to the workplace. The study may not provide an accurate representation of learnerships in South Africa as a result of limitations such as the use of a self-reporting performance measure. Future research may elicit more accurate and representative analysis through the use of interviews or more objective measures when collecting data.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Summit held in September 2000, resulted in world leaders setting ambitious goals to improve human welfare (Besley & Burgess, 2003). The agenda set forth resulted in the creation of eight millennium development goals, which included ensuring environmental sustainability, achieving gender equality and increasing the proportion of people with access to safe drinking water. The first millennium development goal focused on reducing global poverty and hunger by half before the year 2015. Though global poverty has been diminishing since the introduction of the millennium development goals, the overall change in absolute poverty level is limited (Deaton, 2002), from 2000 to 2007 poverty in less developed countries only decreased from 58.90% to 52.80% (Poverty Trends, 2011). South Africa is an example of a country in which poverty prevails. In 2008, it was reported that 48% of the South African population were living in poverty (Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn & Argent, 2010). Extensive research has been conducted regarding its reasons (e.g. Budlender, 1999; Carter & May, 1999; Meth & Dias, 2004). One of these reasons being poor employment opportunities (Kingdon & Knight, 2007). South Africa's unemployment rate has increased by up to 30% in the decade since becoming a democracy in 1994 (Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren & Woolard, 2008). There are a variety of reasons for the increase in unemployment. Among these reasons are the strong union presence in South Africa which in their demand for higher wages restricts the number of positions organisations can afford to make available (Banerjee et al., 2008; Blanchard, 2011) and HIV/AIDS leaving those infected to become unable to work and necessitating those affected to give up work or schooling (Arndt & Lewis, 2001). Such reasons are contributing to an ongoing poverty cycle.

A poverty cycle implies that as a result of older generations not being able to afford tertiary education and develop the necessary skills to acquire adequate work, they are unable to afford to pay for the younger generations to obtain adequate education and skills (Perkins, Radelet & Lindauer, 2006). The younger generations will then follow the same cycle as the older generations. Essentially a poverty cycle implies a perpetuation of events, which keeps individuals or communities below a certain level of resourcefulness (Macionis & Plummer, 2011). The presence of a poverty cycle is one of the main contributors for the existence of a skills shortage in South Africa as a large majority of the South African population is not receiving the necessary schooling to gain the skills required for work (Daniels, 2007). The lack of skills is severely affecting the level of growth and competitiveness in the South African economy (Perkins et al., 2006).

The existence of poverty cycles in South African families can be attributed to the country's political history. From 1948 until 1994, South Africa's apartheid regime supported racial segregation and unequal rights across ethnic groups and permitted a repressive education system for black citizens (Macionis & Plummer, 2011). The practices, which systematically divided members of different racial groups during apartheid, have contributed to the high rates of unemployment currently existing in South Africa as apartheid limited black citizens from accumulating and using assets and most importantly, restricted education opportunities for black citizens (Carter & May, 2001).

In South Africa, the majority of people living in impoverished conditions today still stem from those groups who were disadvantaged during apartheid. Between 2008 and 2009, it was recorded that 94.80% of South African's living in poverty were either black or coloured citizens (Statistics South Africa, 2009). Despite the existence of employment equity legislation to reverse the disadvantages in employment opportunities experienced by designated groups (Employment Equity Act, 1998), there is still a severe shortage of skilled workers from these designated groups in the economy. The percentage of black individuals entering the market with an education of grade 12 or higher is 35.20% compared to 76.00% of white individuals (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Archibong and Adejumo (2013) reported that organisations thus need to provide skills development programmes as an alternative form of tertiary education in order to counter the shortfall in the market. Therefore, there is a resounding need to develop the skills of especially those citizens who are disadvantaged as a result of the apartheid regime.

As mentioned, one of the millennium development goals is to half global poverty. The South African government has strived to contribute to the achievement of this goal through various initiatives, such as through the promotion of skills development and employment. One of these initiatives is the development and promotion of learnership programmes. Smith, Jennings and Solanki (2005) outline South African learnerships as a modern adaptation of traditional apprenticeships. Learnerships aim to improve the employability of South African citizens by developing practical skills through classroom and workplace learning in most occupations (LGWSETA, 2003). The majority of learnership programmes include a social support component which refers to the availability of supervisors, mentors and coaches or some combination of these personnel. When entering a new organisation or starting a learnership, individuals are required to learn and understand the processes which govern the general business operations (Louis, 1980). This process of adjusting to the workplace is often stressful (Waung, 1995) and therefore, the availability and quality of workplace support personnel can

assist employees by bettering their working life. Adjustment to the workplace is particularly important as it can positively influence an individual's level of job satisfaction (Jones, 1986) and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The present study was undertaken using learnerships as there is a need to provide research into the scope, magnitude and outcomes of these programmes (Visser & Kruss, 2009). Research contributing to creating awareness and improving these programmes can ultimately contribute to the overall goal underlying these programmes, which is to improve individual employability through skills development in an attempt to alleviate poverty. With the intention to improve the outcome of these programmes this study aims to determine the relationship which exists between the presence and quality of support personnel and workplace adjustment of learners participating in South African learnership programmes. Specifically, it aims to determine whether workplace adjustment governs a relationship between quality of support personnel and job satisfaction and work performance within these programmes. The research question is thus:

Does workplace adjustment mediate the relationship between social support, job satisfaction and performance among learners in South African learnership programmes?

This dissertation contains the following four chapters: A literature review, a method section, a results section, a discussion of the result and a conclusion. The following literature review defines and provides an overview of apprenticeship and learnership programmes. South African learnership programmes are then reviewed in detail and the various structures of the support offered within South African learnerships will be considered. It then discusses the importance of support in and the importance of adjustment to the workplace. Finally, the literature review considers the relationship, which exists between social support and workplace adjustment. The method section provides a review of how the researcher went about collecting the data in terms of the procedure and scales used. It also provides an overview of the demographics of the sample used during data collection. The results section provides an overview of how the data was tested and analysed using various statistical procedures. The results section highlights the test outcomes from analysis of each hypothesis presented in this study. The discussion section provides an overview of the results found in the study and provides possible explanations for the results in relation to each hypothesis. It further discusses the possible implications of the research and suggests direction for future research. The discussion section also provides a conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of learnership programmes and the support personnel available in these programmes. Additionally, this chapter reviews the existing literature regarding learnerships and their successes and shortfalls in South Africa. This chapter concludes with a review of the construct workplace adjustment.

Learnerships in South Africa

In 2004, then-President Thabo Mbeki highlighted the crucial role that initiatives such as learnership programmes should have in government's aim to halve unemployment and poverty as well as to improve employment equity (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath, 2005). Learnerships are relatively new initiatives introduced in the Skills Development Act (SDA) of 1998. These programmes were designed and modelled using the existing notions of development fundamental to traditional apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship and Learnership Programmes

In South Africa, apprenticeship programmes have been used as the basis for the development of learnerships (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda & Nel, 2009). The traditional definition of an apprenticeship referred to the exchange of work for skills specific to an occupation between an employer and a young individual (Snell, 1996). More recently, apprenticeship programmes have been defined more broadly as being structured programmes, which are sponsored by an employer for vocational preparation (Ryan & Unwin, 2001). They are comprised of a combination of part-time education, on-the-job training and work experience. The popularity and support for these programmes has varied over time. In the United Kingdom (UK), apprenticeship programmes saw a decline in popularity in the early 1980s as a result of the introduction of more cost-effective training schemes (McIntosh, 2005). Programmes such as Youth Training Schemes (YTS) were considered a cheaper alternative to apprenticeship programmes. The popularity of apprenticeships returned in the mid-1990s, however, when countries such as the UK, Germany and Australia opted to redesign the traditional notions of apprenticeship programmes (Smith, Jennings & Solanki, 2005). The reinvented programmes are referred to as Modern Apprenticeships (MA). McIntosh explored the success of MAs in the UK in reference to wage gains. The study found that males who had completed a MA received a significantly higher wage gain than males who had not completed a MA.

Winkelmann (1995) investigated apprenticeships in Germany. His study found that individuals who had completed an apprenticeship were able to transition into employment easier and faster than individuals who had not completed an apprenticeship. Similarly, research in Australia showed a strong relationship between obtaining an apprenticeship qualification and finding employment (McKenzie, 2000).

In South Africa, both apprenticeships and learnerships act as mechanisms for the combination of learning and work experience. Essentially, learnership programmes are modernised apprenticeships which have been adapted to better suit the needs of the South African market. In 2003, the South African Cabinet agreed that all qualifications attained from work-based education and training programmes would become known as learnerships (du Toit, Serfontein & Dealers, 2005). Like with MAs the primary focus of learnerships remains centred on the provision of workplace learning by accredited providers (Smith et al., 2005). Learnership programmes and apprenticeships were designed to address skills shortages in both the formal and informal market sectors and neither programme is limited to large-scale industries but can be incorporated within small businesses as well (Smith et al., 2005). In addition, both apprenticeships and learnerships focus on providing vocational training and skills development for socially disadvantaged individuals and individuals with low socio-economic status (Kruss et al., 2012). Apprenticeships are, however, aimed at younger individuals who are starting work whereas learnerships are defined by two broad categories: Learnerships for existing employees and learnerships for unemployed individuals (du Toit et al., 2005). Learnership programmes, specifically, aim to ensure that a link exists between structured learning and workplace experience.

The SDA of 1998 outlines the requirements of learnership programmes in South Africa. It states that learnerships have to combine structured classroom and workplace learning with workplace practice. Learnership programmes typically take place over a period of twelve months and learners spend a minimum of 30% of this time off the job, attending structured learning seminars (LGWSETA, 2003). Learnerships are targeted at individuals with a grade 12 certificate as a minimum qualification (du Toit et al., 2005). Learnership programmes do not require learners to have completed a tertiary qualification, however, learners should be literate and numerate (LGWSETA, 2003). The limited entry requirements are helpful to those who are unable to afford further education but who want to pursue a professional career. Once the learnership has been completed, the qualifications obtained will then be registered with the Department of Labour (DoL) through a Sector Education Training Authority (SETA) (LGWSETA, 2003). This qualification is recognised globally (LGWSETA, 2003). The South

African learnership programmes are further aimed at providing learners with entrepreneurial skills (Davies & Farquharson, 2004a). Equipping individuals with entrepreneurial skills acts as a 'safety net' for those undergoing the learnership programme as not all learners who enter the programmes are offered permanent jobs once the programme has been completed. Government aims to increase the creation of small businesses and thus entrepreneurial skills can help with this endeavour and subsequently can contribute to reducing unemployment (McGrath, 2005).

Differences between learnerships and apprenticeships. Learnership programmes and apprenticeships are unique to the country in which they are developed. There are many similarities and differences between these programmes depending on the country for which they were designed and implemented. In general, apprenticeships focus on technical trades and practical skills with minimal theory training undertaken at a technical college whereas learnerships combine structured learning with workplace learning and practical skills development (LGWSETA, 2003). Learnerships aim to equip individuals with skills and knowledge so to perform competently in an occupation that is in demand (Erasmus et al., 2009).

Additionally, learnerships were introduced as a means to increase the skills level of previously disadvantaged groups (Moraka & Mapesela, 2009). According to Erasmus et al. (2009) the SDA was enacted in order to address two main issues in South Africa: Improving skills so that South Africa could increase productivity and become globally competitive and reversing the imbalances caused by apartheid so as to create a more cohesive society. Learnerships focus on outcome-based learning and allow learners to progress at their own pace which contrasts the apprenticeship focus on competency-based learning (LGWSETA, 2003). Essentially, competency-based learning was a precursor for outcome-based learning thus the two processes are similar (Harden, 2002). Competency-based learning however focuses more on the attainment and application of knowledge and skills important to the organisation (Jansen & Christie, 1999) unlike outcome-based learning, which often focuses on the purposes, achievements, results and satisfactory progress of individuals according to a constant standard (Spady, 1994). Learners in learnerships are also continuously monitored throughout the process, against a registered unit standard to ensure the achievement of a nationally registered qualification, while apprenticeships require learners to pass a trade test in order to successfully complete the programme (LGWSETA, 2003).

The intention to improve individuals' employability and skills applies to both learnerships and apprenticeships, despite the differences, which exist between the programmes. Both types of programmes were developed in order to contribute towards alleviating skills

shortages (Davies & Farquharson, 2004b). In 1997, a learnership pilot project was implemented to reveal the potential of learnership programmes in a South African context.

KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Project. The KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Project was started as a means to examine the success of learnership implementation and to reduce unemployment and create jobs in small, medium and micro-enterprises (Davis & Farquharson, 2004b; Morrow & King, 1998). The pilot test was funded by the Department of Labour (DoL) as well as by the Danish Government through the Danish Development Agency (Davis & Farquharson, 2004a). The pilot testing was divided into two phases; phase one ran from 1997 until 1999 and phase two from 1999 until 2001 (Davies & Farquharson, 2004b). Phase one involved the implementation of four learnerships in the hospitality and building sectors and was intended for unemployed individuals. The hospitality sector learnership trained learners in food preparation and cooking as well as food and drink services whereas the building sector learners were trained in bricklaying and carpentry. Phase one showed success in that learnerships were capable of facilitating the transfer of skills. Phase two consisted of a Venture Creation Learnership and a skills development project for rural women. The Venture Creation Learnership was intended for unemployed individuals as well as retrenched individuals and was implemented to provide entrepreneurs in the small, medium and micro-enterprises sectors (Davis & Farquharson, 2004b). Individuals entering Venture Creation Learnerships needed to possess entrepreneurial potential as well as the desire to start their own business as these programmes aimed at providing business, technical and managerial skills needed to build and sustain a business (New Venture Creation, 2007). According to Pretorius and Wlodarczyk (2007) the evaluation of the New Venture Creation Learnership is largely positive in that some business creation has taken place.

Davis and Farquharson (2004b) highlighted certain areas, which they deemed as crucial to this success. For example, it was deemed critical to identify and consult stakeholders from the commencement of the programme and to clarify their roles and responsibilities. The stakeholders in the Pilot Projects included workplace and training providers, assessors and mentors and these key role-players required clarity on their complex role arrangements. Furthermore, the pilot project identified a resounding need to manage correctly the availability of support within learnership programmes (Smith et al., 2005). In the pilot project, support to learners had been provided through mentors and supervisors. Smith et al. concluded that even though some learners had access to support, mentors and supervisors were not clear on the purpose of their support and unclear of their duties.

The element of support as a factor for success in learnerships will be examined in more detail in the following section, starting with the importance of support personnel and concluding with a review of how support personnel operates within learnerships.

Importance of Support Programmes in Learnerships

This section highlights the importance of support as part of learnership programmes. It outlines the advantages of support in the workplace as well as the support offered specifically in learnerships.

Perceived organisational support. The construct *perceived organisational support* refers to the degree to which employees feel cared for and valued by their company (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Providing support and ensuring that employees feel valued and cared for can increase performance, organisational commitment and job involvement. Additionally, perceptions of support contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction (Babin & Boles, 1996; Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Brondolo et al., 2002), relieve stress (Kirk & Brown, 2003) and promote learning within organisations (Pidd, 2004). Essentially, perceived organisational support is a construct founded on the principle that if an individual treats another individual favourably it tends to oblige the return of favourable treatment (Gouldner, 1960). It is because of this reciprocation of favourable treatment that workplace support has become an essential component in businesses.

Workplace support is commonly integrated into businesses in order to identify employees who are struggling and as a means to motivate employees to resolve their difficulties. It allows employees to seek assistance regarding workplace concerns as well as troubling personal matters (Sonnenstuhl & Trice, 1990). Workplace support can thus target a diverse range of areas and is not limited to general assistance. For example, Frone and Yardley (1996) considered the importance of workplace family-supportive programmes. In addition to the focus areas of each support programme, the intentions of the programmes differ. Some workplace support programmes are introduced to improve performance (Kirk & Brown, 2003) whereas others are introduced with the intention of supporting learning (Billett, 2001). As learnership programmes are implemented with the intention of developing skills through theoretical and practical learning (Erasmus et al., 2009), the effect that support has on learning is important to consider.

Support for learning. Skule (2004) found that support and encouragement from staff indeed reinforced learning efforts. Support is also paramount in order to ensure an effective

transfer of learning (Eraut, 2007). This type of support can be used to identify whether the intended learning has occurred and can monitor individuals who are struggling to comprehend what is being taught (Eraut, 2007). Workplace support, aimed at ensuring learning can be designed in multiple ways. Billett (2001) reported that both indirect, thus the observation of others' activities, and direct guidance of individuals partaking in workplace activities can result in a successful acquisition of knowledge. This research can be linked to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which supports the importance of social support in order to learn effectively. This theory posits that individuals tend to learn from each other through facets of observation, imitation and modelling (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, it emphasises that individuals should have access to opportunities to discuss and reflect with others, to practice applying the new material learnt, to receive feedback from an expert and to be able to model the behaviour of those who are already competent in the area to be taught (Marsh, 2008). In line with this theory, Podolny and Baron (1997) stated that support provides individuals with a framework to determine the correct course of action to take in the workplace. This, in turn, corresponds to Ostroff and Kozlowski's (1992) study that evaluated the concept of *information acquisition* among newcomers to an organisation and the role that different sources of support has in gaining organisational knowledge. Ostroff and Kozlowski concluded that when acquiring information, observations of others was the most commonly used technique followed by asking for direct guidance from individuals. When considering the principles associated with social learning theory, the provision of support in learnerships can therefore promote the provision of the intended skills and knowledge. Support can be provided by many different sources and is often referred to as social support.

Social support. Leavy (1983) defined social support as the quality and availability of helping relationships. Social support can be provided by many sources including mentors (Young & Perrewe, 2000), co-workers, supervisors and family members (LaRocco, House & French Jr, 1980). Some research has also included friends and significant others as a category of social support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988). Typically, the role of providing skills-based support is given to supervisors thus highlighting the importance of supervisors in relation to learning. Alternatively, more personal support is usually provided by a mentor. Mentors also tend to instil a sense of personal belonging among individuals and often provide friendship (Podolny & Baron, 1997). Scandura and Ragins (1993) found that the provision of social support in the form of mentors was particularly important for females who were entering male-dominant environments such as accounting firms. Dipoye (1987) concurred that social support for women is important in male-dominant industries as women are often exposed to

gender-related barriers to advancement. In addition to the social support provided by supervisors and mentors, social support is also commonly received from co-workers and family members.

Nissly, Barak and Levin (2005) highlight the importance of family and co-worker support in addition to support provided by a supervisor. They concluded that social support provided by co-workers, family and supervisors is a valuable determinant for individuals' intention to leave an organisation. Similarly, Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan and Schwartz (2002) considered social support as a composite of family, co-worker and supervisor support. They concluded that there was a strong relationship between social support and productivity and social support and job satisfaction. More specifically, they emphasised that family support correlates more strongly with burnout than with productivity and that supervisor support correlates with productivity and satisfaction but not with burnout. Typically, in South African learnerships social support for learners is provided from supervisors, mentors (Smith et al., 2005) and coaches (Hattingh, 2006) or some combination of coaches, supervisors and mentors. Coaches are essentially workplace instructors (Eraut, 2007; Hattingh, 2006) however the role of a coach will not be considered in detail in this study as a result of the similarities between the role of coaches and supervisors and mentors. This study will define social support as the availability and quality of support provided by co-workers, family members, supervisors and mentors.

When considering the availability of social support House, Umberson and Landis (1988) stated that there is limited research regarding the relevance of the number of different support sources in organisations and since their research, this statement has held true as there is very few published research considering the influence of the number of support sources. Franks, Cronan and Oliver (2004) conducted one example of this type of research. They undertook a study in a medical setting and found that the size of an individual's support network, thus the number of people that a person can depend on for support, can predict self-efficacy (Franks et al., 2004). Therefore, it is assumed that increasing individuals' confidence might increase their levels of adjustment and performance as a result of their levels of self-belief and personal-capability increasing. Judge, Thoresen, Bono and Patton (2001) stated that individuals who believe in their ability to perform a job, thus with high self-efficacy, tend to have higher job satisfaction. Ganster, Fusilier and Mayes (1986) also stated that the absence of support particularly from supervisors is strongly related to lower job satisfaction. Therefore, when supervisors are not available workers tend to be dissatisfied. This study, however, aims

to provide more insight into the influence that the number of support sources has on workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance thus the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 1_a: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 1_b: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1_c: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of self-perceived performance.

The following section discusses the different sources of support, in detail.

Distinguishing the social support provided in learnerships. A review of literature regarding learnerships highlighted that the two most common sources of workplace support are mentors and supervisors. Furthermore, mentors and supervisors were deemed important as Smith et al. (2005) highlighted that learners enrolled in South African learnerships should ideally have access to at least a supervisor as well as a mentor. The role of mentors and supervisors will be described below and in doing so differentiated from each other.

Mentors are not bound by the organisations hierarchy and are commonly recruited as external hires so that learners can gain a different perspective (Smith et al., 2005). Hattingh (2006) mentioned that mentors are not hired based on their expertise in certain fields but rather as a result of personal qualities as their focus is centred on interpersonal matters. Characteristics such as having a trustworthy nature and a strong commitment to the development of people are what should govern the selection of mentors. Mentors provide personal-level support, advice and counsel for learners so that they are able to complete the programme. Raven (2011) reported that mentors aim to bridge the gap that exists between education and work. Mentors introduce learners to authentic work contexts, provide support to learners who are new to the field and help learners find a career niche, which interests them. Du Toit et al. (2005) suggested that ideally mentors should have monthly contact with learners rather than daily contact. Research conducted by Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng and DuBois (2008) aimed to determine whether having a mentor was beneficial to protégés in the workplace. This study found that mentoring in the workplace had a positive effect on behavioural aspects: Attitudes, motivation, career outcomes and health-related aspects were all positively affected

by the presence of a mentor. Nelson and Quick (1991) considered the quality of mentor support as encompassing facets of availability and helpfulness. They found a negative relationship between the perceived helpfulness of mentors and job satisfaction and discussed that mentors might elicit pressure on newcomers relating to growth and maturity thus leading to lower job satisfaction. Additionally, they attributed this negative relationship to the discrepancy between where newcomers are in the organisation's hierarchy compared to senior colleagues such as mentors. Therefore, newcomers view mentors as personnel in positions that the newcomers ideally want to be in and are a reminder of what the individual has yet to achieve. This may not be an issue in learnerships, however, as mentors are often not subject to the organisation's hierarchy or even to the business area in which the learner operates (Smith, et al., 2005). Thus envying the senior position of the mentor would not apply, as promotion into a mentor position is not the career path that learners are following. Additionally, Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) concluded poor quality mentoring can be more detrimental to workers than no mentoring, thus emphasising the importance of high quality mentoring in the workplace.

Supervisors are responsible for the training component of the learnership programmes, according to Smith et al. (2005). Supervisors are not hired specifically for the learnership but are existing employees and are bound by the organisation's hierarchy, unlike mentors. This affiliation to the organisation implies that supervisors have authority over learners. Similarly, Raabe and Beehr (2003) stated that supervisors are often considered as being part of management. They further specified that supervisors are responsible for the progress and work of employees as well as for ensuring that employee behaviour is conforming to company policy. Additionally, Raabe and Beehr stated that supervisors should be concerned with employee contributions, loyalty and professional respect whereas mentors should focus on role modelling, psychosocial support and career development. The quality of the interaction between supervisors and their protégés is fundamental to the supervisory relationship (Todd & Storm, 2002). Babin and Boles (1996) conducted research that highlighted the importance of quality supervisor support. They stated that a positive perception of supervisor support tends to reduce stress and increase job satisfaction among workers. Similarly, Bliese and Castro (2000) mentioned the importance of quality supervisor support and how supervisors contribute to reducing psychological stressors by clarifying employee roles.

In South Africa, the availability of mentors is a minimum requirement for an organisation to become a workplace provider of learnerships (LGWSETA, 2003), however. learners should also have access to supervisors (Smith et al., 2005). Smith et al. reported that in the South African learnership model the roles of supervisors and mentors are, however,

inadequately described. They revealed that as a result of poor role descriptions many learners who were meant to have been assigned both a supervisor and a mentor, did not in fact have access to a supervisor and even fewer had access to a mentor. It is thus evident that defining the roles and responsibilities of those providing support is essential to a successful learnership process. In other words, these two support structures have to provide a high quality of support. In line with this, Hattingh (2006) highlighted how employers should promote and support the role of mentors as they are fundamental in ensuring a relevant and quality learnership. Employers also need to ensure that adequate individuals are placed in these roles. In addition to supervisor and mentor support, co-worker and family support have been found to play an important role in the success of learnerships. Research related to both types of support is outlined below.

Seers, McGee, Serey and Graen (1983) considered branch managers, unit managers, co-workers and friends as social support structures. They aimed to determine the relationship between the quality of support from these sources in terms of helpfulness and willingness to talk and listen, and job satisfaction. This study found that co-worker support had a modest relationship with job satisfaction, which was stronger than the relationship that family and friend support had with job satisfaction. Ganster et al. (1986), similarly, considered the quality of co-worker and family support. They found that both co-worker and family support have a negative relationship with health related symptoms such as stress. In relation to this, Bakker, Demerouti and Euwema (2005) found that co-workers who are willing to help fellow colleagues, contribute to higher motivation among co-workers and reduce the negative effects of work overload. In addition, Nelson and Quick (1991) highlighted the importance of quality co-worker support by stating that the more helpfulness from peers that individuals experience the lower their intention to quit. Thus, it can be concluded that the quality of co-worker and family support, thus the helpfulness of these sources, contribute to positive workplace effects.

Based on the literature reviewed in this section the provision of quality social support, from co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors, can increase work performance, organisational commitment, job involvement (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and job satisfaction (Seers et al., 1983). The following hypotheses are therefore presented:

Hypothesis 2_a: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 2_b: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2_c: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of self-perceived performance.

The subsequent section will focus specifically on workplace adjustment and why workplace adjustment and social support are important constructs when considering learnerships. Workplace adjustment was considered an important construct as it was assumed that the majority of learners entering these programmes would not have experienced a workplace environment before and thus adjusting to the new sphere would be important.

Workplace Adjustment

This section provides an overview of the concept of workplace adjustment. It considers the relationship, which exists between workplace adjustment and organisational support. Specifically, it reviews how support is related to workplace adjustment and the importance of adjustment for learners enrolled in learnerships. It also describes how mentor and supervisor characteristics, such as gender and race, can affect an individual's level of workplace adjustment.

Organisations are dynamic entities, which vary considerably in terms of structure, individuals and operations (Jones, 2010). When entering an organisation, individuals are required to learn and understand the processes, which govern the general operations occurring within the business (Louis, 1980). When considering an individual's ability to acquire knowledge and perform effectively, their level of adjustment within the workplace becomes important. There is substantial research regarding the adjustment of new entrants into the workplace (e.g. Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007; Nelson & Quick, 1991; Waung, 1995) as well as adjustment of students to new educational experiences (Demaray & Malecki, 2002; Hussain, Kumar & Husain, 2008).

Adjustment is an important concept which Feldman (1981) defined as being comprised of three aspects, namely *the resolution of role demands* thus understanding the responsibilities of the job, *task mastery* thus having confidence in the position and *adjustment to one's group* thus being liked and accepted by others in the organisation. Bauer et al. (2007) supported Feldman's definition by further specifying these categories of adjustment to *role clarity*, *self-efficacy* and *social acceptance*. Furthermore, Fisher (1986) stated that adjustment refers to the process of working through both role-related tasks and social transitions upon entering an organisation. Thus, adjustment is facilitated by socialisation which refers to the learning of new beliefs, values, skills or behaviours required for performing adequately in a role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). As individuals providing workplace social support are intended to

help with knowledge and skills acquisition and act as icons for individuals to observe and model they are essentially encouraging the socialisation of newcomers. The social interactions between existing staff and newcomers ensures socialisation (Feldman, 1981), thus, as socialisation facilitates adjustment it may be assumed that the social interactions between workplace support personnel and learners may assist learners in adapting to their learnership environment.

Organisations can influence learning among workers through socialisation tactics. New employees often have to adjust their assumptions by gaining information on how existing employees behave (Jones, 1986). Socialisation tactics can include learning about individual roles and responsibilities from existing organisational members. Mentors may, for example, be helpful with socialising individuals and thus increasing workplace adjustment as they are a source from which individuals can learn and model behaviour. Similarly, supervisors may be able to socialise individuals and help with adjustment as they should be able to provide information about the job roles and responsibilities and thus reduce uncertainty. Jones considered the relationship between adjustment and socialisation. He hypothesised that the tactics reflecting institutionalised socialisation influence new employees to accept an organisation's norms. Institutionalised socialisation can refer to, for example, a formal tactic which separates existing and new employees while newcomers learn about their role rather than forming informal work groups between all employees. Jones concluded that socialisation has a negative relationship with role uncertainty, role conflict and intentions to leave the organisation. Additionally, he highlighted that socialisation was positively related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It can be concluded that without appropriate socialisation tactics new organisational members are likely to find it more difficult to adjust to the organisation.

Similarly, Ashforth and Saks (1996) considered role and person change affecting workplace adjustment among newcomers, as did Bauer et al. (2007) who specifically considered the role that adjustment has on organisational socialisation tactics and information seeking using a meta-analytic review. The uncertainty regarding role requirements when transitioning into a new position can make individuals subject to influence regarding the role orientation they embrace (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977), thus Bauer et al. analysed how newcomers may attempt to reduce uncertainty in their working environment by gathering information through social interactions. They found that adjustment mediated the effect of organisational socialisation tactics and information seeking among newcomers, and socialisation outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance. They concluded that

information seeking among employees was significantly related to role clarity and social acceptance and that socialisation tactics were significantly related to all the aspects of adjustment thus social acceptance, role clarity and self-efficacy. Essentially, Bauer et al. showed that individuals are likely to gather information which helps with their levels of adjustment. The process of information seeking through social interactions can be linked to the role that support personnel has in learnership programmes, in that available support should help learners with workplace adjustment.

Hummell and Koelmeyer (1999) conducted research which focused on individuals making the transition from students to graduates, and the challenges associated with adjusting to these new positions. They highlighted that the transition to being a graduate is stressful and can result in feelings of inadequacy regarding skills and confidence. In relation to learnership programmes, tertiary education is not a requirement and thus feelings of inadequacy may have an even stronger effect on learners moving from school to work as they often have no prior tertiary education. Tertiary education often prepares students for working environments using practical assignments unlike the tasks completed at school thus not having exposure to what might be expected at work could make the transition for learners even more challenging. Transitioning from being a student to becoming a graduate can be done successfully through a series of processes. For example, Hummell and Koelmeyer recommended orientation programmes in organisations where sharing of knowledge about the organisation can take place. Programmes which allow socialisation between newcomers can contribute to adjustment in the workplace. Furthermore, they explained that in order for individuals to adjust effectively to the workplace, support or supervision must be given on a regular basis. Regular supervision and encouragement of socialisation within learnerships is thus likely to increase workplace adjustment among learners who may be struggling as a result of the transition from school to work.

Studies have shown that adjustment can contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment (Jones, 1986) and higher performance (Bauer et al., 2007). Furthermore, failure to adjust to the workplace can result in higher stress and anxiety among workers (Waung, 1995) and can increase employee turnover rates (Pattie & Parks, 2011). Entering an organisation can result in anxiety (Ashforth & Saks, 1996) and thus providing employees with support should be utilised in order to reduce anxiety by ensuring adjustment. Relevant literature thus suggests that learnership programmes providing high quality workplace support (co-workers, supervisors and mentors) should be related to beneficial

organisational outcomes through ensuring adequate adjustment levels. The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

Hypothesis 3_a: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3_b: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job performance.

How beneficial social support is perceived can be affected by certain factors. Literature shows that the support personnel's racial and gender group in relation to the racial and gender group of the protégé is important. The following section outlines the related literature.

Mentor and Supervisor Characteristics which Affect Workplace Adjustment

Research has revealed that individuals develop perceptions of others based on personal characteristics (Weiten, 2010). Personal characteristics of the learners' supervisors and mentors should thus also play a role. Studies have shown that individuals develop perceptions of support personnel based on gender (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000) and ethnicity (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). These perceptions then influence the effect that social support has on a learner's adjustment (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993).

Ragins and McFarlin (1990) conducted a study, which considered the perceptions of mentor roles in cross-gender and same-gender mentoring relationships. They reported that protégés are less likely to socialise with mentors of the opposite sex. Sexual concerns tended to be the reason for the distance between protégés and mentors of the opposite sex. Conversely, protégés with mentors of the same sex would be more likely to socialise with their mentors. The provision of personal-level support and guidance falls under the responsibilities of a mentor, thus a mentoring relationship where distance and discomfort exists implies that individuals will not be gaining optimally from the benefits that a mentor can provide. Worthington and Stern (1985) reported that gender matching in supervisory relationships affected supervisees' perceptions of their relationships but supervisor perceptions were unaltered. They stated that supervisees in same-gender supervisor relationships attributed a higher degree of their workplace improvement to their supervisor. In relation to building perceptions Turban, Dougherty and Lee (2002) explained that individuals are more likely to be in developmental relationships with others who they perceive as similar to themselves in terms

of gender. Therefore, elements such as socialisation and job satisfaction are more likely to occur when mentors and protégés are the same gender.

In addition to the role of gender on mentor and mentee and supervisor and supervisee relationships there is much research which considers the effect that race has on mentoring (e.g. Dreher & Cox Jr, 1996; Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Thomas (1990) conducted research, which considered the impact of race on managers' experiences with mentors. He reported that individuals engaged in same-race mentoring relationships reported higher psychosocial support than those in cross-race mentoring relationships. This implied that individuals in same-race mentoring relationships reported high support with regards to guidance, role modelling and trust. Similarly, Ensher and Murphy (1997) conducted a study which considered the effect that race has on mentoring relationships. They randomly assigned 104 protégés to mentors either of the same-race or of cross-race. This study concluded that protégés in same-race mentoring relationships reported higher satisfaction and more frequent contact with mentors. Protégés preferred mentors who were similar to themselves. Furthermore, protégés in same-race relationships also reported higher instrumental support. This means that protégés engaged in same-race relationships felt that they were receiving more effective support in terms of career enhancement. Regarding supervisor-protégé relationships, Jeanquart-Barone (1993) considered the effects of race on the relationship between supervisors and subordinates. She found that there was less trust between white subordinates reporting to white supervisors than black subordinates reporting to black supervisors. Additionally she reported that cross-race (black and white) supervisor and subordinate relationships were characterised by less trust than same-race (black and black) supervisor and subordinate relationships.

As evident from the above, research has suggested that demographic factors such as gender and race have a significant impact on the relationship that develops between a supervisor or mentor and their protégé. A lack of similarity between support personnel and protégés may result in distant relationships or mistrust. Protégés may not be experiencing the full benefit of the available support and as a result, their process of seeking information upon entering a firm may decrease. Workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance may be hindered if learners do not perceive their support personnel as similar to themselves. Therefore, the following hypotheses are stipulated:

Hypothesis 4_a: The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-gender workplace support than for learners with cross-gender workplace support.

Hypothesis 4_b: The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-racial workplace support than for learners with cross-racial workplace support.

HYPOTHESES

This section summarises the literature in a conceptual framework (see Figure 1) and provides an overview of all hypotheses.

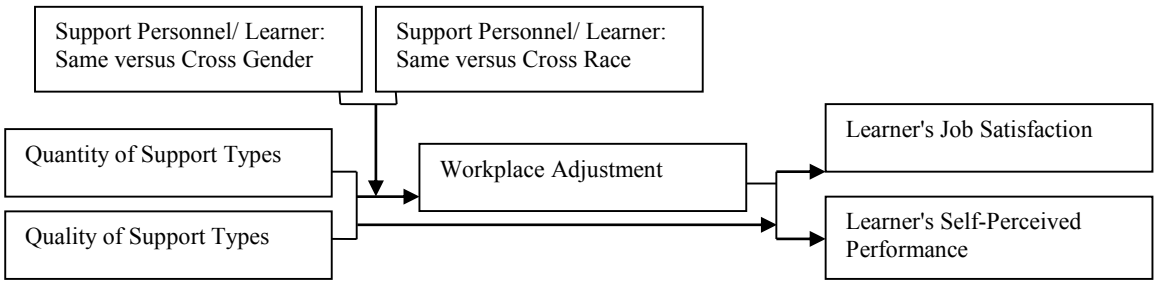


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the present study.

Hypothesis 1_a: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 1_b: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1_c: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of self-perceived performance.

Hypothesis 2_a: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 2_b: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2_c: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of self-perceived performance.

Hypothesis 3_a: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3_b: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job performance.

Hypothesis 4_a: The relationship between quality of support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-gender workplace support than for learners with cross-gender workplace support.

Hypothesis 4_b: The relationship between quality of support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-racial workplace support than for learners with cross-racial workplace support.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD SECTION

This chapter outlines the manner in which the study was conducted. It outlines the research design used and the procedure followed. This chapter further describes the sample, the measures used and the data analysis executed.

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to investigate if workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between social support (independent variable) and job satisfaction (dependent variable) as well as self-perceived performance (dependent variable) in South African learnerships. This quantitative study used a descriptive design with a cross-sectional time dimension and self-report questionnaires to collect data for measuring the variables. This design was chosen as it is appropriate for investigating the relationships which exist between the variables.

Participants and sampling

The participants of this study were learners who were completing a learnership programme in South Africa at the time of data collection. The study was carried out in two organisations which hosted learnership programmes, a large chemical and integrated energy company and a large financial institution both operating throughout South Africa. The chemical and energy company had 1,000 learners and the financial institution had 600 learners enrolled in learnerships. The majority of these employees were entering the organisation for the programme with some existing employees entering the programme. Participants were selected using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a form of non-probability sampling which refers to the process of selecting a sample based on the simplicity of its accessibility (Burns & Burns, 2008). This method may result in the introduction of bias in the sample and the generalisation of results to the population may be jeopardised (Cozby, 2009), however despite the shortfall, it was nonetheless deemed appropriate as a result of its efficiency. Additionally, the inexpensive nature of this method made it the preferable choice due to the limited budget for this study.

Data was collected by way of an electronic survey constructed using the survey tool Qualtrics and an equivalent hardcopy version. It was not possible to administer electronic

questionnaires to all participants as not all had computer access, hence the use of hardcopy questionnaires in addition to the electronic format. The study received 213 electronic responses from learners at both organisations as well as 128 hardcopy responses from the chemical and integrated energy company and 48 hardcopy responses from the financial institution. The questionnaire thus yielded a relatively low response rate of 24.31%. Of the electronic version, 26 participants were removed for providing zero responses and 63 were removed for only providing demographic information. Additionally participants' data for a particular scale was deleted if more than 25% of the responses were missing for the scale (workplace adjustment, job satisfaction, self-perceived performance, co-worker support, family support, supervisor support and mentor support) in accordance with Burns and Burns (2008). Four participants were completely removed for providing less than 25% of responses across all scales thus leaving a total sample of 296 participants and a final response rate of 18.50%. It comprised 82 (27.70%) female participants and 206 (69.60%) male participants with eight participants (2.70%) not having provided their gender. The age of participants ranged from 18 years of age to 59 years of age ($M = 25.39$, $n = 276$), with the mode being 24 ($n = 42$ [14.20%]). Appendix A Section 1 provides the complete age distribution of participants.

A large proportion of participants had either grade 12 ($n = 159$ [53.70%]) or tertiary level as their highest level of education ($n = 105$ [35.50%]). Even though learnerships are designed for employees with at least a matric qualification it is notable that two participants in this sample had not completed their schooling. The racial distribution of participants included a large majority of black participants ($n = 228$ [77.00%]). Table 1 provides more detailed information on the educational and ethnic breakdown of the sample.

A total of 164 (55.40%) participants had previous work experience while 124 (41.90%) participants indicated having had no prior work experience. Previous work experience ranged from 0 months to 432 months ($M = 15.49$, $SD = 35.01$, $Mdn = 3$, $n = 275$) with the mode being zero months ($n = 117$ [40.80%]). This indicates that a large proportion of learners entered the programme with only educational experience and zero or very little workplace experience. Additionally, participants had started their learnership programmes between 1 and 36 months prior to completing the questionnaire ($M = 12.76$, $SD = 10.00$, $n = 285$), with the mode being 2 months ($n = 50$ [17.40%]). This suggests that the sample is largely comprised of newcomers to the organisation. Appendix A Section 2 provides the complete distribution of participants starting time.

Table 1
Distribution of respondents per demographic variable

	N	%
Race		
Asian	0	.00%
Black	228	77.00%
Coloured	12	4.10%
Indian	12	4.10%
White	28	9.50%
Other	0	.00%
Prefer not to answer	10	3.40%
Total	290	100.00%
Highest level of education		
Lower than grade 10	1	.30%
Grade 10	1	.30%
Grade 11	0	.00%
Grade 12	159	53.70%
Tertiary degree	105	35.50%
Postgraduate degree	7	2.40%
Other	17	5.70%
Total	290	100.00%

Table 2 highlights the number of participants and the corresponding percentage of participants that had access to support personnel at their workplace. A majority of the respondents had access to either a supervisor or a mentor or to both, a supervisor and a mentor. For the purpose of this research it was assumed that the twelve participants who were *not sure* about the type of support available to them were unlikely to seek support and thus were merged with the nine participants who selected that they received no support and the one participant who selected *none* and *not sure*. This group was labelled *no support* and comprised of 22 participants (7.50%).

The nine participants who had either selected *supervisor* and *not sure*; *none* and *other*, *mentor*, *supervisor* and *none*; *mentor*, *supervisor*, *not sure* and *other* or *mentor* and *not sure* were entirely deleted from the study. This is as their answers were difficult to interpret, particularly as most had rated support which they had not selected that they had access too. The remaining 281 participants thus comprised the final sample. The participants, who selected *other*, specified a range of different types of support personnel such as line manager, coach, learner support representative, team leader and wife. As this category was thus very broad it was not used for further analysis.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents Per Support Mechanism (n = 290 + 6 missing data)

	Frequency	%
Mentor + Supervisor	103	34.80%
Supervisor	95	32.10%
Mentor	44	14.90%
Not Sure	12	4.10%
None	9	3.00%
Mentor + Supervisor + Other	8	2.70%
Mentor + Other	5	1.70%
Supervisor + Not sure	4	1.40%
Other	2	.70%
Supervisor + Other	2	.70%
None + Other	2	.70%
Mentor + Supervisor + None	1	.30%
Mentor + Supervisor + Not sure + Other	1	.30%
Mentor + Not sure	1	.30%
None + Not sure	1	.30%

Instruments

The questionnaire was made up of the following subsections:

Demographic characteristics

This section included questions about the gender and racial group membership of the learner. Learners were then asked if they had a mentor, a supervisor or any other type of support available to them. This item is modelled on Janse van Rensburg and Roodt's (2005) mentor questionnaire, in which they assessed the satisfaction of learnership participants with their mentors. Janse van Rensberg and Roodt's question sought to assess what type of mentor learners had based on certain categories (for example learners were asked to state whether they had a hierarchical mentor, a supervisory mentor, an executive mentor or a peer mentor). In this questionnaire, participants were merely asked if they had a mentor (without further specification) and if they had a supervisor and/ or other types of support. This question also allowed the researcher to determine the number of support sources that each learner had access to by assessing how many options they selected. Learners were also asked to indicate whether the social support personnel (supervisor, mentor and other) available differed from or were the same to them in respect to race and gender. Additionally, learners were asked about their age, level of education and length of time in the learnership programme. Section 1 in Appendix B provides the exact questions asked in this section.

Perceived social support. This section contained four questions from Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, and Pinneau's (1975) social support scale. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all)* to 5 (*very much)*. A high score on this scale indicated an individual with high levels of perceived support. When using the scale to measure the social support employees received from supervisors, co-workers and families LaRocco et al. (1980) found the reliabilities to be high with the Cronbach alphas ranging from .73 to .83. As a result of the high reliability this scale was deemed appropriate for this study. An example item is "To what extent is it easy to talk to your supervisor". In addition to supervisor, co-worker and family support, the scale was adjusted to include mentor and other support, thus for example "To what extent is it easy to talk to your mentor".

Appendix B section 2 provides all perceived social support items used in the questionnaire.

Workplace adjustment. This section contained questions which aimed to gather information about the level of workplace adjustment experienced by the learners. Adjustment was measured using the indicators of adjustment outlined by Feldman (1981), namely self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance. These indicators were chosen as a meta-analysis, including over 50 studies, conducted by Bauer et al. (2007) revealed that alternative adjustment measures lacked consistency. Outlined below are the self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance scales used.

Self-efficacy. Jones' (1986) 8-item scale was used to measure self-efficacy. Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree)*. This self-efficacy scale was chosen as Jones developed it to assess workplace adjustment and thus used it in a similar context as this study. It has also shown good reliability in Jones's research ($\alpha = .71$). Items were changed from future tense to present tense and an example item is "I can handle a more challenging job than the one I am doing." Additionally this scale contained one item requiring reverse scoring (item 8 "Professionally speaking my new job exactly satisfies my expectations of myself"). A high score on this scale indicates an individual who has high levels of self-efficacy.

Role clarity. Four items from Köhler, Rohm, de Ruyter and Wetzel's (2011) study were used to measure role clarity. They constructed the items using Rizzo, House and Lirtzman's (1970) role clarity and role ambiguity measure. Köhler et al. reported that the reliability of the measure was sufficient at .95 using composite scale reliability. Furthermore,

these items were deemed appropriate for this study as they had been previously used to assess adjustment by Köhler et al. These items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree)*. Items include "I know what I need to do in my job" and "I know what my job responsibilities are." A high score on this scale corresponds to an individual who has role clarity.

Social acceptance. Keyes (1998) developed seven social acceptance items, which were used to assess social acceptance in this study. These items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree)*. A high score on this scale indicates an individual who experiences high social acceptance. Five of these items required reverse scoring and all items were adapted from third person dialect to first-person dialect. An example of an item is "I believe that people are kind." This measure was chosen as a result of its good reliability ($\alpha = .77$; Keyes, 1998).

Employee job satisfaction. This section contained questions, which aimed to gather information about the level of satisfaction which learners had regarding their learnership.

Ten items from MacDonald and MacIntyre's (1997) generic job satisfaction scale were used to measure job satisfaction. Sample items included "I feel good about my job" and "My wages are good." Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 (*strongly agree)*. A high score on this scale indicates an individual who has high levels of job satisfaction. MacDonald and MacIntyre used Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability of their scale. The measure was deemed reliable ($\alpha = .77$), a result which has since been replicated in many studies (Bekier, Molesworth & Williamson, 2011; Belhassen & Shani, 2013; Pillemer, et al., 2008; Robison et al., 2007; Robison & Pillemer, 2007). The reliability of the scale was the reason for choosing it to measure job satisfaction in this study.

Self-perceived performance. As a result of both organisations expressing concern about supervisors' willingness to complete questionnaires, self-perceived performance scales were used instead of supervisor ratings. Self-report data are subject to certain issues, which tend to decrease the popularity of its use (Spector, 1994). For example, Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) discussed how self-reporting questionnaires can lead to problems of self-serving bias. They mentioned that individuals are likely to under-report behaviours that are perceived as inappropriate and exaggerate behaviours that are perceived as suitable. In spite of this method being subject to self-serving bias it can be seen as an adequate approximation of performance as Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) reported that peer and supervisor ratings

have a moderate correlation with self-perceived ratings of performance. Additionally, this option was chosen as the use of supervisor ratings would have jeopardised the anonymity of the data being collected. Therefore, even though supervisors might provide a more objective performance rating, self-perceived performance was the only feasible option.

Performance was measured via five items from Janssen's (2001) standard job performance scale. Responses were collected on a 7-point self-anchoring scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree)*. An example item is "I always complete the duties specified in my job description." Item 3 ("I often fail to perform essential duties") needed to be reverse scored. A high score on this scale indicates that learners perceived their individual performance as high. This scale was chosen as a result of its good reliability ($\alpha = .85$; Janssen, 2001) and as Janssen developed this measure so that it would be applicable to the diversity of jobs represented in his sample. This was important as learnerships in South Africa are also offered in a variety of professions.

Procedure

The Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee was approached in order to gain ethics clearance before the survey was distributed to participants. The study did not pose any ethical threats to participants as the data was collected anonymously and the identity of participants was not known. Additionally none of the items addressed sensitive information or information that would cause distress among participants. The permission letter has been provided in Appendix C. Following this, approximately 20 organisations operating in South Africa who had advertised learnership programmes were contacted for permission to survey learners: Two of these responded. Permission in writing was gathered from the financial institution (see Appendix D) and the chemical and energy company (see Appendix E). Once the relevant permissions had been obtained, the online version of the questionnaire was distributed by the general manager of Global Learning and Global Venture Support from the chemical and energy company and by the Learnerships Manager from the financial institution through their respective organisations' databases. The learners who had access to computers completed the online version of the questionnaire after receiving a link to the questionnaire via email.

Hardcopies of the questionnaire were also made available as both the chemical and energy company and the financial institution representatives had stated that some of their learners did not have access to computers. The hardcopy version was distributed by each

company. Hardcopies were made available at each company's learning centres where individuals could voluntarily complete them. The hardcopies collected at the chemical and energy company were then scanned and emailed to the researcher whereas the hardcopies collected at the financial institution were sent via a courier service to the researcher. Data was collected from 2 July 2014 until 12 August 2014.

The questionnaire was preceded by a cover letter, which provided clear instructions about how to answer the questions and about the survey procedure. It notified respondents about the anonymity of the survey thus confirming that their identities would remain unknown and that all data would be treated confidentially. Appendix F provides a copy of the cover letter. It was expected that the questionnaire would take less than 20 minutes to complete. Investigation of the data revealed, however that this time varied from approximately seven minutes to approximately 50 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

IBM's Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyse the data obtained for this research. Hardcopy data was entered manually by the researcher, into Qualtrics and then both the electronic and hardcopy data was downloaded into SPSS. The reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach alpha and the appropriateness of individual scale items via corrected item-total correlations. Scale validity was assessed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the scales used. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, range, mean and standard deviation) were employed to describe the data. Hypotheses were tested using Spearman Brown correlations and multiple regression analysis. Preacher and Hayes' (2004) PROCESS macro for SPSS was used for testing the proposed mediating relationships.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter describes the results relating to the hypotheses. This analysis is preceded by an analysis of the reliability and validity of the scales used in the study. Additionally, this chapter includes the descriptive statistics for each scale.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

Reliability analysis refers to the tests conducted to ensure that a measure can be interpreted consistently across various situations (Field, 2013). Reliability and item analyses were conducted on each scale used in the study by determining the corrected item-total correlations and Cronbach alpha (α). Cronbach alpha is used to measure the internal consistency of a scale (Pallant, 2010). Prior to the analyses all reverse-scored items were re-coded.

In line with Burns and Burns' (2008) recommendations, items with corrected item-total correlations equal to or greater than .30 were considered significant and therefore were retained in the scale. If a scale contained items with corrected item-total correlations of less than .30 these items were removed and the Cronbach alpha reliability re-examined. In accordance with Nunnally (1975), a scale was considered sufficiently reliable if its Cronbach alpha had a minimum value of .70. George and Mallery's (2003) guideline was used for interpreting the actual size of the reliability coefficients. Their guideline states that an alpha below .50 is unacceptable, an alpha between .60 and .70 is questionable, an alpha between .70 and .80 is good and a value between .80 and .90 is excellent.

Validity analysis refers to the tests conducted to ensure that a scale is accurately measuring what it is intended to measure (Field, 2013). Reliability analysis was undertaken prior to validity analysis as it is possible for a scale to be consistent, however, it may not necessarily be measuring what it is intended to measure. That is, a scale may be reliable without being valid but a scale can never be valid without being reliable. In order to determine the validity of the scales used in this study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. Factor analysis is a statistical procedure used to understanding the underlying structure of a measure (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2007).

Separate EFAs were conducted for the adjustment, job satisfaction, job performance and the social support scales as the sample was not large enough to run one EFA across all scale items. Cohen and Cohen (1983, as cited in Osborne and Fitzpatrick, 2012) recommend

that there be a minimum of ten participants per item included in the analysis, thus for this 53-item questionnaire an EFA across all items used would have required a sample of at least 530 participants, while there were only 281 respondents in the sample. All EFAs were conducted using principal axis factoring as it is the method most likely to provide the best results particularly if the data might not be normally distributed (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Field highlights that these techniques assume that the sample used in the study is the population and thus cannot be extrapolated beyond the study. The purpose of the study was to ensure that the scales were valid in the sample and therefore could be used as accurate indicators of adjustment, job satisfaction, performance and support and thus a generalisation of the scale structure to a broader population was not required. Direct oblimin rotation was used. The rotation procedure was considered appropriate as it was assumed that the factors in scales with multiple underlying factors would be correlated, which direct oblimin rotation allows for. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity for indicating the degree of correlation between variables were used to decipher the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Data was considered suitable if the KMO measure yielded a result greater than .50 and if Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .05$; Burns & Burns, 2008).

The subsequent sections will provide a detailed discussion of the reliability and validity of each scale.

Workplace Adjustment. An initial Cronbach alpha analysis showed that the 19-item adjustment scale had an acceptable reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = .77$). An investigation of the corrected item-total correlations revealed that four items had to be removed due to low correlations (item 1 "My job is well within the scope of my abilities": $r = .23$.; item 3 "I feel I am overqualified for the job I am doing": $r = .11$; item 8 "Professionally speaking, my new job exactly satisfies my expectations of myself": $r = -.27$; item 15 "I believe that people in my organisation are self-centred": $r = .22$). The final Cronbach alpha for this scale was $r = .82$ indicating excellent reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Appendix G provides the items' corrected item-total correlations of all adjustment items. Feldman (1981) assumed workplace adjustment to consist of three separate constructs (self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance). The sub-scales self-efficacy (Cronbach $\alpha = .68$), role clarity (Cronbach $\alpha = .90$) and social acceptance (Cronbach $\alpha = .85$), when considered separately were also reliable (See Table 3).

Table 3
Internal Consistencies of the Workplace Adjustment Scale Subscales Used in this Study

Scale	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α)	Corrected Item-Total Correlations	Total Number of Items in the Scale
Adjustment			
Self-Efficacy	.68	$.32 < r < .48$	5
Role Clarity	.90	$.75 < r < .79$	4
Social Acceptance	.85	$.52 < r < .74$	6

The KMO measure (.86) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_{105} = 1686.21$; $p<.001$) revealed that it was appropriate to conduct a factor analysis including the 15 items remaining in the workplace adjustment scale. The application of Kaiser's rule (Kaiser, 1960) and the scree test (Cattell, 1966) showed that the data could be adequately represented by three factors (see Table 4 for eigenvalues and explained variances for the three factors as well as factor loadings and Appendix H for all eigenvalues and explained variances). Kaiser's rule refers to the assumption that it is not psychometrically reasonable to retain factors that explain less variance than a single original variable and that therefore only factors with eigenvalues greater than one should be retained (Kaiser, 1960; Kaufman & Dunlap, 2000). The scree test involves consideration of a graph in which the factors are plotted on the x-axis and the eigenvalues are plotted on the y-axis. A line is drawn which connects the eigenvalues per factor, ranging from the factor explaining the most variance on the left of the x-axis to those explaining the least variance on the right (Cattel, 1996; Hayton, Allen & Scarpello, 2004). Burns and Burns (2008) explain that in order to interpret the graph one must consider the point at which the graph abruptly levels out after a sharp drop. The relatively flat line that follows the drop shows the additional factors that account for less variance than the factor or factors preceding the drop. Therefore, the factors that precede the point at which the plot levels out are considered relevant.

The scree plot began to flatten after the third factor (see Appendix H for the scree plot). Factor 1 was comprised of the role-clarity items and thus was labelled role-clarity. Factor 2 contained the social acceptance items and was labelled social acceptance and factor 3 summarised the self-efficacy items and was labelled self-efficacy. The EFA thus highlighted that in this sample the adjustment scale was, as conceptualised, a multidimensional scale, comprised of three sub-components. The three factors were, however, correlated with each other suggesting that the factors share variance and therefore share commonalities. Correlations between the factors can be seen in Table 5.

Table 4
Eigenvalues, Explained Variance (In Brackets) and Factor Loadings for the Workplace Adjustment Scale (PAF with Direct Oblimin Rotation; Only Loadings >.30 are Shown)

Items	Factors		
	Role clarity Eigenvalue: 4.77 (28.81%)	**Social acceptance** Eigenvalue: 2.98 (16.87%)	**Self-efficacy** Eigenvalue: 1.15 (4.19%)
I know what my job responsibilities are	.90		
I know what my role is in my job	.84		
It is clear to me what I am obliged to do in my job	.79		
I know what I need to do in my job	.73		
I feel that people are not trustworthy		.81	
I think that people live only for themselves		.82	
I believe that people are more and more dishonest these days		.73	
I believe that people are kind		.67	
I think that people care about other people's problems		.63	
I think that other people are unreliable		.56	
I can handle a more challenging job than the one I am doing			.61
My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I am able to perform successfully in this organization			.61
I feel confident that my skills and abilities equal or exceed those of my colleagues			.64
I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my job, all I need now is practical experience			.47
I did not have any problems in adjusting to work in this organisation			.23

Table 5
Correlations Between Workplace Adjustment Factors

Factors	Correlation	
	Role Clarity	Social Acceptance
Self-Efficacy	.65	.19
Role Clarity		.23

An additional EFA was thus conducted on the 15-item adjustment scale to determine if its sub-scales could be summarised into one overall adjustment dimension. The EFA was run specifying the extraction of only one factor. The factor had an eigenvalue of 4.77 and explained 27.34% of the variance. All items loaded significantly (> .30) on this factor ranging from .29 to .75. The EFA thus showed that the three sub-dimensions (self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance) indicate different aspects of adjustment. See Table 6 for factor loadings and Appendix I for all eigenvalues.

Table 6
Factor Matrix for the Workplace Adjustment Scale (PAF)

Items	Factor loadings
I know what my job responsibilities are	.70
I know what my role is in my job	.67
It is clear to me what I am obliged to do in my job	.75
I know what I need to do in my job	.65
I feel that people are not trustworthy	.47
I think that people live only for themselves	.45
I believe that people are more and more dishonest these days	.40
I believe that people are kind	.51
I think that people care about other people's problems	.53
I think that other people are unreliable	.29
I can handle a more challenging job than the one I am doing	.39
My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I am able to perform successfully in this organization	.49
I feel confident that my skills and abilities equal or exceed those of my colleagues	.43
I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my job, all I need now is practical experience	.46
I did not have any problems in adjusting to work in this organisation	.43

In conclusion, the workplace adjustment scale was considered reliable and valid. The following section provides an outline of the reliability and validity of the job satisfaction scale.

Job Satisfaction. Item analysis and reliability analysis of the 10-item job satisfaction scale revealed that the scale had excellent reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = .82$) and that all corrected item-total correlations were greater than .30 ($.40 < r < .61$, see Appendix J for all corrected item total correlations).

The KMO measure (.89) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_{45} = 717.35$; $p < .001$) revealed that conducting a factor analysis was appropriate. The EFA revealed one factor with eigenvalue greater than one and the scree plot flattened after the first factor (Appendix K provides the scree plot and eigenvalues for all ten factors). This factor accounted for 34.78% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 4.11. It was therefore, appropriate to summarise participants' responses on the job satisfaction scale into an overall satisfaction score. Table 7 shows the factor loadings for this scale.

Table 7
Factor Matrix for Job Satisfaction Scale (PAF)

Items	Factor loadings
I feel good about working at this company	.70
I receive recognition for a job well done	.64
I feel close to the people at work	.64
I feel good about my job	.64
I believe management is concerned about me	.58
All my talents and skills are used at work	.58
I feel secure about my job	.58
I get along with my supervisors	.54
On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health	.52
My wages are good	.44

The job satisfaction scale was therefore considered reliable and valid. The reliability and validity of the self-perceived performance scale will be reviewed in the next section.

Self-Perceived Performance. The scale had acceptable reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = .76$; Nunnally, 1975) and all items had adequate corrected item-total correlations ($.41 < r < .65$, all corrected item total correlations are provided in Appendix L).

The KMO measure (.81) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_{10} = 382.79$; $p < .001$) revealed that conducting factor analysis was appropriate. The EFA (principal axis factoring) provided one factor with an eigenvalue greater than one and the scree plot flattened after the first factor (see Appendix M for the scree plot and eigenvalues). This factor accounted for 44.22% of the explained variance and had an eigenvalue of 2.73. All five items of the job performance scale loaded on this factor (see Table 8 for factor loadings). It was therefore, appropriate to summarise participants' responses on the job performance scale into an overall performance score.

Table 8
Factor Matrix for Self-Perceived Performance Scale (PAF)

Items	Factor loadings
I fulfil all responsibilities required by my job	.80
I always complete the duties specified in my job description	.74
I meet all the formal performance requirements of the job	.70
I never neglect aspects of the job that I am obligated to perform	.56
I often fail to perform essential duties	.47

The self-perceived performance scale is therefore considered reliable and valid. A review of the reliability and validity of the support scales will be presented in the following section.

Support Scales

Co-Worker and Family Support. The 4-item co-worker support scale was an excellently reliable scale (Cronbach $\alpha = .83$; corrected item-total correlations: $.58 < r < .74$). Equally so, the 4-item family support scale was an excellently reliable scale (Cronbach $\alpha = .91$, corrected item-total correlations: $.75 < r < .84$, see Appendix N for all corrected item total correlations). One EFA was run over the items of both scales together as all participants had been required to answer the items belonging to these two scales.

The KMO measure (.83) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_{28} = 1209.18$; $p < .001$) revealed that it was appropriate to run a factor analysis using the available data. Kaiser's Rule and the scree test revealed that the items loaded onto two factors and that the scree plot began to flatten after the second factor (see Appendix O). Factor 1 comprised of the four family support items and factor 2 comprised of the four co-worker support items (see Table 9 for factor loadings, eigenvalues and explained variance and Appendix O for all eigenvalues and explained variances). There was a low correlation of r = .28 between the two factors.

Table 9
Eigenvalues, Explained Variance (In Brackets) and Factor Loadings for Co-Worker and Family Support scales (PAF with Direct Oblimin Rotation)

Items	Factor	
	Family Support Eigenvalue: 3.67 (41.92%)	**Co-Worker Support** Eigenvalue: 2.14 (21.98%)
To what extent is your family willing to listen to your problems?	.90	
To what extent does your family go out of its way to make life easier for you?	.84	
To what extent can your family be relied on when things get tough?	.85	
To what extent is it easy to talk to your family?	.80	
To what extent do your co-workers go out of their way to make life easier for you?		.85
To what extent are your co-workers willing to listen to your problems?		.79
To what extent can your co-workers be relied on when things get tough?		.68
To what extent is it easy to talk to your co-workers?		.64

The co-worker support scale is therefore reliable and valid. The following section will present an overview of the reliability and validity of the supervisor support scale used in this study.

Supervisor Support. The Cronbach alpha analysis revealed that the 4-item supervisor support scale was excellently reliable and all items had adequate corrected item-total correlations (Cronbach $\alpha = .93$, $.82 < r < .84$, see Appendix P for all corrected item total correlations).

Factor analysis was appropriate as revealed by the KMO measure (.82) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_6 = 692.61$; $p < .001$). Principal axis factoring was conducted on the 4-item supervisor support scale. Application of Kaiser's rule and the scree test revealed that it was appropriate to extract one factor (see Table 10 for factor loadings) which accounted for 76.29% of the variance and had an eigenvalue of 3.29 (see Appendix Q for the scree plot and eigenvalues for the supervisor support scale).

Table 10
Factor Matrix for Supervisor Support Scale (PAF)

Items	Factor loadings
To what extent is it easy to talk to your supervisor?	.89
To what extent does your supervisor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	.88
To what extent is your supervisor willing to listen to your problems?	.86
To what extent can your supervisor be relied on when things get tough?	.87

This scale is therefore a reliable and valid measure of supervisor support. The subsequent section will describe the reliably and validity of the mentor support scale used in this study.

Mentor Support. The reliability of the 4-item mentor support scale was excellent (Cronbach $\alpha = .94$) and all items had adequate corrected item-total correlations ($.85 < r < .85$), thus no items needed to be removed from the scale. Appendix R contains all corrected item-total correlations.

The KMO measure (.84) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($F_6 = 531.59$; $p < .001$) revealed that conducting factor analysis was appropriate. Kaiser's rule and the scree test revealed that one factor adequately represented the data, which accounted for 78.55% of the

variance and had an eigenvalue of 3.36 (see Appendix S for the scree plot and eigenvalues for the mentor support scale). Table 11 contains the factor loadings.

Table 11
Factor Matrix for Mentor Support Scale (PAF)

Items	Factor loadings
To what extent does your mentor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	.88
To what extent is it easy to talk to your mentor?	.89
To what extent is your mentor willing to listen to your problems?	.89
To what extent can your mentor be relied on when things get tough?	.89

The mentor support scale is therefore considered reliable and valid. The following section outlines the descriptive statistics for each scale.

Descriptive Statistics for the Scales

The descriptive statistics for each scale used in the study are provided in Table 12 below.

As 7-point Likert scales had been used to collect participants' responses on the workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance scales means greater than 4.00 indicate a positive rating and an average below 4.00 a negative ratings. The descriptive results thus indicate that, on average, participants felt well adjusted, were satisfied with their jobs and saw themselves as excellent performers. Responses on the social support scales ranged from 1 to 5 with a scale mid-point of 3.00. This means that, on average participants felt supported by their co-workers, supervisors, mentors and particularly by their families. The skewness of data refers to the symmetry of the data around the mean, thus skewed data is not symmetrically distributed around the mean and thus not normally distributed. To interpret skewness one must consider the result in relation to zero. A skewness result of zero indicates symmetry around the mean, a skewness result of less than zero implies that the data is skewed left thus there is a large concentration of values to the right of the mean and a result greater than zero indicates that the data is skewed right and that most of the values are concentrated on the left of the mean (Field, 2013). The skewness values for all variables indicate that the data is left-skewed. Kurtosis refers to the peakedness of the data's distribution, thus values that result in the data having high or low variation around the mean (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). When interpreting

kurtosis one must consider its value as greater than, less than or equal to three. A kurtosis value of three indicates a normal distribution, less than three indicates a flatter distribution with a wider peak and greater than three indicates a sharper distribution where the likelihood of extreme values is high (DeCarlo, 1997). The kurtosis values reveal that none of the variables are normally distributed, with adjustment, job satisfaction, performance, co-worker support, supervisor support, mentor support and number of support sources indicating a flatter distribution and family support indicating a sharper distribution.

Table 12
Overall Descriptive Statistics for Scales Used

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Workplace Adjustment	281	5.35	.75	2.43	6.93	-.45	.44
Job Satisfaction	279	4.98	1.04	1.22	6.90	-.64	-.06
Self-Perceived Performance	279	6.06	.78	3.00	7.00	-1.14	1.56
Co-Worker Support	282	3.52	.85	1.00	5.00	-.41	-.07
Family Support	282	4.48	.77	1.00	5.00	-1.98	4.28
Supervisor Support	213	3.62	.99	1.00	5.00	-.51	-.41
Mentor Support	157	3.93	.93	1.00	5.00	-.92	.81
Number of Support Sources	281	1.39	.75	.00	3.00	-.03	-.25

Note. N = number of participants

Analysis of Hypothesis

The results for hypotheses 1 and 2 will be reported together in this section as will be the results for hypotheses 3 and 4. Pairwise deletion was used for all analyses. Pairwise deletion excludes participants from calculations only when data is missing (Field, 2013). The manner in which the questionnaire was structured meant that participants only had to answer certain scales based on the support available to them, thus there was a large amount of missing data and listwise deletion would have drastically reduced the sample size.

Hypothesis 1_a: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 1_b: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1_c: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of self-perceived performance.

Hypothesis 2_a: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 2_b: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2_c: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of self-perceived performance.

A set of Spearman rank correlations were computed to determine if there were any significant relationships between the variables under investigation. Spearman rank correlation was deemed the appropriate test as the data for none of the scales was normally distributed as indicated by significant Shapiro-Wilk test results (see Table 13 for the Shapiro-Wilk test results).

Table 13
Distribution Analysis of Data Using Shapiro-Wilks Test of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk	
	W	Degrees of Freedom
Workplace Adjustment	.99**	281
Job Satisfaction	.96***	279
Self-Perceived Performance	.91***	279
Co-Worker Support	.97***	282
Family Support	.72***	282
Supervisor Support	.95***	213
Mentor Support	.91***	157

Note. **p < .01, ***p < .001

The intercorrelation matrix is shown in Table 14. Significant and positive relationships were found between workplace adjustment, job satisfaction, self-perceived performance and the quality of support for the four support sources. The number of support sources correlated significantly with the quality of co-worker and supervisor support as well as with job satisfaction, but there were no significant relationships with adjustment and self-perceived performance, providing an initial indication that the quality of support might be more important in explaining the outcome variables than the number of support sources. According to Cohen (1988) correlation coefficients can be interpreted using the guideline that .10 is a small effect, .30 is a medium effect and .50 is a large effect. It can therefore be concluded that the number of support sources has a weak insignificant relationship with workplace adjustment and self-perceived performance and thus hypotheses 1_a and 1_c are rejected. On the other hand, hypothesis 1_b is supported as the number of support sources has a weakly positive, significant

relationship with job satisfaction. Additionally, the quality of co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support have weak to moderately positive relationships with workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance and thus hypotheses 2_a, 2_b and 2_c are supported. Of all support sources the quality of co-worker support is most strongly associated with workplace adjustment, showing a moderate relationship, while the quality of other support structures are weakly to moderately associated with workplace adjustment. The quality of co-worker and supervisor support are relatively strongly related with job satisfaction, while the relationship between the quality of mentor and family support and job satisfaction are weak to moderate. The perceived quality of support for all of the support sources is only weakly related to self-perceived performance.

Table 14
Spearman Rank Correlations for the Variables Under Investigation (n = Number of Participants)

	Job Satisfaction	Self-Perceived Performance	Co-Worker Support	Family Support	Supervisor Support	Mentor Support	Number of Support Sources
Workplace Adjustment	.57**	.41**	.56**	.22**	.39**	.33**	.05
	(n = 278)	(n = 278)	(n = 277)	(n = 277)	(n = 209)	(n = 153)	(n = 275)
Job Satisfaction		.24**	.46**	.13*	.50**	.31**	.14*
		(n = 278)	(n = 275)	(n = 275)	(n = 209)	(n = 151)	(n = 274)
Self-Perceived Performance			.17**	.20**	.16*	.22**	-.06
			(n = 275)	(n = 275)	(n = 209)	(n = 152)	(n = 274)
Co-Worker Support				.28**	.49**	.45**	.13*
				(n = 282)	(n = 212)	(n = 156)	(n = 276)
Family Support					.13	.09	.01
					(n = 212)	(n = 156)	(n = 276)
Supervisor Support						.29**	.15*
						(n = 115)	(n = 211)
Mentor Support							.01
							(n = 155)

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

Following the correlation it was tested if those participants who had no workplace support differed from participants who had one or more sources of workplace support in their workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. This was done in addition to the correlation analysis in order to ensure if the presence of support, regardless of the number of sources available, made a difference to learner's workplace adjustment, job satisfaction or self-perceived performance levels. The data was not normally distributed and

therefore the Mann-Whitney U test was used as the non-parametric equivalent to the independent samples t-test to determine if individuals with and without workplace support differed in their degree of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. In order to control for the inflation of the Type I error associated with multiple comparisons the alpha level was adjusted using the Bonferroni correction. Given that there were three tests conducted the critical alpha value was adjusted from .05 to .017. Bonferroni correction was chosen over Tukey tests as it has more statistical power when the number of comparisons is small (Field, 2013) as with the case for these tests where three comparisons are made.

A Mann-Whitney U test showed that workplace adjustment levels among learners were not significantly different between individuals without support (*Mdn* = 5.15) compared to individuals with support (*Mdn* = 5.40), $U = 2290.00$, $z = -1.38$, $p = .17$ with a small effect of $r = -.08$.

Additionally a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if job satisfaction differed among learners with support compared to learners without support. There was no significant difference in job satisfaction levels between learners with no support (*Mdn* = 4.45), compared to learners with support (*Mdn* = 5.25), $U = 1947.00$, $z = -2.32$, $p = .02$, with a slightly small effect size of $r = -.14$.

Equally so, there was no significant difference in self-perceived performance between individuals without support (*Mdn* = 6.50) versus individuals with support (*Mdn* = 6.20), $U = 2413.00$, $z = -.70$, $p = .48$, with a small effect size of $r = -.04$.

Following the correlation analysis and t-tests, standard multiple regression analysis was used to test the relative importance of each source of support in explaining variance in the three outcome variables (workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance). Correlation analysis suggested a significant correlation between number of support sources and job satisfaction however using multiple regression on this variable would not be appropriate as regression requires a range of scores to determine a relationship between variables and this analysis only accounts for individual who have at least a mentor and a supervisor. Multiple regression analysis is a statistical test used to predict an outcome variable from several predictor variables (Field, 2013). Field states that in order to draw conclusions about a population from a sample several assumptions for regression analysis must be met.

1. **Variable type.** All predictor variables, thus the perceived quality of co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support as well as number of support sources, must be categorical or interval scaled. Similarly, the outcome variable (adjustment, job satisfaction and performance, respectively) must be continuous and unbounded. Field (2013) explains that unbounded refers to there being no constraints on the variability of the outcome variable. The data in this study met this assumption.

2. **Non-zero variance.** Field (2013) highlights that in order to conduct multiple regression analysis, the predictors (co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support) should have some variation in value and should not have a variance equal to zero. This assumption is not violated by the data (see Table 12).

3. **No perfect multicollinearity.** Predictor variables should not have high correlations as there should be no perfect linear relationship between two or more of the predictor variables (Field, 2013). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was determined for each predictor variable in order to ensure the assumption of mulitcollinearity was not violated (O'Brien, 2007). According to Bowerman and O'Connell (1990 as cited in Field, 2013) the VIF score should be below 10. The VIF scores for the predictor variables indicated that this assumption was not violated as would have been expected given the low to moderate bivariate correlations between the variables (see Table 15). Additionally the tolerance score is related to the VIF score as it is the reciprocal of the VIF score (Field, 2013). According to Menard (2002) if tolerance is below .20 it is indicative of a potential problem. Considering that the tolerance scores for the predictor variables are all above .20 there are no issues with tolerance (see Table 15 for the VIF and tolerance scores).

Table 15
Variance Inflation Factor Scores and Tolerance Scores for Predictor Variables

	Outcome Variables					
	Workplace Adjustment		Job Satisfaction		Self-Perceived Performance	
Predictor Variables	VIF	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance	VIF	Tolerance
Co-worker Support	1.60	.62	1.61	.62	1.61	.62
Family Support	1.10	.91	1.10	.91	1.10	.91
Supervisor Support	1.40	.71	1.41	.71	1.41	.71
Mentor Support	1.31	.77	1.33	.75	1.33	.75

4. **Homoscedasticity.** Homoscedasticity is determined by considering the distribution of the differences that exist between obtained and predicted dependent variable values, i.e. the residuals. Homoscedasticity is given if these values have equal variance at each level of the independent variable (Burns & Burns, 2008). This assumption was tested using a scatterplot depicting the standardised predicted scores against the standardised residuals. The scatterplots for workplace adjustment (see Figure 2) and job satisfaction (see Figure 3) showed that homoscedasticity could be assumed as the flat line of best fit revealed that the variance of residuals was constant. The scatterplot for self-perceived performance shows slight heteroscedasticity as there is greater variance to the left of the graph than on the right of the graph (see Figure 4). Despite self-perceived performance violating this assumption, parametric statistics were still deemed appropriate as only extreme cases of heteroscedasticity can result in severe distortions of findings, weak analysis and higher probability of type I error (Barry & Feldman, 1985). There is only a slight effect on significant tests as a result of slight heteroscedaticity (Barry & Feldman, 1985).

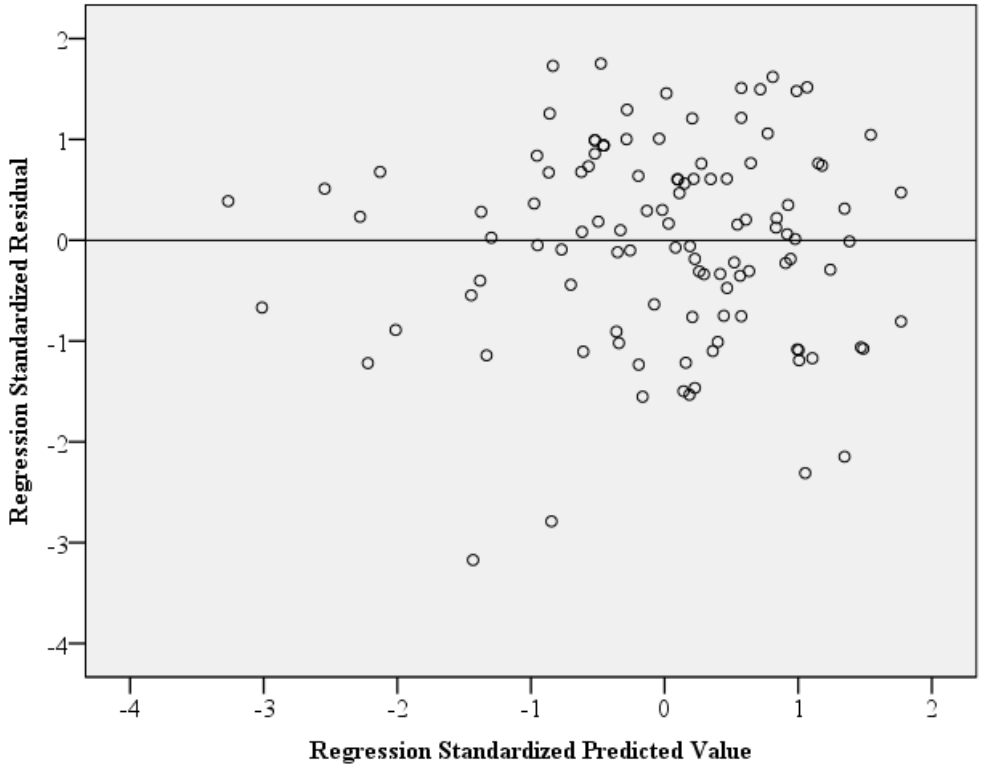


Figure 2. Graphs showing the variance of the residuals for workplace adjustment using a line of best fit.

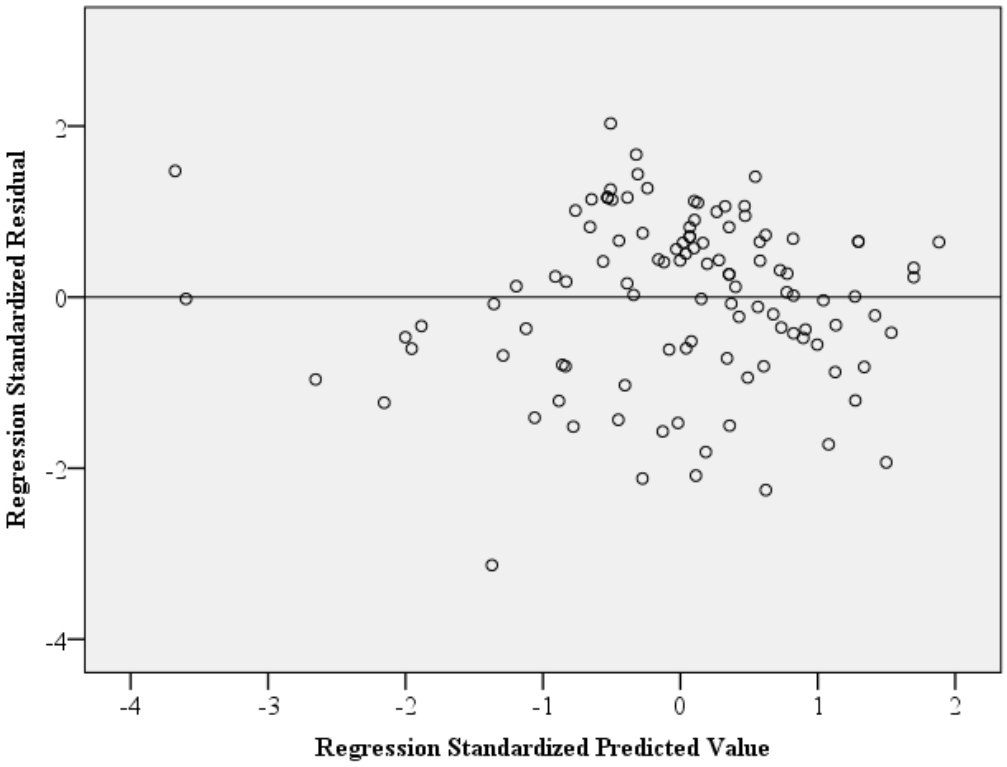


Figure 3. Graphs showing the variance of the residuals for job satisfaction using a line of best fit.

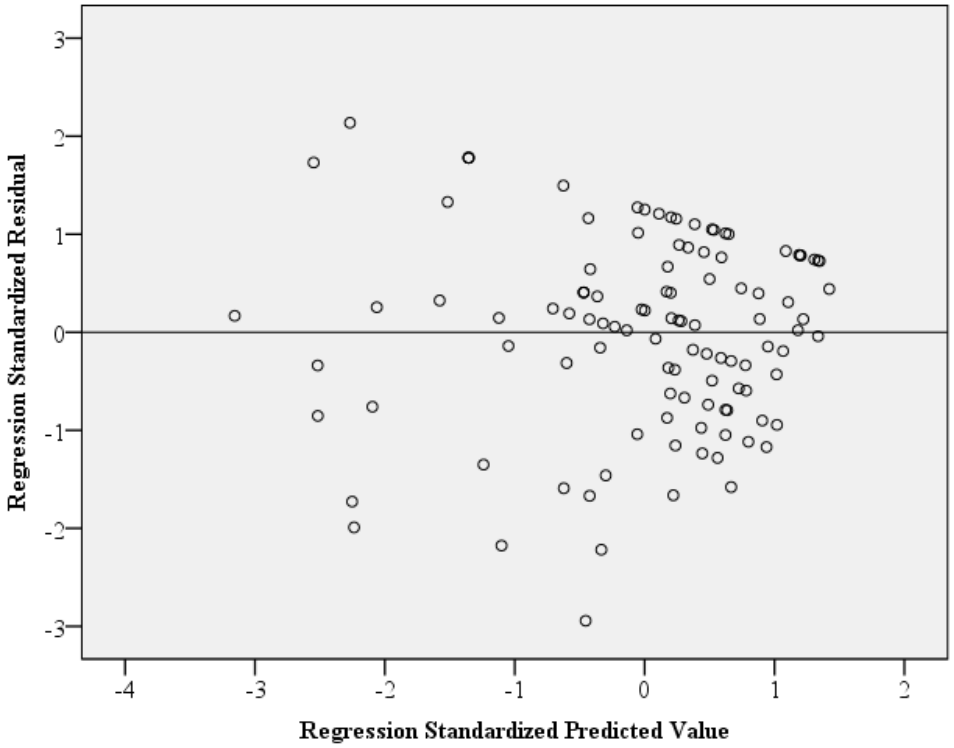


Figure 4. Graphs showing the variance of the residuals for self-perceived performance using a line of best fit.

5. **Independent errors**. Field (2013) highlights that in order for this assumption to be met the residuals between any two observations should be uncorrelated. This was tested through the use of the Durbin-Watson test (Durbin & Watson, 1951). Fields (2013) states that the test statistic varies between 0 and 4 and a value of 2 indicates that the residuals are uncorrelated. He mentions that values below one and higher than three are concerning as a general rule of thumb. For workplace adjustment the test statistic was equal to 1.93, for job satisfaction the test statistic was 1.53 and for self-perceived performance the test statistic was 1.96 and therefore this assumption was not violated.

6. **Normally distributed errors.** In order to conduct regression analysis the residuals in the model should be normally distributed with a mean of zero (Field, 2013). Therefore, Field (2013) highlights that the sum of the differences between the predicted and the observed data should equal zero. In line with Field the normality of residuals was tested using histograms of the standardised residuals and normality probability plots.

The histograms displayed approximately normally distributed data as depicted in the bell-shaped or inverted U shaped data, despite some of the residuals deviating from zero, for workplace adjustment (see Figure 5), job satisfaction (see Figure 6) and performance (see Figure 7), therefore, this assumption was not violated. Normality probability plots highlight deviations from normality (Field, 2013). Consideration of the normality probability plots for the sample data also showed no extreme deviations for workplace adjustment (see Figure 8), job satisfaction (see Figure 9) and performance (see Figure 10). This assumption of normally distributed errors was therefore met in the sample data.

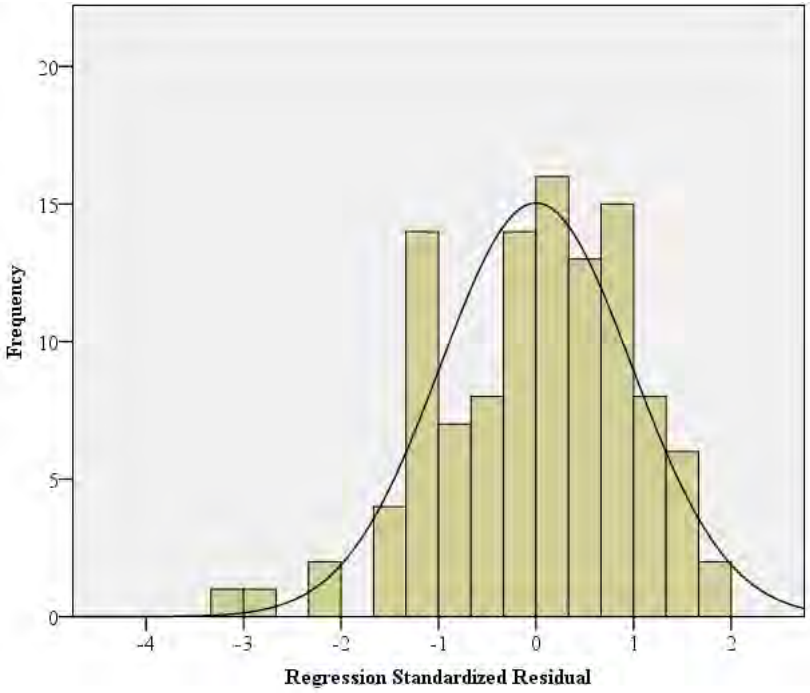


Figure 5. Histogram: workplace adjustment.

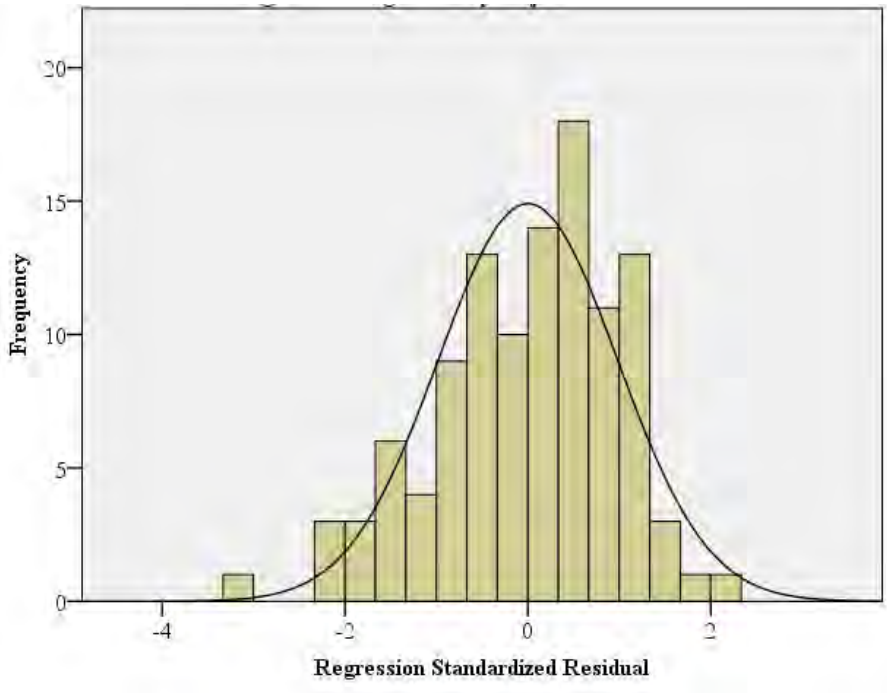


Figure 6. Histogram: job satisfaction.

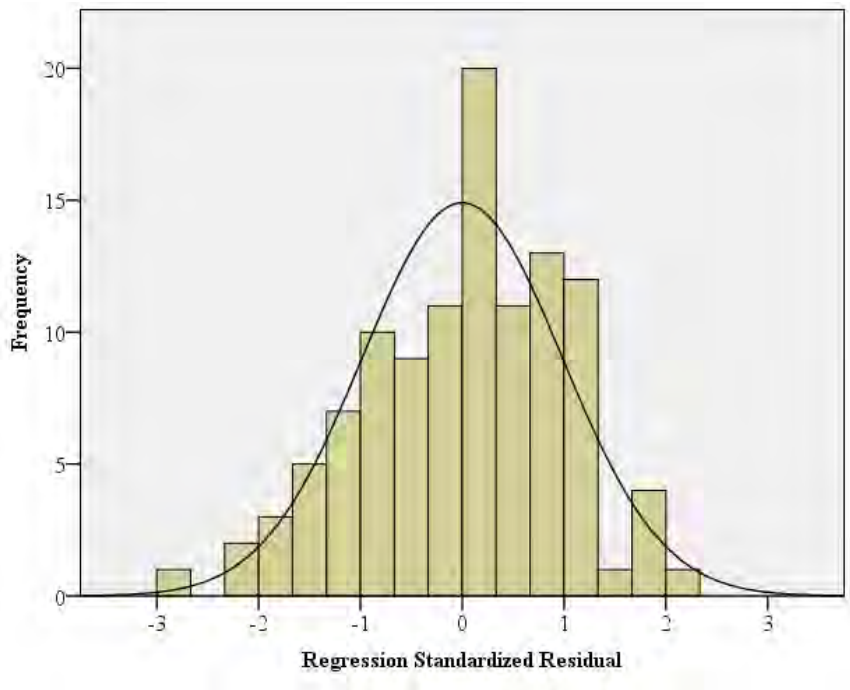


Figure 7. Histogram: self-perceived performance.

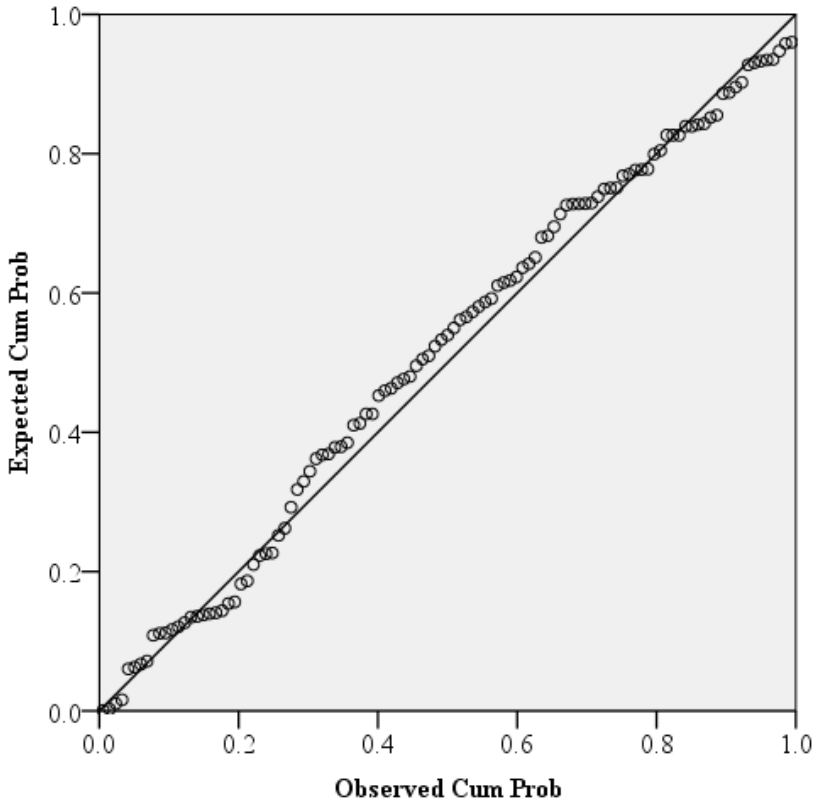


Figure 8. Normality probability plot: workplace adjustment.

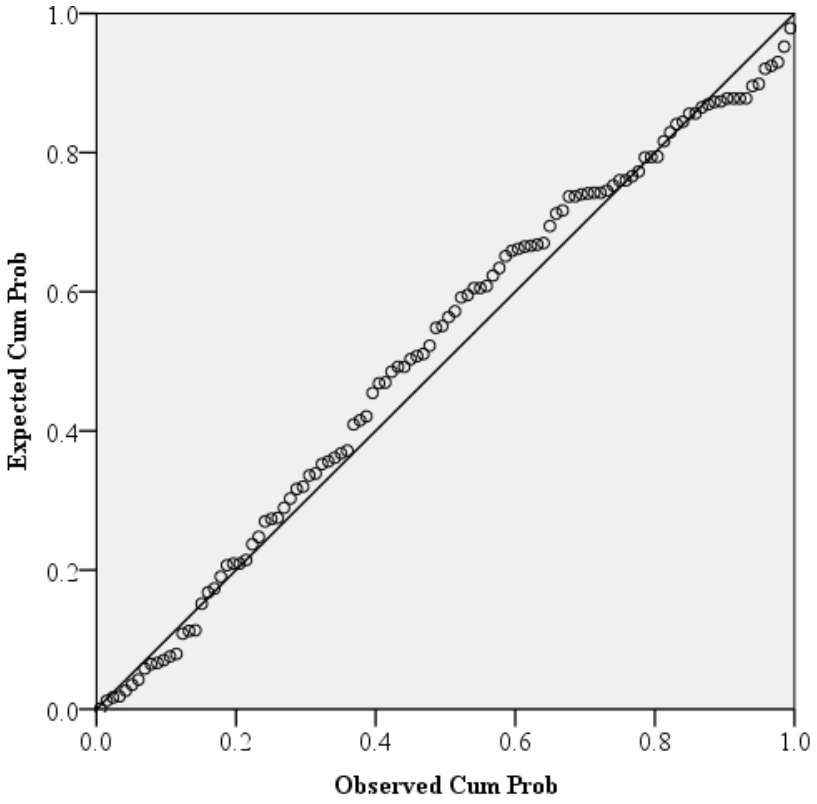


Figure 9. Normality probability plot: job satisfaction.

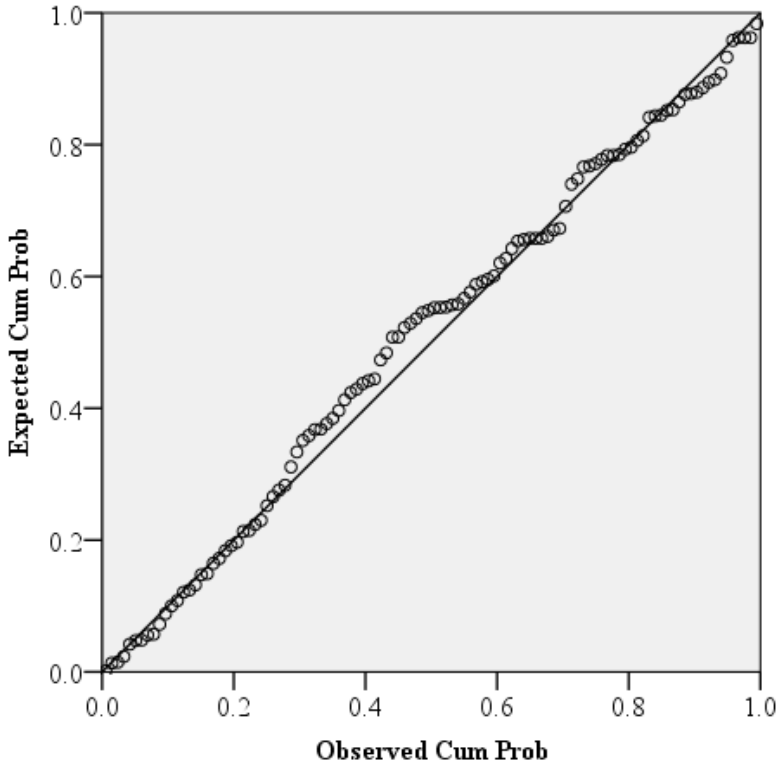


Figure 10. Normality probability plots: self-perceived performance.

As the assumptions for conducting regression analysis were fulfilled, the analysis was then conducted.

Hypothesis 2_a: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment.

The multiple regression analysis was run with workplace adjustment as the dependent variable and the quality of co-worker support, family support, supervisor support and mentor support as the independent variables, which were all entered at the same time. Approximately 36.70% of the variance in workplace adjustment was accounted for by the independent variables together and the overall regression model was significant (see Table 16). The quality of co-worker support explained the most unique variance in workplace adjustment, however, the quality of family support and supervisor support were also significant predictors. The quality of mentor support was the only source of support that did not predict a significant amount of variance in adjustment over and above the other three predictors. The results therefore support hypothesis 2_a as quality of support, particularly co-worker support, predicts a learner's degree of workplace adjustment.

Hypothesis 2_b: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of job satisfaction.

In this analysis job satisfaction served as the dependent variable and the same independent variables as above were entered into the regression model (quality of co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support). Approximately 35.40% of the variance in job satisfaction was accounted for by the independent variables together. The overall regression model was significant (see Table 16). Co-worker support and supervisor support were the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. Family support and mentor support did not predict unique variance in job satisfaction over and above the other two predictors. The results thus support hypothesis 2_b.

Hypothesis 2_c: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of self-perceived performance.

Approximately 10.30% of the variance in self-perceived performance was accounted for by its linear relationship with the four sources of support (co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor). The overall regression model was significant (see Table 16). Only the perceived quality of family support emerged as predicting unique variance in self-perceived performance, thus a source of support outside the workplace. Co-worker support, supervisor support and mentor support were not significant predictors of performance in the regression model.

Table 16
Regression Analysis and Emerging Predictors for Workplace Adjustment, Job Satisfaction and Self-Perceived Performance

	Workplace adjustment	**Job satisfaction**	**Self-perceived performance**
Model statistics			
R	.62	.62	.37
R^2	.39	.38	.14
R^2 adjusted	.37	.35	.10
F	$F_{4,110}$ = 16.92***	$F_{4,109}$ = 15.96***	$F_{4,109}$ = 4.14**
Variable	b	b	b
Constant	2.21	1.90	3.83
Quality of co-worker support	.30**	.37**	.05
Quality of family support	.18*	-.07	.30**
Quality of supervisor support	.26**	.40***	-.01
Quality of mentor support	.08	.16	.17

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The following section shows the results for hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3_a: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3_b: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job performance.

To test the remaining hypotheses Preacher and Hayes' (2004) PROCESS macro for SPSS was used. This procedure estimates the indirect effects between variables using a normal theory approach and bootstrapping. Bootstrapping is useful as it makes no assumptions about the distribution of data and is therefore appropriate for variables that are not normally distributed (Field, 2013). Additionally, bootstrapping is more powerful than the Sobel test in

determining the statistical significance of mediation effects. This method also includes aspects of the traditional Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to mediation. In the first set of mediation analyses workplace adjustment was evaluated as the mediator variable between the same independent variables (co-workers, family, supervisor and mentor support) and job satisfaction. In the second set of mediation analyses workplace adjustment was evaluated as the mediator variable in the relationship between all support categories or independent variables (co-workers, family, supervisor and mentor support) and self-perceived performance. In addition to interpreting the statistical significance, Cohen's (1988) guideline for interpreting varying effect sizes was used. Cohen referred to .01 as a small effect size, .09 as a medium effect size and .25 as a large effect size.

The results pertaining to co-worker support will be shown in the subsequent section.

Co-worker support. This model was comprised of the quality of co-worker support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the mediator variable (m) and job satisfaction as the outcome variable (y). The results showed overall support for mediation as a significant indirect effect of co-worker support on job satisfaction through workplace adjustment emerged (b = .26, BCa CI [.24, .45], which signifies a large effect size, κ^2 = .26, 95% BCa CI [.20, .34].) See Figure 11 for a depiction of the relationship.

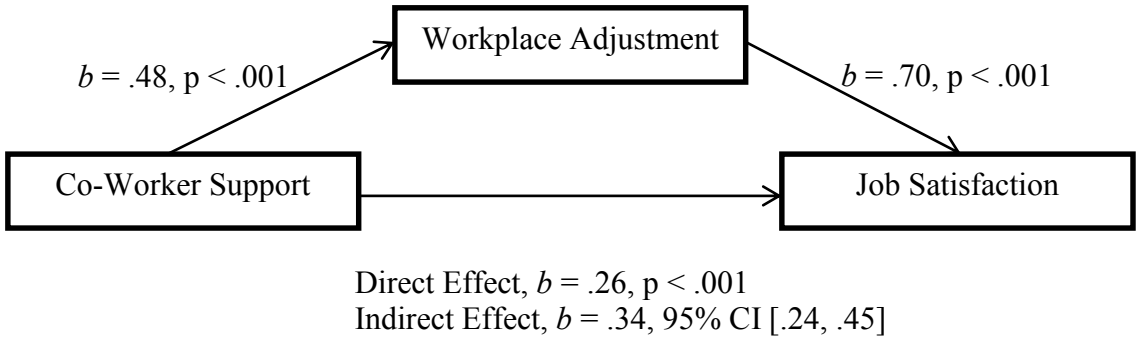


Figure 11. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on co-worker support and job satisfaction.

Equally so, workplace adjustment mediated the relationship between co-worker support and self-perceived performance as indicated through the significant path from co-worker support to self-perceived performance through workplace adjustment (b = .27, BCa CI [.19,

.36]). The results thus denote a large effect, κ^2 = .26 (95% BCa CI [.20, .33]). While the quality of co-worker support did not significantly predict the degree of self-perceived performance it was related to workplace adjustment which, in turn, was related to higher self-perceived performance. See Figure 12 for a depiction of the relationship.

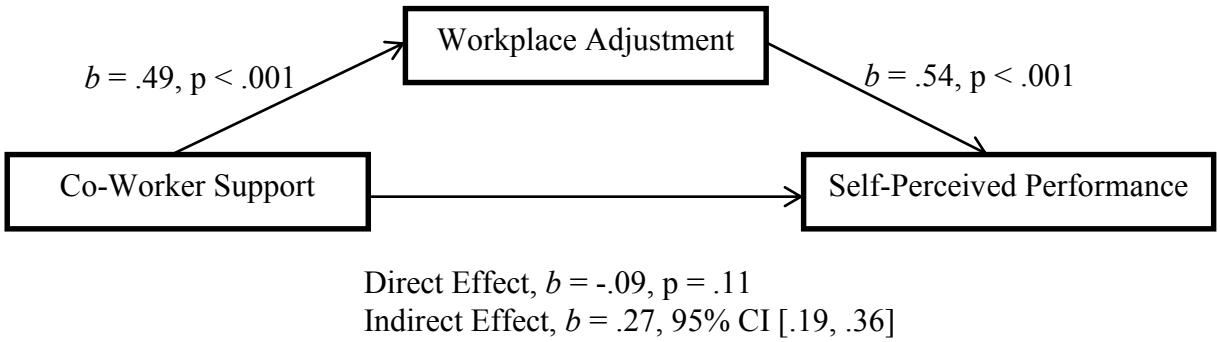
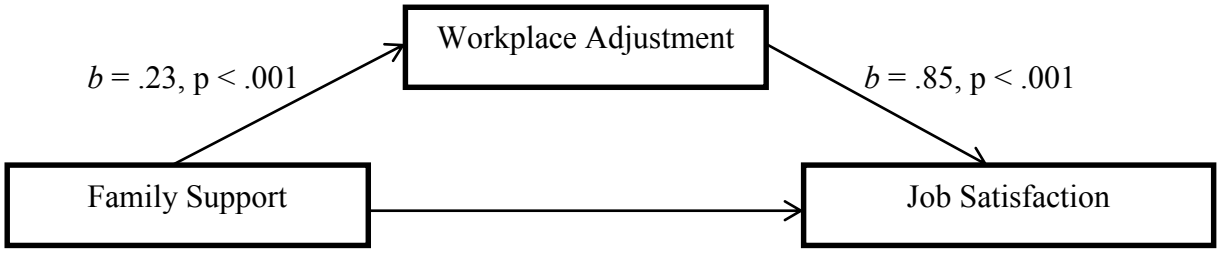


Figure 12. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on co-worker support and self-perceived performance.

The following section outlines the results pertaining to family support.

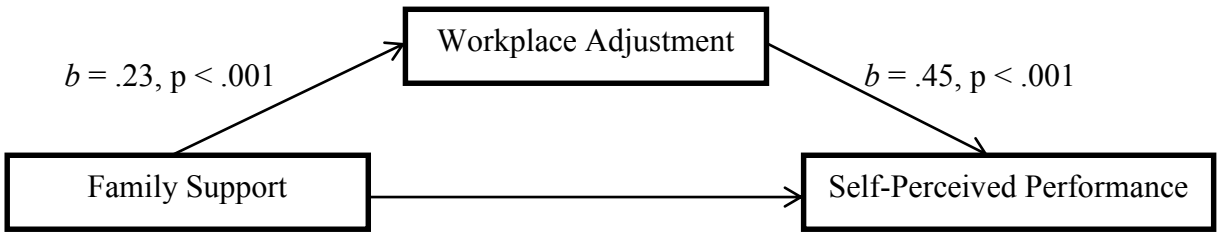
Family support. A simple mediation model was analysed to test this hypothesis. The model was comprised of family support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the mediator variable (m) and job satisfaction as the outcome variable (y). Results showed overall support for the model showing a significant indirect effect of family support on job satisfaction through workplace adjustment, *b* = .20, BCa CI [.10, .32]. These results imply a relatively large effect, κ^2 = .16, 95% BCa CI [.09, .26]. While family support had no direct relationship with job satisfaction it was related to it via its link with workplace adjustment. Figure 13 shows the relationship graphically.



Direct Effect, *b* = .01, p = .88
Indirect Effect, *b* = .20, 95% CI [.10, .32]

Figure 13. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on family support and job satisfaction.

Additionally, results showed overall support for workplace adjustment being a mediator between family support and self-perceived performance, *b* = .10, BCa CI [.05, .17]. This represents a moderate effect size (κ^2 = .11, 95% BCa CI [.05, .18]). Family support was related to workplace adjustment which was related to higher self-perceived performance, though the direct effect was equal to the indirect effect (see Figure 14).



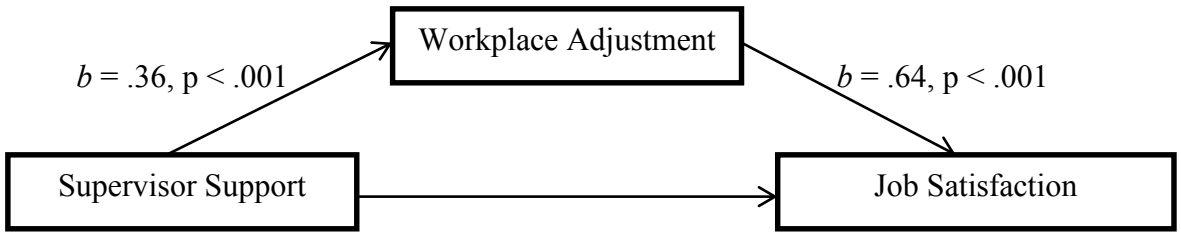
Direct Effect, *b* = .16, p < .01
Indirect Effect, *b* = .10, 95% CI [.05, .17]

Figure 14. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on family support and self-perceived performance.

The following section outlines the results for supervisor support.

Supervisor support. The mediation model comprised supervisor support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the mediator variable (m) and job satisfaction as the outcome variable (y). The results showed overall support for mediation as

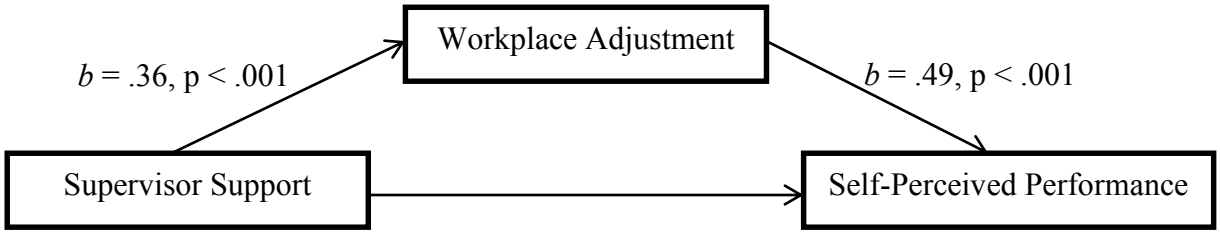
a path from supervisor support to job satisfaction via workplace adjustment (b = .23, BCa CI [.14, .33]). Supervisor support was related to workplace adjustment which was related to higher job satisfaction. Additionally, results showed a relatively large effect, κ^2 = .22, 95% BCa CI [.15, .31]. See Figure 15 for a graphical representation of the relationship.



Direct Effect, b = .37, p < .001
Indirect Effect, b = .23, 95% CI [.14, .33]

Figure 15. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on supervisor support and job satisfaction.

Additionally, results supported workplace adjustment as a mediator between supervisor support and self-perceived performance (b = .18, BCa CI [.11, .27]). Supervisor support was related to workplace adjustment which was related to higher self-perceived performance. Thus the results represented a relatively large effect size (κ^2 = .21, 95% BCa CI [.12, .31]). See Figure 16 for a depiction of the relationship.



Direct Effect, b = -.07, p = .21
Indirect Effect, b = .18, 95% CI [.11, .27]

Figure 16. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on supervisor support and self-perceived performance.

Results pertaining to mentor support are outlined in the following section.

Mentor support. A simple mediation model was analysed to test this hypothesis. The model was comprised of mentor support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the mediator variable (m) and job satisfaction as the outcome variable (y). Results highlighted a significant indirect effect of mentor support on job satisfaction through workplace adjustment, b = .20, BCa CI [.09, .35] thus overall support for the model was represented. Mentor support was related to workplace adjustment which was related to higher job satisfaction. In addition a fairly large effect was shown, κ^2 = .19, 95% BCa CI [.09, .30] (see Figure 17).

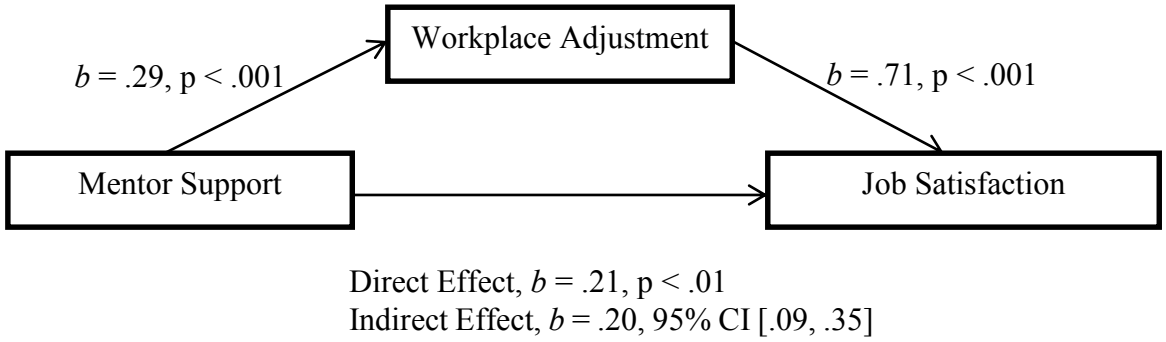


Figure 17. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on mentor support and job satisfaction.

Additionally, results showed overall support for workplace adjustment as a mediator from mentor support to self-perceived performance, b = .13, 95% CI [.06, .22]. Mentor support had no direct relationship with self-perceived performance however it was related via its link with workplace adjustment. Results also showed a fairly large effect, κ^2 = .15, 95% BCa CI [.06, .25]. Figure 18 shows the relationship graphically.

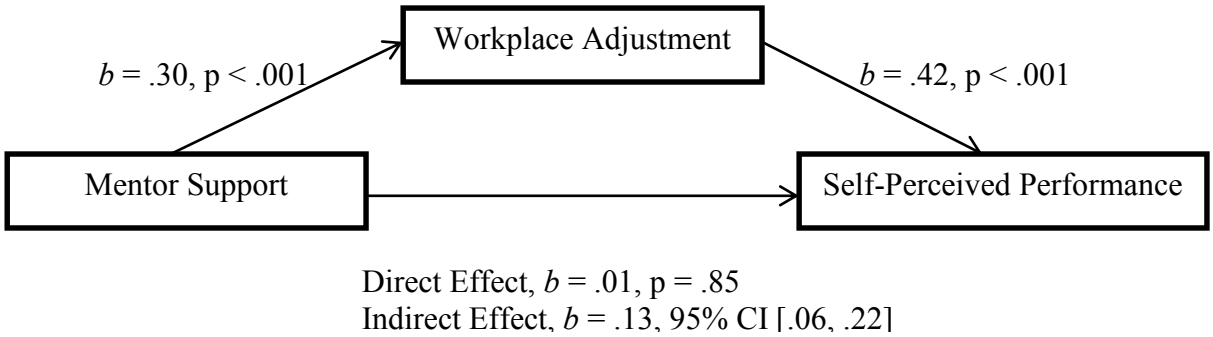


Figure 18. Results of the regression analysis showing the mediation of workplace adjustment on mentor support and self-perceived performance.

It is evident from above that the mediation was particularly strong in the relationships between the quality of co-worker, supervisor and mentor support and self-perceived performance; and in the relationship between the quality of family support and job satisfaction. In these cases the direct effects had been non-significant. Thus, without workplace adjustment there would have been an insignificant relationship between the predictor variables (quality of co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support) and the outcome variables (job satisfaction and self-perceived performance). Workplace adjustment as a mediator was of little importance in the relationship between the quality of supervisor and mentor support and job satisfaction and between the quality of family support and self-perceived performance. Additionally, results showed that quality of family support is directly related to self-perceived performance and that quality of co-worker, supervisor and mentor support are directly related to job satisfaction. In summation, having quality co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support are important for job satisfaction and self-perceived performance and therefore the hypotheses are supported.

This subsequent section will provide the results related to hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4_a: The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-gender workplace support than for learners with cross-gender workplace support.

Hypothesis 4_b: The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-racial workplace support than for learners with cross-racial workplace support.

Whether or not the learner's workplace support belonged to the same racial or gender group or to a different racial or gender group to the learner was evaluated as the moderator variables in the relationship between the quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment. Support staff could either belong to the same racial group as the learner or to a different racial group. Similarly, the support staff could be of the same gender to the learner, cross-gender or partly same and partly cross-gender.

Supervisor support. A simple moderation model was analysed to test this hypothesis. The model comprised quality of supervisor support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the outcome variable (y) and supervisor race (same versus different to learner) and gender (same versus different to learner) as the moderator variables (m, w). Results for the moderation analysis are indicated in Table 17. Supervisors and learners having the same or different race or gender in supervisory relationships does not significantly moderate the relationship between supervisor support and workplace adjustment indicated by the insignificant results calculated and therefore this hypothesis is rejected.

Table 17
Linear Model of Predictors of Workplace Adjustment and Supervisor Support

	b	SE B	*t*	*p*
Constant	5.39	.06	95.55	p < .001
	[5.28, 5.50]			
Supervisor Race	.06	.12	.52	p = .60
	[-.18, .31]			
Supervisor Support	.37	.07	5.57	p < .001
	[.24, .50]			
Supervisor support x Supervisor race	.09	.15	.63	p = .53
	[-.20, .39]			
Supervisor Gender	-.08	.12	-.68	p = .50
	[-.32, .16]			
Supervisor Support x Supervisor Gender	.09	.16	.53	p = .60
	[-.23, .40]			

Note. $R^2 = .20$

Mentor support. A simple moderation, comprised of quality of mentor support as the independent variable (x), workplace adjustment as the outcome variable (y) and mentor race (save versus different to learner) and gender (same versus different to learner) as the moderator

variables (m, w), was used to study this hypothesis. Results of the moderation analysis are shown in Table 18. The hypothesis that the relationship between mentor support and workplace adjustment does not differ depending on whether the mentor has the same or different race or gender to the learner, is not supported.

Table 18
Linear Model of Predictors of Workplace Adjustment and Mentor Support

	b	SE B	*t*	*p*
Constant	5.42	.07	83.18	p < .001
	[5.30, 5.55]			
Mentor Race	-.04	.13	-.30	p = .77
	[-.30, .22]			
Mentor Support	.32	.09	3.68	p < .001
	[.15, .50]			
Mentor support x Mentor race	.15	.17	.89	p = .38
	[-.18, .48]			
Mentor Gender	-.07	.15	-.49	p = .62
	[-.37, .22]			
Mentor Support x Mentor Gender	.02	.20	.12	p = .91
	[-.37, .42]			

Note. $R^2 = .16$

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter highlights the study's main findings and discusses the results. The limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are included in this chapter as well as a conclusion to the study.

Main Findings of the Study and Discussion of Results

One of the South African government's attempts to reduce poverty, thus contributing to the achievement of the millennium development goals, was to create employment through the implementation of learnership programmes. In order to ensure the success of these programmes Smith et al. (2005) suggested the importance of ensuring learners have access to support personnel within these programmes. The central aim of this study was to investigate whether or not workplace adjustment mediated the relationship between the support personnel available, the perceived quality of these individuals and job satisfaction and self-perceived work performance within learnership programmes. In particular, the study assessed the relationship between co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. To achieve this, further hypotheses were developed which aimed to evaluate whether learners who are currently completing learnership programmes in South Africa, have access to support personnel and if those with greater access and a higher quality of support personnel have higher levels of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived work performance. Furthermore, this research considered the relationship that learners with supervisors and/ or mentors of the same gender and race have with quality of support and workplace adjustment in comparison to learners with supervisors and/ or mentors of a different race and gender. The subsequent section presents a discussion of the results pertaining to each hypothesis shown in table 19.

Table 19
Description of Hypotheses findings

Hypothesis 1_a:	The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of workplace adjustment.	Rejected
Hypothesis 1_b:	The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of job satisfaction.	Supported
Hypothesis 1_c:	The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of self-perceived performance.	Rejected
Hypothesis 2_a:	Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment.	Supported
Hypothesis 2_b:	Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of job satisfaction.	Supported
Hypothesis 2_c:	Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of self-perceived performance.	Supported
Hypothesis 3_a:	Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job satisfaction.	Supported
Hypothesis 3_b:	Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job performance.	Supported
Hypothesis 4_a:	The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-gender workplace support than for learners with cross-gender workplace support.	Rejected
Hypothesis 4_b:	The relationship between quality of supervisor and mentor support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-racial workplace support than for learners with cross-racial workplace support.	Rejected

Hypothesis 1: The higher the number of support sources the higher the level of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance.

Participants in this study had up to three workplace support sources available to them though there were also participants who indicated having none. The results highlighted that learners are equally well adjusted to the workplace regardless of how many support sources they have available. This is even the case if they have no workplace support at all at their disposal. Equally so, the number of workplace support sources offered is not related to self-perceived performance. Learners with a greater number of workplace support sources available to them tend to be more satisfied in their job, however.

There are a number of possible reasons for these results. Nelson and Quick (1991) mentioned that the presence of support has little relation to newcomer behaviour, thus performance, which corresponds to the results of this study. In relation to this study, on average learners had been in the organisation for twelve months however the highest number of learners had only been enrolled in the programme for two months. This implies that a large proportion of the sample are fairly new to their organisations and therefore might be a reason for number of support sources not relating to performance. Nelson and Quick further argue that high performers find social support less valuable and helpful than low performers. In this study the majority of learners perceived their performance as high and might therefore not have had a

need for support. It needs to be pointed out, though, that performance was measured by asking learners to assess their own performance. Individuals' performance may thus have been inflated due to self-serving bias. Self-serving bias refers to the distortion of cognitive or perceptual processes in order for an individual to exaggerate their self-esteem (Sherrill, 2008). It is conceivable that a relationship with the number of support sources and performance and workplace adjustment might have been found if a more objective performance measure had been employed, which might have led to more variability in scores. If this point was however an issue there should not have been a relationship between the number of support sources and job satisfaction as well as between the different qualities of support sources and performance.

Additionally, the results did not reflect what was expected as the support staff themselves may not have been clear on their roles and responsibilities. This might mean that, for example, supervisors and mentors are providing the same type of support to learners and thus additional support staff does not actually increase the level of support provided. This is likely to be the case as Smith et al. (2005) mentioned that there is a need within South African learnership programmes to distinguish clearly the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and mentors. Kidd and Smewing (2001) also pointed out that supervisors are increasingly taking on new responsibilities and are beginning to act like mentors. Therefore, in many cases learnership supervisors may be completing a role that encompasses the responsibilities of a supervisor as well as of a mentor thus making additional support from mentors redundant. Consequently, having one or three people offering similar help is not adding additional benefit to learners.

It was also found that even when no support personnel were available there were no differences in workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. A possible explanation for this may be that learners have access to other forms of support, for example organisational wellness programmes. Organisational wellness programmes are associated with higher job satisfaction (Parks & Steelman, 2008) and lower stress levels, which subsequently lead to higher performance (Falkenberg, 1987). Staff involved in these programmes might not necessarily have the title of supervisor or mentor and therefore learners might not have considered them when answering the questionnaire. Thus, learners may have higher adjustment, satisfaction and performance levels as a result of support offered in these types of programmes rather than from access to support personnel specific to the learnership.

It is important to note that learners appeared confused by the support available to them. Some learners indicated that they had a mentor but also indicated being unsure about the support available to them, for example. Some learners indicated that they had both a mentor

and a supervisor and then also selected having no support. Despite the removal of these participants from the data, it remains unclear as to whether or not the remaining participants were also confused about the support available to them and the purpose of the support. The data may have looked clearer if learners understood the availability of support personnel and their responsibilities. Hence, this may explain why the number of support personnel available did not affect workplace adjustment or self-perceived performance. Future studies may benefit from the use of qualitative research to understand the type of support and the type of support personnel that is actually available to learners in learnership programmes. For example, using interviews to collect data might have elicited clearer data.

As expected, the higher a learner's level of job satisfaction the more sources of support they have access to. Having multiple sources to draw assistance from should instil perceived organisational support among employees. Organisational support theory states that the actions undertaken by organisational members are often perceived as indications of organisational intent (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus providing multiple sources of support may be viewed as intentions to assist learners, which might, in turn, explain the higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, it may be argued that organisations which make a number of support sources available might value employee wellbeing more than organisations that make fewer sources available. The link between job satisfaction and number of support sources might thus actually be due to other factors, such as employee wellbeing. For example, mediators may exist which explain the relationship between number of support sources and job satisfaction. This argument is less likely to hold, though, as there are no strong relationships between the number of support sources and the perceived quality of support and in considering an organisation with a strong focus on employee wellbeing it would be assumed that there would be a strong focus on providing quality support, too.

Hypothesis 2: Higher quality of support predicts a higher degree of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance.

As expected the results for hypothesis 2 indicated a positive relationship between perceived quality of support from co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors and workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. However, not all types of support predicted the outcome variables equally well: The quality of co-worker and supervisor support were the strongest predictors of both workplace adjustment and job satisfaction. Family support was the only emerging predictor for self-perceived performance. Mentor support was

the only indicator of support, which did not predict workplace adjustment, job satisfaction or self-perceived performance.

Some of these results are in line with prior research. Babin and Boles (1996) found that perceptions of strong supervisor support and co-worker involvement increase job satisfaction as they reduce stress levels. Nelson and Quick (1991) considered the effect of availability and help from 10 social support sources (including co-workers, supervisors and mentors) on factors such as job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Ducharme and Martin (2000) considered the effect of co-worker support on job satisfaction. Both these studies as with the present study found positive relationships between interactions with peers and job satisfaction.

Mentor support was the only source of support that did not predict workplace adjustment, job satisfaction or self-perceived performance which might be explained by the dynamic role that supervisors now have in the workplace. If supervisors are conducting the same role as mentors than having mentors in addition to supervisors might be ineffective. Essentially, mentors would not be providing any additional support to the support provided by supervisors therefore making their presence seemingly ineffective as demonstrated by this study. This result might also be explained by the issues of role clarity which Smith et al. (2005) mentioned. If mentors are unsure of the type of support they are meant to be offering than it is plausible that the support from mentors is ineffective to learners. It may also be conceivable to consider that mentor support is not predicting workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and self-perceived performance because learners lack awareness regarding the availability of mentors. Some learners provided answers suggesting that they were confused about the support available thus, mentors with the ability to affect organisational behaviours may be present but learners are not taking advantage of them, as they are uninformed about mentors' presence. Future research may benefit from placing more focus on ensuring that learners are able to distinguish between their support personnel prior to the collection of data.

The perceived quality of family support emerged as the only predictor of performance in this study. Baruch-Feldman et al. (2002) reported similar results highlighting that though family support was particularly helpful with buffering job stressors thus reducing burnout, it also has a relationship with productivity. They mentioned how an individual's family may have vested interest in supporting the individual's maintenance of employment. This may be the case in South Africa learnerships particularly, as individuals entering learnerships are not typically from privileged backgrounds and thus may be the only family member with the ability to support other family members. This may be conceivable considering that the majority of the sample used in this study indicated grade 12 as their highest level of education. These

dependents therefore have a stake in encouraging the continued employment of that family member and the learner is therefore encouraged to perform at a higher standard in order to continue to help these members.

Additionally, it could be argued that the use of self-perceived performance measures influenced this result. Individuals who rated themselves as high performers may not necessarily be high performers but are instead individuals with high levels of confidence or self-esteem. Having a high level of confidence and self-esteem is likely associated with those who perceive their family support as high because of family member's encouragement and support, thus family members promoting learners' positive self-image. In summary, if self-perceived performance is seen as an indicator of higher confidence and self-esteem, therefore personal characteristics rather than actual on-the-job behaviour, it might explain why support in the personal sphere (family) rather than workplace support (co-workers, supervisors and mentors) is related to performance.

Hypothesis 3: Workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between the quality of support available and job satisfaction and between the quality of support available and job performance.

This hypothesis addressed the dissertation's main research question and as expected workplace adjustment does mediate the relationship between the perceived quality of support provided by the different sources (co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor) and job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. In other words, high quality social support (from co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors) links to higher job satisfaction and performance due to its relationship with higher workplace adjustment. The mediating relationship was particularly strong between the perceived quality of the three workplace support sources (co-workers, supervisors and mentors) and self-perceived performance and between family support and job satisfaction. The inclusion of workplace adjustment as a mediator was of little use in the relationship between supervisor and mentor support and job satisfaction and between family support and self-perceived performance.

Family support emerged as being linked to job satisfaction largely via its relationship with workplace adjustment. In this study workplace adjustment was conceptualised as the combination of self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance. Adams, King and King (1996) highlighted that family support might not be able to help with work related issues but may

increase learner's adjustment by increasing his or her self-efficacy. This is similar to Bauer et al.'s (2007) conclusion that a positive relationship existed between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Family support might thus be particularly helpful with encouraging learner confidence and therefore might boost learner satisfaction as indicated by the results. Additionally, according to LaRocca et al. (1980) family support does not relate to work-specific outcomes such as job satisfaction but does predict general well-being, for example having lower anxiety levels. This study did not examine elements such as stress and anxiety however these psychological stressors may decrease as a result of positive perceptions of family support thus resulting in higher adjustment and job satisfaction. Future research should therefore consider incorporating psychological stressors in order to gain more insight into this relationship.

Assuming that information seeking is undertaken using available social support sources then it is conceivable that the current study's results are in line with Bauer at al. (2007) who found that workplace adjustment mediates the relationship between newcomer information seeking and organisational socialisation tactics; and various outcome variables including job satisfaction and performance. Co-worker, supervisor and mentor support had relationships with performance via their link with workplace adjustment. These relationships might be explained through consideration of the separate sub-components of adjustment. For example, gathering information about the workplace and job responsibilities is likely to be conducted using workplace sources (co-workers, supervisors and mentors). If learners thus perceive their support as helpful their adjustment, in terms of role clarity and social acceptance, is likely to be higher thus relating to higher performance. Therefore, social support might only contribute to higher performance if the support given is aimed at clarifying learner roles and socialising learners. Bauer et al. (2007) stated that role clarity and social acceptance is positively related to information seeking but has no relationship with self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between quality of support and workplace adjustment is stronger for learners with same-gender/ racial workplace support than for learners with cross-gender/ racial workplace support.

The hypothesis was not supported as the results revealed that learners with the same race and gender as their supervisors do not have a stronger relationship between the quality of supervisor support and workplace adjustment. It might be conceivable that the overall level of perceived quality of support (supervisors and mentors) and workplace adjustment might be

lower in cross-gender support relationships and cross-race support relationships. The results from the moderation analysis however refute this notion as there was no difference in the level of adjustment across support relationships.

The findings of the current study contradict the research presented by Pulakos and Wexley (1983), and Foley, Linnehan, Greenhaus and Weer (2006). Foley et al. stated that supervisors provided more support to protégés who were similar to them in relation to gender and race than those who were dissimilar. Likewise, Pulakos and Wexley found that higher performance ratings, from subordinates, were given to managers if the subordinates perceived similarities between themselves and their manager. Turban and Jones (1988) also found that subordinates had higher role clarity, trust and confidence when they perceived their supervisor as similar to them. The relationship between the perceived quality of mentor support and workplace adjustment was the same regardless of whether or not the mentor belonged to the same racial and gender group as the learner. This differs from Ensher and Murphy's (1997) study in which they found that satisfaction and contact with mentors were higher among protégés that perceived their mentors as more similar to themselves. They highlighted that employees in same-race mentoring relationships reported more support in aspects such as career enhancement, the provision of challenging assignments and protection than employees in cross-race relationships.

Furthermore, the results contradict the research conducted by Thomas (1990) who concluded that white protégés are likely to form almost no developmental relationships with an individual of another racial group and that higher psychosocial support is associated with same-race relationships than cross-race relationships. Similarly, in relation to mentors, results contradict Scandura and Williams' (2001) conclusion that same-gender mentoring relationship may be more beneficial to protégés than cross-gender relationships. Social identity can assist to explain the results in this study.

Social identity theory is the psychological analysis relating to individuals' perception of themselves in relation to group membership, group processes and intergroup relations (Hogg, 2006). According to Hogg (2006) social identity theory can be used to address issues of discrimination and prejudice as it encourages unity among groups and can assist with attributing positive notions to group members (Wetherell, 1982). Individuals and staff working in learnership programmes may be somewhat separated from other business units and may not interact with as many departments within the organisation. For example, when learners are completing the classroom learning portion of the programme they might not be located in the same office as most other staff as they are often sent to learning centres. Additionally, mentors

do not often form part of the organisations hierarchy (Smith et al., 2005) and therefore may only interact with learners rather than with other business units. This separation may have helped with developing a sense of group membership for those involved in learnership programmes only and therefore, the differences that exist within the group are not seen as threatening or problematic.

Interestingly, the results matched the findings presented by Stanz and Mosoeunyane (2007) who concluded that race and gender do not cause any differences in learners' perceptions of their mentoring relationships. The similarities in results may be attributed to both studies having been conducted in a South African context. Stanz and Mosoeunyane conducted their research in a South African context versus Pulakos and Wexley (1983) and Thomas (1990), for example, who conducted their studies in America. Political history and resounding cultural differences between the two countries could possibly explain the differences. South Africa, for example, has very prominent employment equity legislation as a result of apartheid thus promoting fairness and equality in the workplace might be more pronounced in South Africa than in America.

Practical Implications

Workplace adjustment emerged as a mediator between sources of support (co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors) and job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. The mediation was particularly strong in the relationship between the quality of co-worker, supervisor and mentor support and self-perceived performance and in the relationship between quality of family support and job satisfaction. Employers ensuring quality support, thus availability and helpfulness to ensure adjustment, among support sources in the work sphere may benefit from higher performing workers. Additionally, employers may benefit from more satisfied individuals if they encourage a healthy work-family balance. The effects of quality family support might be more prominent and thus helpful in the workplace if workers and their family members are engaged in a healthy work-family balance. Essentially, workplace adjustment as a mediator between support personnel and job satisfaction and performance can help employers understand the link between providing support and achieving desired outcomes. The construct of adjustment being comprised of self-efficacy, role clarity and social acceptance can help employers highlight to workplace support personnel which areas of the job they should be helping individuals with in order to achieve higher satisfaction and performance levels. Thus employers can achieve higher job satisfaction and performance from

learners if they ensure that the available support personnel are encouraging self-efficacy, clarifying learner roles and correctly socialising learners into the company and with fellow staff.

Relating to the number of support sources available to learners, Smith et al. (2005) had reported that most learners did not have access to both a supervisor and a mentor. The results of this study showed similar results as many learners still do not have access to both a supervisor and a mentor. Furthermore, this study found that higher levels of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance relates to higher quality support, as perceived by learners. Thus, employers and organisations may benefit from ensuring the quality of support provided through employee evaluations or training courses for example. Learners are not benefiting from more support but rather from quality support. It may be beneficial for firms to consider having a smaller number of support personnel who are reliable, trustworthy and helpful rather than many individuals who are not necessarily performing effectively. Additionally, it may be worthwhile to ensure that the support personnel available have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which are understood by both the support personnel and the learners. Information seminars or orientation programmes may also help with creating awareness about the availability of support for learners and what learners should gain from the various sources. This study also highlighted the importance of perceived co-worker support and the positive relationship that positive perceptions of co-worker support has with workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance. Encouraging communication and the development of relationships among co-workers through team-building exercises for example, may help learners with their transition within the learnership programme.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This section will discuss the limitations connected to this study and how the study may have been affected by these limitations. Additionally, this section will suggest possible directions for future research.

It was assumed that participants partaking in learnerships have the ability to read and understand English. Considering that some of the learners indicated confusion regarding the support available to them, this may not have been the case for all participants. Learners who indicated that the support staff, which they had access to, were ‘mentor, supervisor and none’ may have been struggling with understanding the question and thus the confusing nature of their response. It cannot be deduced from the data in how far this might have influenced

responses in the remainder of the questionnaire. Future studies might benefit from assessing the languages spoken by learners prior to collecting data. This will allow researchers to adapt the questionnaire based on the languages of the respondents. Additionally, the data collection process could have involved interviews rather than questionnaires. The use of interviews would have allowed the researcher to explain to learners what sources of support to which the questionnaire referred. Furthermore, interviews would have stifled the need to use self-reporting measures and the problems associated with these measures as performance data could have been collected directly from supervisors rather than from learners during the interview process.

Data was collected using self-reported measures. This form of data collection can result in response bias. Self-serving bias refers to the notion that individuals overlook their failures and shortfalls in order to enhance their self-esteem (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999), which might have particularly influenced responses on the performance scale. Sherill (2008) found that indeed, when rating their own performance individuals are likely to inflate their responses. The very high average performance score suggests that this might have been the case in this study too. On the other hand, the high performance score might also be a reflection of the fact that individuals may have been selected for the programme based on having had high performance levels in previous companies, at school or in their current workplace prior to the programme. This study did not assess the selection procedure for individuals entering learnership programmes, thus it is unknown whether the learners had been working in the company prior to starting the learnership or if external recruitment decided who partook in the programme. It might be beneficial for future research to use objective performance measures rather than self-reporting measures. This was not done in the current study as the representatives of the two organisations in which data was collected had indicated that support personnel would likely not complete a questionnaire and as a result making the collection of self-report data the only possibility to get an indication of learners' performance. The advantage of the self-reporting measure was however that it did ensure anonymity. When weighing up the disadvantages of using self-reported performance and thus same source data and having an insufficient sample size it was considered more important to collect a larger sample, which would be more representative of the learner population. Future research may consider finding a way to avoid using self-reporting scales in order to insure more accurate performance reflections. For example, future researchers may benefit from methods synonymous of 360 degree feedback methods, thus collecting data from multiple sources including supervisors, co-workers and the

individual. This method may be more time consuming however, it should also provide a more accurate and detailed account of learner performance.

The size of the sample was a further limitation to this study. The sample used was considered acceptable however a larger sample size nonetheless might have provided a more detailed and accurate reflection of learners situations in South African learnerships. Only two organisations responded to the request to collect data and the response rate for these organisations was low. Access to a large number of organisations and exposure to a more dynamic range of learnerships might have shed light on learner's access to other support personnel for example the prominence of coaches or tutors in learnerships. A larger sample may also have helped with presenting a more accurate depiction of support offered in learnerships and may have provided a sample more representation of learnerships in South Africa.

CONCLUSION

The millennium development goals are an ambitious attempt aimed at resolving global issues, including poverty. In South Africa, government implemented certain strategies in an attempt to alleviate the disconcerting poverty levels. One of these strategies are learnership programmes designed to counter the skills gap in the South African economy and to provide educational and developmental opportunities to individuals in both the formal and informal market sectors (Visser & Kruss, 2009). Very few studies have been conducted on the effectiveness, scope and magnitude of South African learnership programmes. This study thus took place in an important, yet under-researched field. Its central focus was to explore the role of workplace adjustment as a mediator in the relationship between perceived sources of support (co-workers, family, supervisors and mentors) and job satisfaction and performance. The analysis showed that good quality co-worker, family, supervisor and mentor support are important for job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. Quality of family support was directly related to self-perceived performance whereas co-worker, supervisor and mentor support only related to performance via their link with workplace adjustment. Furthermore, workplace support (co-workers, supervisors and mentors) related directly to job satisfaction whereas family support had a relationship with job satisfaction via its link with workplace adjustment.

Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of making support personnel available within learnership programmes. The results in this study showed that the number of

support personnel is less important than the quality of support provided, and thus when implementing learnerships having access to positively perceived support personnel is an important source of workplace adjustment, job satisfaction and performance among learners. Additionally, learners were equally well adjusted to the workplace regardless of whether or not their supervisor and mentor belonged to the same racial or gender group as themselves. Some learners were unsure what support was available to them, indicating that organisations should put more effort into clarifying the roles of support personnel and ensuring learner awareness. Future research should consider investigating what other types of support personnel learners have available and how these influence learners' success in learnership programmes.

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Appendix A

Appendix A Section 1.

Table A1

Number of Participants Across All Ages

Age	N	%
18	5	1.70%
19	5	1.70%
20	5	1.70%
21	20	6.80%
22	20	6.80%
23	37	12.50%
24	42	14.20%
25	33	11.10%
26	26	8.80%
27	24	8.10%
28	14	4.70%
29	12	4.10%
30	9	3.00%
31	7	2.40%
32	3	1.00%
33	1	.30%
34	2	.70%
35	3	1.00%
36	2	.70%
37	3	1.00%
39	1	.30%
43	1	.30%
59	1	.30%

Note. N = number of participants, (*Mean* = 25.39, *standard deviation* = 4.35, *minimum* 18, *maximum* 59)

Appendix A Section 2.

Table A2

Number of Participants for All Start Times (Months, n = 278)

Number of months ago that the learnership started	Frequency	Percent %	Cumulative Percent %
1	2	.70	.70
2	50	17.40	18.70
3	28	9.80	28.80
4	20	7.00	36.00
5	15	5.20	41.40
6	5	1.70	43.20
11	6	2.10	45.30
12	34	11.80	57.60
13	12	4.20	61.90
14	5	1.70	63.70
15	2	.70	64.40
16	4	1.40	65.80
17	2	.70	66.50
18	9	3.10	69.80
19	4	1.40	71.20
21	11	3.80	75.20
22	2	.70	75.90
23	6	2.10	78.10
24	21	7.30	85.60
25	10	3.50	89.20
26	1	.30	89.60
27	2	.70	90.30
28	3	1.00	91.40
29	10	3.50	95.00
30	2	.70	95.70
31	2	.70	96.40
32	1	.30	96.80
34	1	.30	97.10
35	3	1.00	98.20
36	5	1.70	100.00

Note. Mean = 12.70, Median = 12.00, Mode = 2

Appendix B

Appendix B Section 1. Questionnaire questions relating to support available and demographic information.

1.1 Please tick which of these support mechanisms are available to you as a learner in your organisation.

☐ Mentor — *What it is:* Provides personal-level support, advice and counsel for learners

☐ Supervisor: — *What it is:* Responsible for the progress and work of employees, ensures that employees conform to company policy.

☐ None of the above
☐ I am not sure
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

1. 2 Please tick whether your supervisor, mentor and any other support personnel you have available in your learnership has the same or different gender and the same or different ethnicity than you.

	Gender		Ethnicity/ race		**I cannot answer this question as I do not have a:** *(please tick appropriate)*
	Same	Different	Same	Different	
Supervisor					Supervisor
Mentor					Mentor
Other					Other

1.3 What is your ethnicity?
☐ Asian
☐ Black
☐ Coloured
☐ Indian
☐ White
☐ Other
☐ Prefer not to answer

1.4 What is your gender?
☐ Male
☐ Female

1.5 What is your age? _____

1.6 What is your highest level of education?
☐ Lower than grade 10
☐ Grade 10
☐ Grade 11
☐ Grade 12 (Matric)
☐ Tertiary education
☐ Postgraduate degree
☐ Other, please specify: _____

1.7 How many months ago did you start your learnership?
_____

1.8 Have you had work experience before starting your learnership?
☐ Yes
☐ No

1.9 If yes, how many months had you been working before starting your learnership?
(*write 0 if you had no prior experience*)

Number of months: _____

Appendix B Section 2**.** All remaining questions provided in the questionnaire.

Note. Reverse coded items are marked with an R

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Somewhat disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Somewhat agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
2.1.	My job is well within the scope of my abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.2.	**I did not have any problems in adjusting to work in this organization**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.3.	I feel I am overqualified for the job I am doing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.4.	**I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my job, all I need now is practical experience**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.5.	I feel confident that my skills and abilities equal or exceed those of my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.6.	**My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I am able to perform successfully in this organization**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.7.	I can handle a more challenging job than the one I am doing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.8.	**Professionally speaking, my new job exactly satisfies my expectations of myself (R)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.9.	I know what I need to do in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.10.	**I know what my job responsibilities are**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.11.	It is clear to me what I am obliged to do in my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.12.	**I know what my role is in my job**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.13.	I think that other people in my organisation are unreliable **(R)**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.14.	**I believe that people in my organisation are kind**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.15.	I believe that people in my organisation are self-centred**(R)**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
2.16.	**I feel that people in my organisation are not trustworthy (R)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.17.	I think that people in my organisation live only for themselves (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.18.	**I believe that people in my organisation are more and more dishonest these days (R)**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
2.19.	I think that people in my organisation care about other people's problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.1.	I receive recognition for a job well done	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.2.	**I feel close to the people at work**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
3.3.	I feel good about working at this company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.4.	**I feel secure about my job**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
3.5.	I believe management is concerned about me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.6.	**On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
3.7.	My wages are good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.8.	**All my talents and skills are used at work**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
3.9.	I get along with my supervisors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.1.	**I always complete the duties specified in my job description**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
4.2.	**I fulfil all responsibilities required by my job**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
4.3.	I often fail to perform essential duties (R)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.4.	**I never neglect aspects of the job that I am obligated to perform**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
4.5.	I meet all the formal performance requirements of the job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Completely
6.1	To what extent is it easy to talk to your co-workers?	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	**To what extent are your co-workers willing to listen to your problems?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.3	To what extent do your co-workers go out of their way to make life easier for you?	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	**To what extent can your co-workers be relied on when things get tough?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.5	To what extent is it easy to talk to your family?	1	2	3	4	5
6.6	**To what extent is your family willing to listen to your problems?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.7	To what extent does your family go out of its way to make life easier for you?	1	2	3	4	5
6.8	**To what extent can your family be relied on when things get tough?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

If you have a supervisor answer this section

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Completely
7.1	To what extent is it easy to talk to your supervisor?	1	2	3	4	5
7.2	**To what extent is your supervisor willing to listen to your problems?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7.3	To what extent does your supervisor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	1	2	3	4	5
7.4	**To what extent can your supervisor be relied on when things get tough?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

If you have a mentor answer this section

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Completely
8.1	To what extent is it easy to talk to your mentor?	1	2	3	4	5
8.2	**To what extent is your mentor willing to listen to your problems?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8.3	To what extent does your mentor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	1	2	3	4	5
8.4	**To what extent can your mentor be relied on when things get tough?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

If you selected OTHER as a support mechanism answer this section

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by ticking the number that best reflects your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.		Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Completely
9.1	To what extent is it easy to talk to this person?	1	2	3	4	5
9.2	**To what extent is this person willing to listen to your problems?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9.3	To what extent does this person go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	1	2	3	4	5
9.4	**To what extent can this person be relied on when things get tough?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Thank you!

Appendix C

Ethics Approval from the Commerce Ethics in Research Committee

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Faculty of Commerce
Ethics in Research Committee
Courier: Room 2.21 Leslie Commerce Building Upper Campus University of Cape Town
Post: University of Cape Town * Private Bag * Rondebosch 7701
Email: Irwin.brown@uct.ac.za
Telephone: +27 21 650-2311
Fax No.: +27 21 689-7570

July 1, 2014

Megan Blandin De Chalain
Management Studies

Project title:

Learnerships in South Africa: An investigation of workplace adjustment as a mediator between social support, and learner performance and satisfaction

Dear Researcher,

This letter serves to confirm that this project as described in your submitted protocol has been approved.

Please note that if you make any substantial change in your research procedure that could affect the experiences of the participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Regards,

Harold Kincaid

Professor Harold Kincaid
Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee

Appendix D

Letter of Approval to Collect Data from the Financial Institution

Learning and Development

Ethics in Reseach Committee
University of Cape Town

Via email

Thursday, June 19, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Ethics in Research Committee

I [redacted], Head of Learnerships, hereby, grant Megan Blandin de Chalain, student at the University of Cape Town, permission to survey learners currently completing a learnership through [redacted].
Please contact me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Appendix E

Letter of Approval to Collect Data from the Chemical and Energy Company

9 June 2014

Dear Ethics in Research Committee

I, [redacted] General Manager, Global Learning and Global Venture Support, hereby, grant Megan Blandin de Chalain, student at the University of Cape Town, permission to survey learners currently completing a learnership through [redacted]

Your sincerely

Appendix F

Cover Letter Attached to Each Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Organisational Psychology Masters Programme

2014 Research Project

Dear Learner

As part of my Masters programme in Organisational Psychology I am required to conduct a research project. For this I will be investigating learnership programmes. Particularly, my study will focus on factors that make learners feel satisfied with their learnership programme and contribute to their performance on the programme.

The attached questionnaire consists of 68 questions. Demographic details are also requested. It will not be possible to identify who you are from this data. Your identity will therefore remain anonymous and all data collected will be kept confidential.

It should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

I do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By completing and submitting this questionnaire, you are acknowledging that your participation in this study has been of your own free will.

The Commerce Ethics Committee at the University of Cape Town and your organisation have approved this study and the questionnaire.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, please contact me on 072 375 9428 or alternatively via email at BLNMEG004@myuct.ac.za. If you wish to contact my supervisor, Ines Meyer, you can reach her via Ines.Meyer@uct.ac.za.

I thank you for your assistance with my research.

Kind regards

Megan Blandin de Chalain

Appendix G

Item-Total Statistic for Adjustment Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
My job is well within the scope of my abilities	.23	.76
I did not have any problems in adjusting to work in this organisation	.36	.76
I feel I am overqualified for the job I am doing	.11	.77
I have all the technical knowledge I need to deal with my job, all I need now is practical experience	.36	.76
I feel confident that my skills and abilities equal or exceed those of my colleagues	.36	.76
My past experiences and accomplishments increase my confidence that I am able to perform successfully in this organization	.42	.75
I can handle a more challenging job than the one I am doing	.31	.76
Professionally speaking, my new job exactly satisfies my expectations of myself	-.27	.81
I know what I need to do in my job	.46	.75
I know what my job responsibilities are	.45	.75
It is clear to me what I am obliged to do in my job	.51	.75
I know what my role is in my job	.40	.76
I think that other people in my organisation are unreliable	.35	.76
I believe that people in my organisation are kind	.52	.74
I believe that people in my organisation are self-centred	.22	.77
I feel that people in my organisation are not trustworthy	.55	.74
I think that people in my organisation live only for themselves	.51	.74
I believe that people in my organisation are more and more dishonest these days	.47	.75
I think that people in my organisation care about other people's problems	.52	.74

Appendix H

Total Variance Explained for the Adjustment Scale

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.77	31.79	31.79	4.32	28.81	28.81	3.67
2	2.98	19.84	51.63	2.53	16.87	45.68	3.32
3	1.15	7.65	59.28	.63	4.19	49.87	2.89
4	.88	5.84	65.13				
5	.81	5.38	70.50				
6	.69	4.60	75.10				
7	.64	4.25	79.35				
8	.59	3.92	83.27				
9	.56	3.71	86.98				
10	.48	3.19	90.17				
11	.35	2.33	92.49				
12	.33	2.16	94.66				
13	.31	2.04	96.70				
14	.28	1.89	98.59				
15	.21	1.41	100.00				

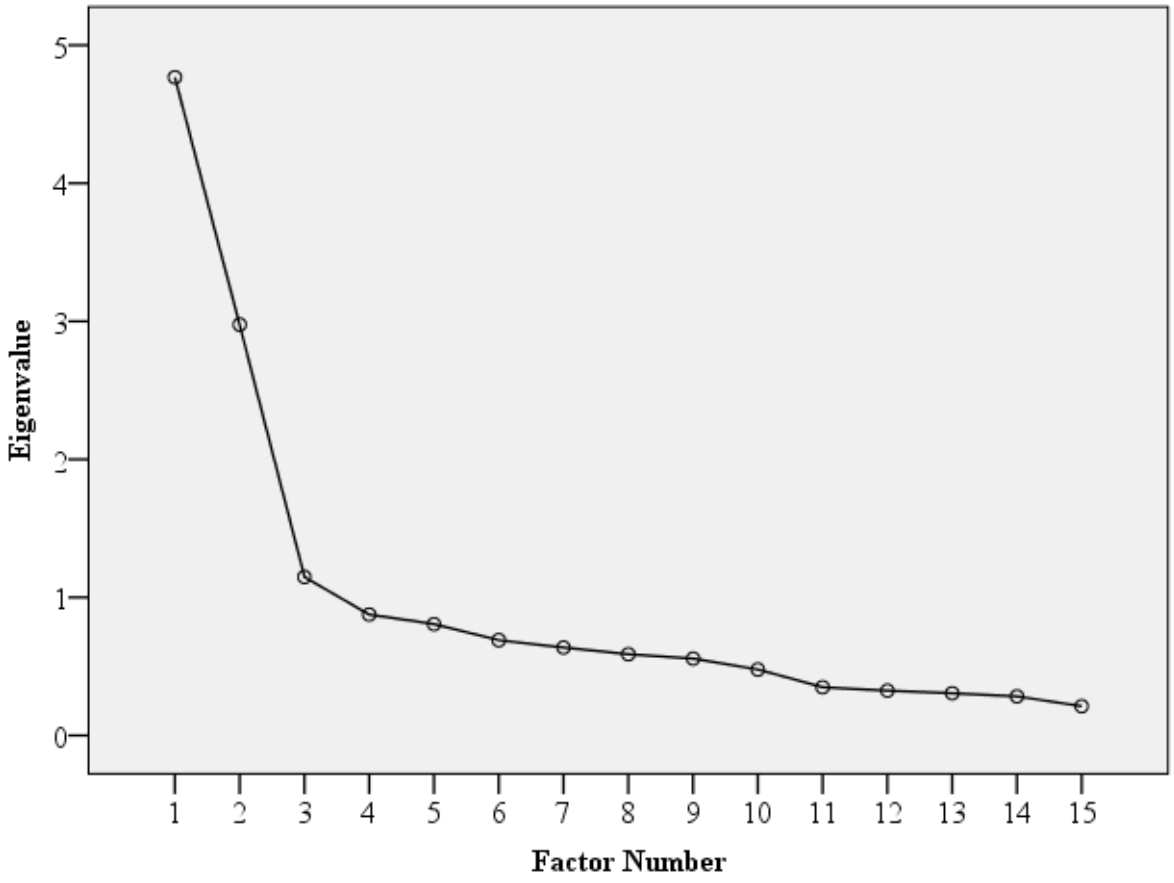

Figure H1. Scree plot for the workplace adjustment scale.

Appendix I

Total Variance Explained for the Workplace Adjustment Scale (Extracted for 1 Factor)

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	4.77	31.79	31.79	4.10	27.34	27.34
2	2.98	19.84	51.63			
3	1.15	7.65	59.28			
4	.88	5.84	65.13			
5	.81	5.38	70.50			
6	.69	4.60	75.10			
7	.64	4.25	79.35			
8	.59	3.92	83.27			
9	.56	3.71	86.98			
10	.48	3.19	90.17			
11	.35	2.33	92.49			
12	.33	2.16	94.66			
13	.31	2.04	96.70			
14	.28	1.89	98.59			
15	.21	1.41	100.00			

Appendix J

Item-Total Statistic for the Job Satisfaction Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
I receive recognition for a job well done	.57	.80
I feel close to the people at work	.56	.80
I feel good about working at this company	.61	.80
I feel secure about my job	.53	.80
I believe management is concerned about me	.52	.80
On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health	.47	.81
My wages are good	.40	.82
All my talents and skills are used at work	.48	.81
I get along with my supervisors	.44	.81
I feel good about my job	.57	.80

Appendix K

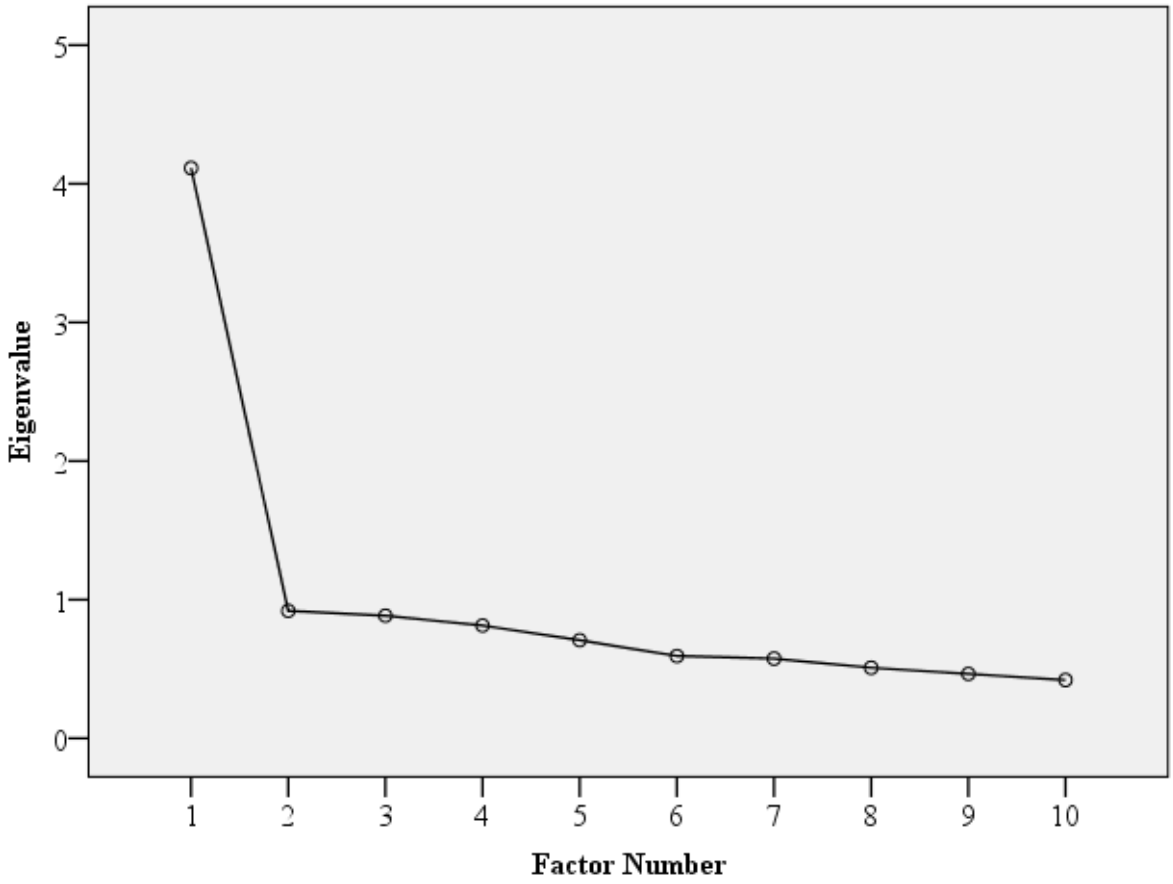

Figure K1. Scree plot for the job satisfaction scale.

Total Variance Explained for the Job Satisfaction Scale

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	4.11	41.13	41.13	3.48	34.78	34.78
2	.92	9.19	50.32			
3	.88	8.84	59.17			
4	.81	8.13	67.30			
5	.71	7.07	74.38			
6	.59	5.94	80.31			
7	.58	5.75	86.06			
8	.51	5.09	91.15			
9	.47	4.65	95.80			
10	.42	4.20	100.00			

Appendix L

Item-Total Statistic for the Self-Perceived Performance Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
I always complete the duties specified in my job description	.61	.69
I fulfil all responsibilities required by my job	.65	.69
I often fail to perform essential duties (R)	.41	.78
I never neglect aspects of the job that I am obligated to perform	.48	.74
I meet all the formal performance requirements of the job	.60	.70

Appendix M

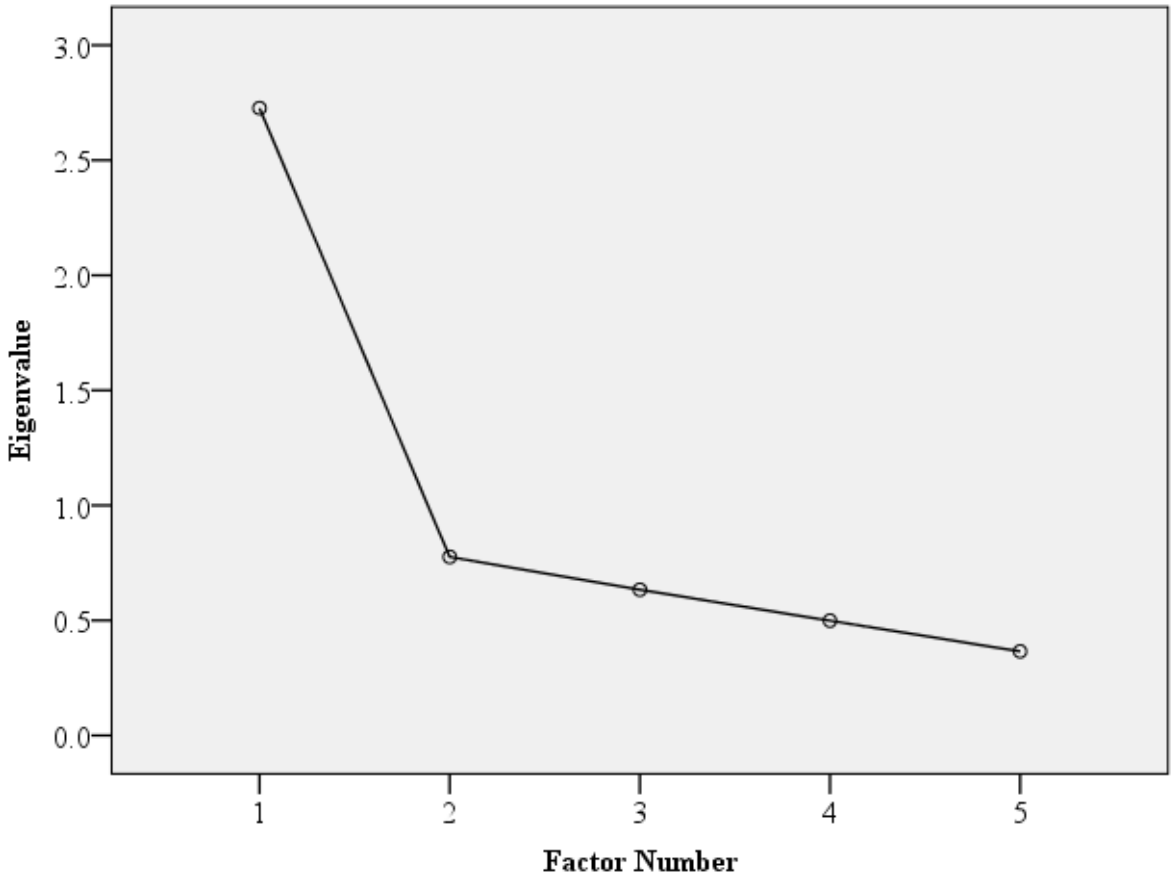

Figure M1. Scree plot for the self-perceived job performance scale.

Total Variance Explained for the Self-Perceived Job Performance Scale

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.73	54.53	54.53	2.21	44.22	44.22
2	.78	15.52	70.05			
3	.63	12.67	82.72			
4	.50	9.97	92.70			
5	.37	7.31	100.00			

Appendix N

Item-Total Statistic for the Co-Worker Support and Family Support Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
To what extent is it easy to talk to your co-workers?	.58	.82
To what extent are your co-workers willing to listen to your problems?	.70	.77
To what extent do your co-workers go out of their way to make life easier for you?	.74	.74
To what extent can your co-workers be relied on when things get tough?	.62	.80
To what extent is it easy to talk to your family?	.75	.90
To what extent is your family willing to listen to your problems?	.84	.87
To what extent do your family go out of their way to make life easier for you?	.81	.88
To what extent can your family be relied on when things get tough?	.80	.89

Appendix O

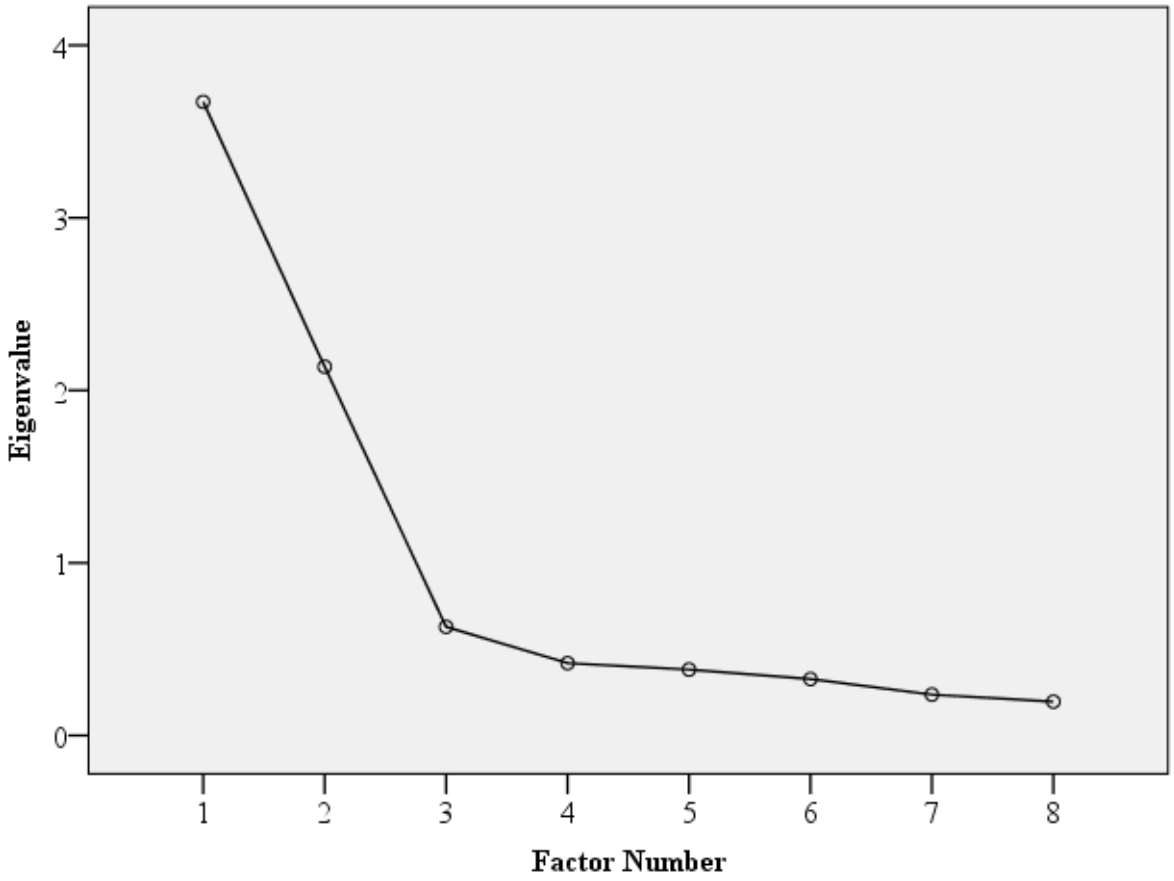

Figure O1. Scree plot for the co-worker support and family support scales.

Total Variance Explained for the Co-Worker Support and Family Support Scale

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	3.67	45.90	45.90	3.35	41.92	42.92	3.07
2	2.14	26.72	72.62	1.76	21.98	21.98	2.45
3	.63	7.87	80.48				
4	.42	5.24	85.72				
5	.38	4.78	90.50				
6	.33	4.09	94.59				
7	.24	2.96	97.55				
8	.20	2.45	100.00				

Appendix P

Item-Total Statistic for the Supervisor Support Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
To what extent is it easy to talk to your supervisor?	.84	.90
To what extent is your supervisor willing to listen to your problems?	.82	.91
To what extent does your supervisor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	.84	.90
To what extent can your supervisor be relied on when things get tough?	.83	.91

Appendix Q

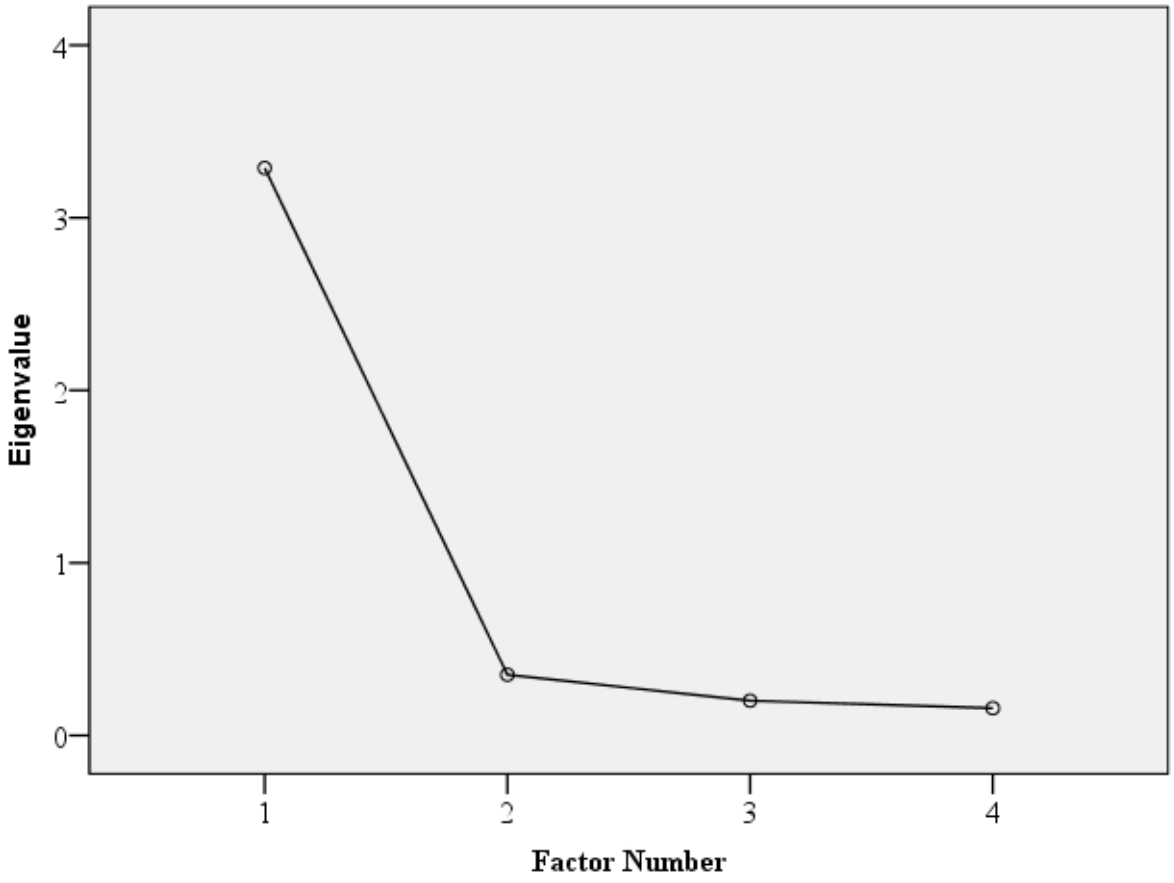

Figure Q1. Scree plot for the supervisor support scale.

Total Variance Explained for the Supervisor Support Scale

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
Factor	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	3.29	82.21	82.21	3.05	76.29	76.29
2	.35	8.80	91.01			
3	.20	5.04	96.05			
4	.16	3.95	100.00			

Appendix R

Item-Total Statistic for the Mentor Support Scale

	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
To what extent is it easy to talk to your mentor?	.85	.92
To what extent is your mentor willing to listen to your problems?	.85	.92
To what extent does your mentor go out of his/her way to make life easier for you?	.85	.92
To what extent can your mentor be relied on when things get tough?	.85	.92

Appendix S

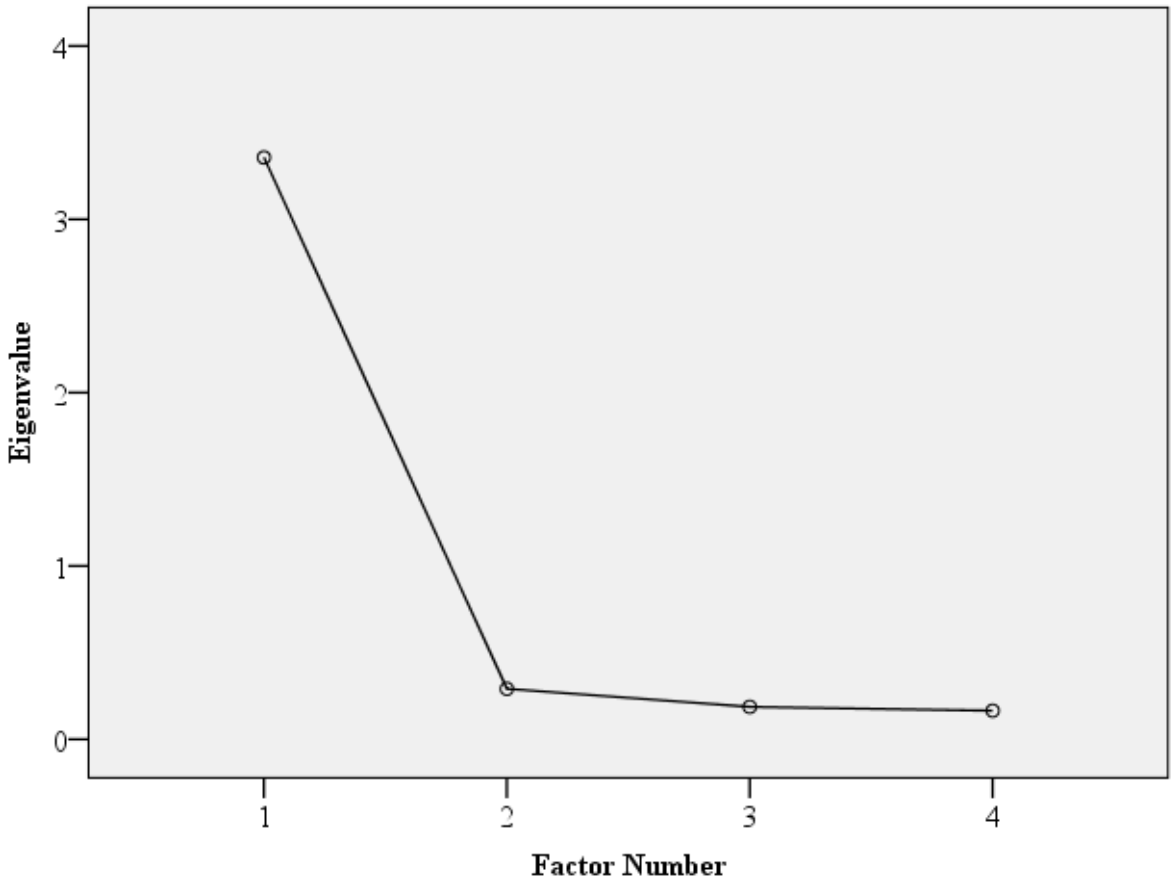

Figure S1. Scree plot for the mentor support scale.

Total Variance Explained for the Mentor Support Scale

Factor	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	3.36	83.92	83.92	3.14	78.55	78.55
2	.29	7.28	91.20			
3	.19	4.68	95.87			
4	.17	4.13	100.00			