An Investigation of Training Needs Assessment Processes in a Libyan Organisational Context: Case Study of the Libyan General Electricity Company

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text.

No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or Overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed…………………………………. Date…………………………………………….

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Abstract

This study focuses on training needs assessment (TNA) in a Libyan context. It is the first of its kind involving a large Libyan public utility company in relation to investigating training processes and TNA. The study adopts interpretivist and subjectivist paradigms; both are linked to qualitative research. A qualitative and inductive approach was used to generate in-depth data and information from people responsible for training and from those who have received training. A qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews was adopted.

One key contribution of the study was the development of a theoretical TNA framework in a Libyan context, which was based on western models (Olivas's, 2007 model and Vaughn's, 2005, model) and also on the findings of the present study. This theoretical framework consists of six stages of implementation, to suit the Arab and Libyan cultural context in which needs assessment is undertaken through several steps due to the bureaucratic nature of management and the many hierarchical layers of the organisation.

Another contribution was that of the impact of social, personal economic and organisational factors on TNA process and nomination of employees for training. Social factors, e.g., favouritism and 'Wasta', are commonplace in the Libyan culture and plays some role in the nomination process, and social relationships (kinship and friendship) seem to affect the managerial performance when identifying employees' training needs. The study indicates the importance of the individuals' economic factors, in terms of trainees' financial gains, especially training overseas. Organisational factors were also found to have an impact on the process of individuals' needs assessment, in terms of the absence of appropriate regulations or protocols relating to the process of identifying training needs, or overlooking any regulations or protocols, if any, for some reasons, including favouritism. This led to including these factors and issues in the proposed theoretical framework.

The study also contributed to our understanding of IHRD and national HRD policies in non-western countries. The study found that two of the factors identified with IHRD; administration and political and economic factors, seem to have an impact of the LGEC's HRD. It also contributed to the conceptual knowledge in TNA in the field of IHRD, as employees' requirements for training and development is compared with research from Arab countries. In the Libyan context, several social factors seemed to have intervened in the process of nominating candidates, such as 'Wasta', favouritism, kinship and friendship, in addition to management and Ministry officials intervention in this process, which were not found in western literature, and drawing from the empirical data a view was formed of what models and processes form the basis of a public utility sector's practices in a Libyan context based on centrally planned economy and relatively young, growing educational base but tribally based culture. The study also contributed to our knowledge by having a more appropriate definition of TNA and in terms of a clearer debate about TN analysis and TN assessment, and that TN assessment is not synonymous with TN assessment; rather, TN analysis is perceived as a step of TN assessment.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother and late father, may Allah endows His peace on them, and in acknowledgement of bringing me up and taking care of me.

This work is also dedicated to my brothers, especially Mohammed, my eldest brother who offered their help, assistance, and encouragement to achieve my task.

I also dedicate this work to my wife, Aisha, and to my children, Naji, Karima, Al-Mabrook, and Mabrooka, who endured with me living abroad and travels in order to achieve my objective and also for providing me with all sorts of comfort and care.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1   Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and provides an overview of a number of issues and topics relating to the present study. In the following section (Section 1.2) an overview of the term 'training', its purpose, and aims and objectives is briefly discussed. Reference to the term 'human capital' is also made in this section. Further details concerning human capital theory are provided in Chapter Two (Section 2.5. Human Capital Theory). In Section 1.3, the term 'training needs assessment' is briefly introduced and a distinction is made between 'training needs assessment' and 'training needs analyses'.

Research questions, and the study aim and objectives, as have been formulated, are presented in Section 1.4 and Section 1.5, respectively. Issues relating to the significance of the present study are discussed in Section 1.6. This is followed by introducing and discussing research assumptions (Section 1.7) and research methodology (Section 1.8).

An overview of the organisation investigated; The Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC), is provided in Section 1.9. Finally, the research structure is outlined in Section 1.10.

Two groups of participants were involved in the present study. The first group of participants includes all managers responsible for training (eight managers). Consequently, the whole population of these managers were interviewed, using semi-structured interviews. The second group of participants were drawn from engineers' population of the company, who were interviewed using focus group interview technique. Engineers were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Ten focus groups were selected from different stations of the company; each consisting of twelve participants. However, not all those selected to participate in the focus group interviews did participate given that some of them were busy at

their workplace when the interviews were held, and some of them withdrew or just did not show up. Between six and nine engineers participated in each focus interview.

1.2   Training

Training is essential for the workforce to attain the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to accomplish jobs more efficiently; given that training is the procedure for assisting the workforce to gain further knowledge of their tasks and also to learn or improve the required skills, attitudes and values linked to the competent performance of their work (Tulsian and Pandy, 2009). Gómez-Mejia et al. (2001) maintain that in obtaining new knowledge and skills, attitudes are modified and bring about better competence and general job performance.

Parry (2000) maintains that employees, methods, machinery, materials and money are the resources which organisations have to achieve their goals. Parry adds that the employees are the primary resource given that all the other resources exist to extend the effectiveness of the human resource. Parry (2000, p. 1) argues that the purpose of training is to make it possible for people to exploit *these resources to the best advantage. Organizations that are seen as world class have done a better job than their competitors in training and developing their employees.*"

In addition, training helps resolve problems in relation to performance which is caused by lack of sufficient knowledge of the job or levels of skills. Despite the fact that training is necessary for everything which can be logically referred to as human resources development, it cannot solve all performance related problems (Buckley and Caple, 2009) as performance based models would suggest. In addition, it is claimed that the central focus of interest of performance models has at all times been knowledge, skills and attitudes of individual employees, and it is usually accepted that the association of human resource development with performance is without any problems (Garavan et al., 1999). The terms knowledge,

skills and attitudes are further explained in some details in Chapter Two.

The aims of training, as summarised by Armstrong (2006, p. 507), are as follows:

1. *learning time is shortened and the costs of training and the losses resulting from too lengthy a learning curve are reduced (the learning curve is the time taken to reach an acceptable level of performance);*
2. *the performance of existing employees is improved;*
3. *commitment to the job and identification with the company are increased; and*
4. *people's capacities are developed so that they can be better prepared for positions of greater responsibilities in the future.*

The objective of training is to develop an employee's functional skills, knowledge and techniques, and it is usually the human resource manager's responsibility to formulate training policies by maintaining the following objectives of training in mind (Giri, 2008, p. 3-12):

- *To develop the skills, knowledge and techniques of an employee to meet the job and organisation requirements such as higher productivity, increased efficiency in operation, a safe and harmonious working environment etc.*
- *To assist employees to function more effectively in their present position by exposing them to the latest concepts, information and techniques and developing the skills they will need in their respective fields.*
- *To develop the potentialities of employees for the next level of job.*
- *To promote individual and collective morale, a sense of responsibility, cooperative attitudes and healthy relationships.*
- *To impart the basic knowledge and skills that the new entrants need for an*

  intelligent performance of a specific job.
- *To build-up a second line of competent officers and prepare them to occupy more responsible positions.*
- *To ensure cost-effective output of required quality.*
- *To change the mindset of senior managers by providing them opportunities for an interchange of experiences.*

Armstrong (2011) maintains that people generate, retain and use knowledge and skill (human capital) and bring about intellectual capital. Armstrong (2011) adds that people's knowledge is developed through the interaction between them (social capital), and produces the institutionalised knowledge acquired by the organisation (organisational capital). Human

capital is argued to comprise the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individuals recruited by an organisation and that human capital management concerns the generation and analysis of the information required to develop and manage these individuals (Armstrong, 2011). Accordingly, human capital in a Libyan context is very important for the Libyan organisations and training is very important for employees and their organisations as well as for their performance and sustainable competitive advantage from a resource-based view of the firm in a Libyan context. Human Capital Theory, its possible relevance to the Libyan context and its criticisms are explained in Chapter Two (Section 2.5).

A similar view to that reported by Schuller (2000) has recently been expressed by Khandakar and Sharma (2005) whose findings revealed that human resource capabilities are positively correlated to organisational performance, and that HR capability was a significant predictor of sustainable competitive advantage. This applies to the Libyan organisation in that developing human resource in this organisation would have positive impacts of employee performance; hence developing their organisation's performance. Nonetheless, in terms of predicting sustainable development; this is not applicable, given that the LGEC is a public sector company and does not have any competitors.

According to Brown (2002) the assessment of training needs is an ongoing and vital process, and through this assessment, an organisation can identify effective training programmes, which achieve the objectives of the organisation. However, Human Resources Departments as well as Executive Directors should be aware that training programmes are not the ultimate solution to all the problems of the organisation, and that they might not be used as a way to reward outstanding performance or an incentive to address poor performance (Brown, 2002). Therefore, the main objective of training programmes is the contribution to achieving the goals of the organisation by raising the skills of its staff (Brown, 2002).

Brown (2002) argues that training relates to building the knowledge and skills of employees

that increasingly help them in the achievement of the organisational mission. To maintain and update professional knowledge is considered to be the aim in some cases, and preparing employees for requirements anticipated is another goal in other situations (Brown, 2002). According to Doughty and Romiszowski (1997), training and development fit well in the overall concept of an integrated performance support system which must exist within any organisation.

1.3   Training Needs Assessment: An Overview

'Training needs assessment' and another term, 'training needs analysis', are two common terms that can be used to refer to the process of identifying training needs (Ghufli, 2009). However, despite the fact that these two terms are often used interchangeably, and many authors consider them as being similar, Kaufmann et al. (1993) regard them as different, arguing that the purposes of needs assessment are three-fold: to identify performance gaps, to prioritise them and to address the most important ones. Holton et al. (2000), on the other hand, refer to needs analysis, as the process adopted to examine the reasons for the gaps. Further discussion on the differentiation between 'training needs assessment' and 'training needs analysis' is presented in Chapter Two (Section 2.2). Although both terms are related and designed to identify training needs within an organisation, they are not used interchangeably in the present study. The present study treats 'training needs assessment' and 'training needs analysis' as separate topics and they are not used interchangeably. The focus of the present study is on 'training needs assessment'.

Assessment of organisational training needs is argued to be the diagnostic stage of a training plan, and that such assessment takes into account issues relating to employee and organisational performance to establish whether training can help (Mathis and Jackson, 2010). This diagnostic stage fits with the first purpose presented by Kaufman et al. (1993, p. 3); that is: *"Identify gaps between current results and desired one."* Assessment taking into account

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issues relating to employee and organisational performance, as indicated by Mathis and Jackson (2010) fits with Kaufman et al.'s (1993, p. 3) second purpose; that is: "*Place the gaps in results (needs) in priority order,*" and to establish whether training can help, possibly fits in Kaufman et al.'s third purpose; namely, "*Select the most important ones to be addressed.*" Tobey (2005) maintains that though training undoubtedly provides skills and learning and development, training needs assessment is the initial process which ensure that training is founded on the organisation's needs. Barbazette (2006, p. 5) refers to a needs assessment as "*the process of collecting information about an expressed or implied organizational need that could be met by conducting training.*" Barbazette indicates that the needs assessment process assists the trainer and the prospective trainee to identify a training need or performance deficiency. Barbazette (2006, p. 5) refers to deficiency as a "*performance that does not meet the current standard.*"

Rossett (1987, p. 3) defines training needs assessment as: "*the systematic study of a problem or innovation, incorporating data and opinions from varied source, in order to make effective decisions or recommendations about what should happen next.*" He added that while that recommendation sometimes involves training; sometimes it is not. Under training needs assessment, Rossett (1987) includes activities such as analysis, front end analysis, needs assessment, needs analysis, discrepancy analysis, etc. This indicates that needs analysis; hence, training needs analysis, is part of training needs assessment rather than equivalent to training needs assessment. Accordingly, it can be argued that in the present study Rossett's (1987) definition is accepted.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research aim and objectives, questions relating to the study topic have been formulated, as follows:

Q1. Has the Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC) an established training framework? if so, what are the methods/procedures used for the determination of employee training needs?

Q2. How are the training decisions made in a different cultural context to that of the decision making processes identified in western models?

Q3. What are the factors that have an impact on the process of training needs assessment?

1.5   Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the present study is to:

> "*identify the training needs assessment (TNA) procedures used in a Libyan context and to introduce a theoretical framework of TNA within the Libyan context based on the relevant literature, particularly western literature, and the outcomes of the present empirical research.*"

The objectives are to:

1. "*Explore training and development perspectives and the range of models of training needs assessment (TNA) used in HRD practices.*"
2. "*Assess, through a single company investigative study of a Libyan public utility company, the engagement of managers and staff in the TNA processes and decision making.*"
3. "*Identify the factors that impact the training needs assessment.*"
4. "*Develop a decision making model of training needs assessment within the Libyan context drawing from western and Arabic literature and the outcomes of the empirical research.*"

1.6   Significance of the Study

In the context of the Libyan needs for training, especially from the perspective of training within the public utility sector, there are at present, to the best knowledge of the researcher, neither adequate information nor employees' training needs; rather, there are very few studies concerning management training needs, for example, Agnaia's (1996) study. The exception is that of Bayoud's (1999) study, which only involved one department of the investigated company, and has been carried out about fifteen years ago. Bayoud (1999) indicated that the information the company uses in determining training needs are not adequate and that the Company has no database which can be used to obtain information about its employees. There seems to be a large gap in the information and research on training and training needs

in almost all industrial sectors, including power companies. As a result of this gap in our understanding and the significance of training within key utility sector organisations, the idea of undertaking a training needs assessment study is important. The study is also significant given that it is carried out in relation to training needs assessment in an Arab utility company which has operated for many years in a political environment that has been characterised by Arabic socialism and a highly centralised system; so a key contribution can be our academic perspective or understanding of how TNA operates in practice and is affected by the national HRD policy and has implications for our academic understanding of international frameworks of HRD. That political environment has now changed after the Gaddafi regime, and there is the tendency, which has been initiated by the old regime and will be in operation under the new regime, to privatise state-owned organisations and to decentralise operations.

The study is also significant in that it is the first of its kind undertaken involving a large public utility company in relation to investigating training needs assessment. The study will put forward a theoretical framework for the assessment of training needs that might have value for the Libyan context, or this theoretic al framework might possibly have value for large public utilities in Arab countries, so far characterised by having centralist and planned economies, which might change given the changes in some Arab countries, including Libya and much of the public sector organisations would be privatised. This study has been undertaken while Ghaddafi's regime was still in full control of all aspect of economic and social aspects of life in Libya. This framework is developed based on cultural and economic situations in a Libyan context, as well as on economic differences between Western and Arabic interpretation of training needs assessment.

The study involves both management and employees. This is significant in that views expressed by the management and those expressed by the employees are obtained and can be analysed to see how management and employees differ or agree about issues relating to

training and training needs assessment. Furthermore, the analysis and interpretations of the study findings will add to our understanding of international HRD and national HRD policies in non-western countries. One of the findings of the present study, analysed in Chapter Five (Theme 4, Sections 5.2.6, 5.2.7, and 5.2.8) and discussed in Chapter Six (6.5.1, 6.5.2, and 6.5.3), indicated the impact of social, economic and organisational factors on the process of training needs assessment in a Libyan context, which led to including these factors in the proposed framework. The findings of the present study will also represent a base for further studies after the collapse of the old regime (the study was undertaken under the old regime control of all production and utility sectors of economy).

1.7   Research Assumptions

The present research study is founded on the assumptions that the management (managers, heads of departments, and supervisors) are in a good position to comment on employee training and development, and training needs assessment in their organisation. The management as a whole in many organisational and national contexts have to be the planners, promoters and implementers of training programmes and courses in their company. The management is also the authority that undertakes training needs assessment and decides upon training needs of their employees. Accordingly, it can be also assumed that their experience and evaluation of staff training will disclose the relevance of training to the company staff members and its value to their company and its success in undertaking the various tasks expected from its employees. It is also based on the assumption that employees who have attended training are also in a good position to comment about their training and their reactions to the training courses they have attended, and whether or not they have benefited from such training when going back to their work places. The decisions and the impact of such decisions on the recipients form the basis of the data to develop a better understanding of how TNA decisions are made in a Libyan Arabic context.

1.8   Research Methodology

Looking at the research questions (Section 1.4) clearly indicates that data and information to be obtained to answer them are of a qualitative nature; hence, it was decided to use qualitative research methods; semi-structured interviews (and also focus group interviews) is the right approach to generate such data and information (Fylan, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are significant for discovering "Why *rather than How many or How much*" (Fylan, 2005).

Epistemological assumptions consist of three opposing perceptions relating to the nature of knowledge, referred to as competing paradigms which can be categorised as positivist paradigm, interpretive paradigm and constructionism. Positivism, according to Bryman (2012, p. 28), is "*an epistemological position that advocates the application of methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond.*" Carcary (2010) maintains that interpretivist research is referred to as non-positivist, post-positive or qualitative, and according to Rowlands (2005), the research in not seen as being entirely objective; instead, the researcher is an element of the research process. Interpretivist paradigm is associated with the qualitative approach to research. Accordingly, since the present study is qualitative in nature, an interpretivist paradigm is applied, and inductive. Hence, the study can be described as qualitative, and from the perspective of the epistemological assumption, it is interpretivist, and positivist as well.

From the ontological assumptions point of view, there are two contrasting paradigms; the objectivist paradigm and the subjectivist paradigm. The former is associated with a quantitative approach to research, whereas the latter is associated with the qualitative approach to research. Accordingly, given the qualitative nature of the study, a subjectivist paradigm is adopted. As regards research approaches, the present study is described as inductive, as well as interpretivist, as indicated earlier. The study is also described as exploratory research. Accordingly, the present study, based on the methodologies used and

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methods implemented is qualitative, interpretivist, subjective, inductive and exploratory. It is also used to explore the behaviour, feelings and experiences of people (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010); and in the present study the people (managers and employees) involved in training and how training is assessed, planned and undertaken in the LGEC.

Both primary research to collect primary data and secondary research to generate secondary data and information were undertaken. Primary research, according to Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 8), "*generally refers to research that has involved the collection of original data specific to that particular research project, for example, through using research methods such as questionnaires or interviews.*" For the purposes of the present study, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were used to generate that primary data and information. The rationale of using semi-structured interviews is for several reasons. Semi-structured, according to Rapley (2001, p. 315), "*allow a rich, deep and textured picture – is locally produced and through the 'simple' method of producing topic-initiating and follow-up questions.*" Rapley (2001) also indicates that many 'mentionables' generated by this method "*then become* resources *for the research project. What remains relevant is those 'mentionables' are produced* in and through *interaction.*" (p. 315).

The rationale for using focus group interviews is that, like interviews, they look into particular issues on a predefined topic (Goodman and Evans, 2010), and that focus groups are an informative data collection method when the aim is to explain, investigate or confirm ideas with several participants on a predefined set of issue (Goodman and Evans, 2010).

The aim of using semi-structured interviews (with managers) and focus group interviews (with employees) in the present study was to obtain data and information regarding employee training needs assessments, to assess management and staff engagement in training needs assessment process and decision-making (Objective 2, Section 1.5), and also to identify the factors impacting training needs assessment (Objective 3, Section 1.5).

Data and information generated in response to interview questions have been categorised across six themes, as will be explained later in this thesis. Lindlof and Taylor (2011, p. 246) define category as "*a covering term for an array of general phenomena: concepts, constructs, themes, and other types of "bins" in which to put item that are similar.*" They define categorisation as denoting "*the analytic process of sorting units of data with respect to properties that they have in common.*" Spiggle (1994, p. 493) argues that the "*essence of categorization is identifying a chunk or unit of data (e.g., a passage of text of any length) as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon.*"

Two groups of participants were involved in the present study. The first group of participants includes all managers responsible for training (eight managers). Consequently, the whole population of these managers were interviewed, using semi-structured interviews. The second group of participants were drawn from engineers' population of the company, who were interviewed using focus group interview technique. Engineers were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Ten focus groups were selected from different stations of the company; each consisting of twelve participants. However, not all those selected to participate in the focus group interviews did participate given that some of them were busy at their workplace when the interviews were held, and some of them withdrew or just did not show up. Between six and nine engineers participated in each focus interview.

Achieving the study aim and objectives is undertaken through four distinct activities. The first activity to be carried out is to conduct a review of the existing literature relating to a number of issues relevant to the present study, including human resource management (HRM), human resource planning (HRP), and most importantly issues relating to human resource development (HRD), such as training, education, learning, development, training needs assessment, methods of training needs assessment, training needs assessment models, selection of training needs assessment models HRD models, training budget, performance

models, and international HRD. A review of the literature (secondary data) is presented in Chapter Two of the study. Most of the literature reviewed in this chapter is critically evaluated from a western capitalist economic perspective, and where possible, literature from the Middle East and Asian countries and their reference to training needs assessment is also reviewed.

The second activity relates to providing a general profile of Libya, with special reference to education, training, and training and development (T&D) as well as to provide an overview of the organisation investigated (the Libyan General Electricity Company) and the administration of training in this company (Chapter Three). The Libyan culture is also discussed in Chapter Three. The rational of writing this chapter is that it was thought it is important to review issues relating to Libya, in general, and also about its education system, especially in relation to Training and vocational education system, as well as about the country's culture that will help in discussing similar issues raised in the interviews with the managers responsible for training and employees (engineers) who have attended training programmes and courses. Hence, it can be argued that issues reviewed in this chapter will help answer research questions and how they fit with training needs assessment.

The third activity is to design and formulate the research instruments (semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews). A pilot study is then undertaken to assess the credibility of the interview questions, followed by amending interview schedules in the light of the suggestions and observations provided by the piloting sample, and the final version of the interview schedules is formulated. The fourth and final activity is to analyse and discuss the narratives obtained in response of answering interview questions in order to develop the review of training needs assessment models, training needs assessment definitions, and international HRD knowledge

1.9   The Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC): An Overview

The LGEC is the state-owned utility company in charge of the generation of all electricity power, transmission, distribution and services in Libya (The Report-Libya, 2010). The LGEC was established according to Act No. 71 of 1984, passed by the General People's Congress ('the Parliament'), according to which the company implements the resolutions of the Popular congresses in the field of operating and maintaining electricity networks and energy production plants and related distribution stations and conversion, transmission lines and distribution of energy, and electrical control centres, as well as the management and operation and maintenance of water desalination plants throughout the Libya. The company also manufactures equipment and materials in cooperation with the authorities concerned with employee training and development. The LGEC hierarchical structure has been described as being a tall structured (See Appendix 1; Figure 1.1. The organisational structure chart of the LGEC), consisting of around eight levels of management. The lowest management levels have a number of sections and units (not shown in Appendix 1, Figure 1.1). The long chain of command is a characteristic of tall organisations. A tall organisation is that which have "*many levels of authority of authority relative to company size*" (Hill and Jones, 2012, p. 418). Burton et al. (2011) maintain that a tall organisation has a sizeable middle management which concentrates on information processing; in other words, receiving directives and information from the top management and making them clear for lower levels in the hierarchy, and that middle management takes detailed information from the bottom of the hierarchy and summarises it and interprets it for the top management. This is what happens in the LGEC, which has many managerial layers.

The LGEC can also be described as a mechanistic organisation. A mechanistic organisation is an organisation "*characterized by a relatively high degree of job specialization, rigid departmentalization, many layers of management (particularly middle management), narrow*

span of control, centralised decision making, and a long chain of command. This combination of elements results in what is called a tall organizational structure" (Gitman and McDaniel, 2009, p. 190). These elements are all found in the LGEC. French et al. (2011) indicate that taller or more vertically specialised structures with more managers per worker which implies "*closer and tighter control over workers, with formal communication through several layers of hierarchy which can be slow and distorted*" (p. 304).

The LGEC is headed by the General Secretary of the Company Administration Committee, and his deputy, the Assistant General Secretary. Four Assistant Secretary Administrators are affiliated to the Assistant General Secretary, and each has a number of General administrations affiliated to him, as illustrated in the Company organisational chart (see Appendix 1, Figure 1.1). General Administrations also consist of various Directorates, and each Directorate is headed by a Director.

The LGEC serves about 1.2 million residential and corporate customers and by the end of 2009 the number of employees was 37,012, as indicted in Appendix 1, Table 1.1.

The Company operates more than twenty electricity generation plants, powered mainly by steam turbines (The Report-Libya, 2010). About 70% of fuel used by the power plants comes from oil, and the remaining 30% of fuel is gas (The Report-Libya, 2010).

As regards training, the company, being one of the state-owned companies, draws up its training plan according to its requirements and also according to the procedures adopted when formulating the company's annual plan.

The LGEC's Training Department prepares this plan in co-ordination with the company's administrations and departments. The cost is estimated and the plan is referred to the company's top management to endorse it, and then the plan is referred to the Ministry or the Administration, as is the procedure at present. Then, the plan is referred to the governmental

committee to approve it within the annual training plans of the various sectors. After being approved and its budget approved, the plan is implemented according to the programmes and determined timetables. This process is typical of a centralised government system, in which all decisions are made at the concerned ministries or authorities, and plans should be sanctioned by the central government before they are implemented. This is characteristic of the Libyan economic centralised system of government.

Table 1.2 summarises training courses implemented during October 2008 are summarised in Appendix 1, Table 1.2, and a summary of the training plan is presented in Appendix 1, Table 1.3. Examples of some of the general training courses relating to raising efficiency internally are documented in Tables 1.1 and 1.2, and many other training courses implemented by the company are documented in Appendix I.

Table 1.1.   General training courses relating to raising efficiency internally-Training Plan of 2008

Course Title	Target (Different Fields)	Duration (Weeks
Principles of Computers	175	3
The International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)	8	7
NEPLAN Programmes for Planning and Investigating Distribution Networks	40	2
Auto CAD	30	3
English Language	300	10
Development of Administrative Skills	24	1
Applications of the IFS System	60	2
Management of Operations and Maintenance	20	1
Preparation of Technical Reports	12	1
Total	**669**	

Source: General Administration of Human Resources, LGEC. Training Plan 2009.

Table 1.2.   Courses for raising efficiency for Customer Services and Structures (CSS) Project

| | | Administrations | | | Total |
Tripoli	Western	Central	Eastern	Southern	Target
350	330	295	335	120	1,430

Source: General Administration of Human Resources, LGEC. Training Plan 2009.

In 2009 training and raising employees' competence activities increased in accordance with a comprehensive plan previously formulated at the beginning of 2009 in coordination with the Company's administrations.   This was done to meet the Company's various activities. Training programmes were implemented within the Company training centres in cooperation with several consultancy agencies, universities and training centres within Libya and abroad (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3. Types of training programmes and number of employees trained in 2009

Place of Training	Training Programme	Total Number of Trainees
Internal	Preparation (Induction)	278
	Raising local competence	5,838
	English Language	1,201
	Computer	885
	Development System Operation	922
	Leadership Training	216
Abroad	Training Projects Abroad	334
	Total	**9,674**

Source: LGEC Annual Report 2009, p. 34

1.10   Research Structure

The present study is organised into six chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter introduced the study and provided an overview of a number of issues and topics relating to the present study, including an overview of the term

'training', its purpose, and aims and objectives, training needs assessment, and a distinction is made between 'training needs assessment' and training needs analysis'. Research questions and the study aim and objectives, were documented as well as the significance of the present study, research assumptions, and research methodology were also discussed briefly. An overview of the Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC) is also provided (Section 1.9).

Chapter Two: Literature Review.   This chapter analyses and discusses training needs assessment (TNA) in general, and in terms of who undertakes TNA; reasons for conducting a TNA; TNA methods; selection of assessment methods; TNA models. Distinction between the two terms, 'training needs assessment' and 'training needs analysis' is highlighted in this chapter. This chapter also provides an overview of human resource development (HRD) and a model of HRD. A brief overview of human resource management (HRM) is discussed in this section given that HRD is one of the primary functions of HRM. A brief overview of human resource planning (HRP), another primary function of HRM, is provided since fits in with the planning for training and development of the organisation's employees. An overview of issues relating to International HRD (IHRD), and factors distinguishing IHRD from national HRD are also discussed. Issues relating to training and development are reviewed and discussed, and a comparison between training and development is also highlighted in this Chapter. Issues relating to training and development in the Middle East are reviewed, and organisational culture and its impact on training and development and TNA are also briefly considered in this chapter. A general discussion of the literature reviewed is also documented in this chapter. Finally, conclusions of the main issues are provided in this chapter are provided.

Chapter Three: Libya: General Profile with Special Reference to Education, Training and Training and Development in the LGEC. This chapter provides a general country profile of Libya, and reviews briefly issues relating to education, higher education, and vocational

education and training (VET) in Libya, since early learning and training individuals is undertaken by these institutions in Libya before these individuals are recruited in various organisations. Training and development sector in Libya is also explained briefly.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology. This chapter provides a review of the research paradigms employed and adopted in the present study. Research approaches adopted are also reviewed and reference to the approaches employed is indicated. Research strategies employed to generate primary data are then reviewed and reasons justifying their use are also discussed in this chapter, and a number of data collection methods are reviewed and those adopted in the present study are indicated. Sampling and sampling procedures are reviewed and approaches and procedures employed for the purposes of the present study are highlighted. A framework for identifying training needs assessment within the Libyan context is also presented. Trustworthiness (Credibility, Transferability and Dependability) of the qualitative research is explained, and ethical considerations are addressed. Finally, a summary of the issues addressed in this chapter are provided.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings. Issues relating to field work processes and difficulties experienced by the researcher are highlighted. Research findings, in response to the semi-structured interviews with the managers and the focus group interviews, are analysed and discussed across six themes in this chapter. Each theme consists of a set of questions. The six themes include the following: Theme 1: Establishment of training framework; Theme 2: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs; Theme 3: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database); Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training needs; Theme 5: Training Decisions; and Theme 6: Significance of Training Needs Determination

Chapter Six: General Discussion and Conclusions. In this final chapter, the study findings are discussed in general, followed by identifying the main conclusions of the study findings.

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Finally, implications for the management in a Libyan context are provided and to provide new developments to the theoretical understanding of TNA frameworks in the context of the academic understanding of the national HRD in an Arab country, as well as implications for further research to be carried out in this field.

The research structure design is graphically depicted in Figure 1.1. The research design developed for this study employs only qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews with managers, and focus group interviews with trained employees.

Chapter One: Introduction
Introduction to the Study. Significance of the Study. Research Questions, Aims, and Objectives.. Research Assumptions. Research Limitations. Research Structure

Chapter Two: Literature Review
A Review of Training Needs Assessment (TNA), TNA models, Overview of HRD, HRM and HRP, International HRD, Training and Development, Training and Development in the Middle East, Organisational Culture, and Conclusions of the Main Issues dealt with in this Chapter.

Chapter Three: Libya: General Profile with Special References to Education, Training and Training and Development in LGEC
General Profile of Libya. Issues Relating to Education, HE and VET in Libya. Training, and T&D Sector in Libya. The LGEC.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology
Research Paradigms, Approaches, and Research strategies. Data collection methods. Sampling procedures. Framework for determining the effectiveness of TN determination. Trustworthiness. Ethical considerations. A summary of the issues

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings
Field Work Processes and Difficulties; Analysis of Study Findings across 6 Themes: Theme 1: Establishment of training framework; Theme 2: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs; Theme 3: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database); Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training needs; Theme 5: Training Decisions; and Theme 6: Significance of Training Needs Determination. Training Department in LGEC

Chapter Six: General Discussion, and Conclusions
General Discussion of the Study Findings. Main Conclusions. Implications for Management and for Future Research

Figure 1.1. Design of the Thesis.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

The literature will focus first on reviewing literature relating to training needs assessment (TNA), then moving to review, analyse and discuss literature concerning related topics to training assessment, including human resource development (HRD), international HRD, training and development, training and development in the Middle East and organisational culture.

A needs assessment is referred to in the Western literature as the process of gathering information in relation to an expressed or implicit organisational need which could be achieved by undertaking training (Barbazette, 2006). Assessment of training needs is the initial step in planning a training programme and can be associated with organisational success (Erasmus et al., 2006; van Eerde et al., 2008; Du Plessis et al., 2010). Accordingly, assessing training needs must be comprehensive for training to succeed (Du Plessis et al., 2010).

This chapter includes eight sections. Section 2.2, introduces, analyses and discusses training needs assessment in general and consists of five subsections: 2.2.1, Who Undertakes Training Needs Assessment; 2.2.2, Reasons for Conducting a Training Needs Assessment; 2.2.3, Methods of Training Needs Assessment; 2.2.4, Selection of Assessment Methodology; and 2.2.5, Training Needs Assessment Models. Section 2.3 on Human Resource Development provides an overview of human resource development (HRD) and lists some of HRD definitions and placing other definitions of this term in an Appendix. A model of HRD is also discussed in this section. A brief overview of human resource management (HRM) is discussed in this Chapter (Section 2.3), given that HRD is one of the primary functions of HRM. Finally, a brief overview of human resource planning (HRP), another primary function

of HRM, is provided as fits in with the planning for training and development of the organisation's employees. Section 2.4. International HRD. This section discusses issues relating to International HRD (IHRD), and factors distinguishing IHRD from national HRD. Competencies identified with IHRD are also reported in this section. Section 2.5: Training and Development. Issues relating to training and development are reviewed and discussed. Comparison between training and development is also highlighted in this section. Section 2.6: Training and Development in the Middle East. In this section issues relating to training and development in the Middle East are reviewed. Section 2.7. Organisational Culture. Organisational culture and its impact on training and development and training needs assessment are briefly considered in this section.

2.2   Training Needs Assessment

Training resources, similar to other resources within the organisation, are limited, and to use training resources to the paramount benefit, firms need to set an adequate amount of effort in training needs assessment (TNA) (Tao et al., 2006). Tobey (2005, p. 2) offers a simple definition of training needs assessment, maintaining that it "*is the process of identifying how training can help your organisation reach its goals.*"

Du Plessis et al. (2010) argues that needs assessment "*is all about finding whether training is necessary and if so, where, when and how.*" They add that while it is easy to conclude that a problem can be solved by training prior to performing an appropriate assessment, this would end up wasting time and funds on training which will not be successful, and that training has to be founded on needs which are identified "*by gaps or discrepancies in performance of an organisation*" (p. 583). Du Plessis et al.'s definition and that of Rossett (1987, p. 3; Chapter One, Section 1.3, "*the systematic study of a problem or innovation, incorporating data and opinions from varied sources, in order to make effective decisions or recommendations about what should happen next.*") agree that it is not always necessary to train employees; rather,

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interventions might include other issues not training. There is also an agreement between the two definitions of TNA. While Rossett indicates that incorporating data and opinions from varied sources, Du Plessis et al. refers to TNA as all about findings whether training is necessary; that is, findings from varied sources. Both authors also agreed that TNA is systematic study (Rossett) and not to undertake training prior to performing an appropriate assessment (Du Plessis et al.). However, while Rossett did not mention anything about gaps or discrepancies in performance of an organisation as a basis on which needs are founded, Du Plessis et al. do refer to needs as identified by such gaps or discrepancies in performance.

Du Plessis et al.'s views of training needs assessment is an example of a performance paradigm of human resource development, as opposed to a learning paradigm of human resource development. Swanson and Holton (2001, p. 137) and Holton (2002, p. 201) refer to the performance paradigm of HRD as follows:

> "*The performance paradigm of HRD holds that the purpose of HRD is to advance the mission of the performance system that sponsors the HRD efforts by improving the capabilities of individuals working in the system and improving the systems in which they perform their work.*"

It is noted that in this definition of performance paradigm the term 'performance system' is introduced which is used instead of organisation (Swanson and Holton, 2001; Holton, 2002). There are eleven core theoretical assumptions of the performance paradigm (see Swanson and Holton, 2001, pp. 137-140, for details of these assumptions:

Assumption 1: Performance systems must perform to survive and prosper, and individuals who work within them must perform if they wish to advance their careers and maintain employment or membership.
Assumption 2: The ultimate purpose of HRD is to improve performance of the system in which it is embedded and which provides the resources to support it.
Assumption 3: The primary outcome of HRD is not just learning but also performance.
Assumption 4: Human potential in organizations must be nurtured, respected and developed.
Assumption 5: HRD must enhance current performance and build capacity for future performance effectiveness in order to create sustainable high performance.
Assumption 6: HRD professionals have an ethical and moral obligation to ensure that attaining organizational performance goals is not abusive to individual employees.

Assumption 7: Training/learning activities cannot be separated from other parts of the performance system and are best bundled with other performance improvement interventions.
Assumption 8: Whole systems per4formance improvement seeks to enhance the value of learning in an organization.
Assumption 9: Whole systems performance improvement seeks to enhance the value of learning in an organization.
Assumption 10: HRD must partner with functional department to achieve performance goals.
Assumption 11: The transfer of learning into job performance is of primary importance.

Learning paradigm of human resource development, on the other hand, is defined as follows:

"*HRD is the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long-term work-related learning capacity at the individual, group, and organizational level of organization.*"

(Watkins, 1995, p. 2). Watkins also indicates that HRD acts to develop individual's aptitude to learn; and help groups overcome barriers to learning, as well as helping organisations in creating a culture that advances conscious learning. Drawing on the literature relating to the core assumptions of the learning paradigm, Swanson and Holton (2001, p.135) indicated that nine core assumptions have emerged concerning the learning paradigm (see Swanson and Holton, 2001, pp. 133-137) for details of these assumptions) These assumptions are as follows:

Assumption 1. Individual education, growth, learning and development are inherently good for the individual.

Assumption 2. People should be valued for their intrinsic growth as people, not just as resources to achieve an outcome.

Assumption 3. The primary purpose of HRD is development of the individual.

Assumption 4. The primary outcome of HRD is learning and development.

Assumption 5. Organizations are best advanced by having fully developed individuals.

Assumption 6. Individuals should control their own learning process.

Assumption 7.Development of the individual should be holistic.

Assumption 8. The organization must provide people a means to achieve their fullest human potential through meaningful work.

Assumption 9. An emphasis on performance or organizational benefits creates a mechanistic view of people that prevents them from reaching full potential.

There is considerable overlap between the performance paradigm of HRD and learning

paradigm of HRD, especially that there is a sound belief in learning and development as approaches to personal growth; a belief that organisations may be improved by means of learning and development activities (Swanson and Holton, 2001). Swanson and Holton (2001) argue that it is this common ground which maintains people within these two paradigms in HRD discipline; given that, they embody a strong bonding link which defines the discipline and separates it from other disciplines.

The literature concerning training needs assessment and training needs analysis indicates that both terms are either used interchangeably, and many authors consider them as being similar, or they are perceived as different (Kaufmann et al., 1993). It appears that some authors, for example, Holton et al. (2000), Bowman and Wilson (2008) and Morrison et al., 2011), use the term 'training needs analysis' instead of 'training needs assessment'; other authors (for example, Kaufman et al., 1993; Barbazette, 2006, Werner and DiSimone, 2011; Drummond, 2008), use training needs assessment and training needs analysis as synonymous. Drummond (2008, p. 4) also uses 'training needs analysis' as synonymous to 'training needs assessment, referring to training needs analysis as "*a thorough review of the training which can affect improvement in the knowledge, skills or attitude of individuals or teams in the work place.*" Drummond also indicates that training needs analysis represents the foundation of structured training and recognises existing work-based deficiencies or problems in performance standards which may be capable of being resolved through training. Although needs assessment is synonymous and in common use with needs analysis, *needs assessment* often differs from needs analysis in that needs assessment *focuses only on identifying what training should cover rather than focusing on what people must know*, *do, or feel to do their jobs effectively*" (Rothwell et al., 2012, p. 294). Rothwell et al. (2012, p. 294) refer to training needs analysis as: "*The process of clarifying what people must know, do, or feel to perform successfully and comparing that to workers in the organization presently know, do, or feel. It*

is often distinguishable from needs assessment in that it compares what should be happening to what is happening." Rothwell and Kazanas (2011) differentiate between training needs assessment and training needs analysis, arguing that a needs analysis finds out the main sources of gaps between the best or desirable and the actual. Rothwell and Kazanas (2011) also maintain that a needs analysis if often undertaken after a needs assessment, and that needs analysis goes further than a needs assessment, which only reveals that a performance gap exists, to identify the main cause(s) which lead to such gap. The identification of the main causes is argued to be vital for finding out the best solution (Rothwell et al., 2012). Bowman and Wilson (2008) refer to training needs analysis as a key first stage in the systematic training cycle, the following stages of the cycle being: training design; and training delivery, and evaluation. This has some link with the first phase of the proposed initial draft of a framework of training, illustrated at the end of this chapter (Figure 2.8) [Establishment of Training Framework: (Training Plans for Company and Employees, Budget, goals and objectives of training, Type of Training)]. The final framework will be amended in Chapter Six in the light of the study findings and the literature reviewed in this chapter.

Werner and De Simone (2011, p. 109) define needs assessment (or needs analysis) as "*a process by which an organization's HRD needs are identified and articulated. It is the starting point of the HRD and training process.*" For the purposes of the present study, this definition of TNA is adopted, given that TNA is the starting point of the training process in the Libyan context, as it is in other organisations in other countries. A needs assessment is said to help identify a number of issues including the following (Werner and De Simone, 2011, p. 109):

- *An organization's goals and its effectiveness in reaching these goals*
- *Discrepancies or gaps between employees' skills and the skills required for effective current job performance*

- *Discrepancies (gaps) between current skills and the skills needed to perform the job successfully in the future*
- *The conditions under which the HRD activity will occur."*

The Libyan economy has been highly centralised, though, due to recent developments in the country this centralisation of all aspects of economy might be eased and market economy may be adopted and decentralisation of the economy will be realised. However, the present study has been undertaken and completed prior to the recent revolution, though nthis might take a long time to come. The Libyan centralised economy will be addressed in Chapter Three. The list provided above by Werner and De Simone (2011) might have not been adopted by the LGEC management for one reason o another. For example, in terms of a needs assessment help identify discrepancies (gaps) between employees' skills and the skills required for effective current job performance and current skills and the skills needed to perform the job successfully in the future, might have been affected by some social practices such as favouritism, '*wasta'*, as will be explained in Chapter Three (Section 3.2), and employees who do not need training might be selected for further training and those needing training are excluded because of this favouritism or 'wasta' intervention. As regards the conditions under which the HRD activity occur, the centralisation of economy and the control of all aspects of life under the previous regime might have hindered HRD activities to be practised in a proper way. Such centralisation of decision making and political control have rendered public sector organisations from their goals.

Sims (2006) and Werner and De Simone (2011) argue that with such information, human resource development professionals find out where and what types of programmes or interventions are needed, who needs to be included in such programmes, and whether there are at this time any barriers to their effectiveness.

Assessment of training needs is an ongoing and very important process, through which an

organisation can identify effective training programmes that help achieve the organisation's objectives (Brown, 2002). The main objective of these programmes is the contribution to achieving the organisation's goals by raising the skills of its staff. Sims (2006, p. 57) maintains that there is the need for continuous TNA, indicating that an effective HRD programme cannot develop unsystematically in response to problems as they occur; rather a "*strategic (and systematic) approach to developing training efforts requires that some type of training assessment be conducted to compare the benefits of the efforts with the projected costs and determine the long-term implications of the program.*"

Swist (2001) maintains that reviewing the literature shows that training programmes are often stipulated as the drug of choice to problem situations in organisations. She adds that the training needs assessment is often ignored as the first step in the performance improvement process. Swist (2001) also indicates that the assessment is part of a planning process which concentrates on identifying and resolving performance problems.

Van Eerde et al. (2008) similarly argue that it is reasonable to think that training affects performance but it may not be the case in every circumstance, and discusses the reason for training not generating the desired effects. They maintain that one of the reasons for this may be that training does not match the needs of the organisation, and though this gives the impression of an uncomplicated and simple idea, there is not much in the relevant literature to support it. van Eerde et al. (2008) reports that studies carried out concerning needs assessment showed positive effect sizes (ds[1] ranging from 0.28 to 1.93); nonetheless, such studies did not relate to organisational effectiveness, but to criteria related to reactions, learning and behaviour of individuals in training. Two of the training evaluation models, such as Kirkpatrick's model, and Hamblin Evaluation Framework include these three criteria;

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[1] d = effect size; s = standard deviation.
Effect size "*is an index that is used to express the strength or magnitude of a difference between two means. It can also be used to indicate the strength of an association between two variables using correlation coefficients*" (David, 2011, p. 35).

reaction, learning and behaviour, in addition to other criteria. Reaction level in these two models measures how participants in a training course react to it (van Eerde et al., 2008). The Learning level measures the extent to which trainees learn in line with the programme objectives, such as, increase in skill or knowledge, change of attitude and/or behaviour, and early application of new learning (CIPD, 2007). Behaviour level measures the extent to which a change in behaviour has taken place, as a consequence of the programme (CIPD, 2007). One of the purposes for undertaking training needs assessment is establishing the basis for back-end evaluation (Tobey, 2005), as this is illustrated in Figure 2.1, which shows how needs assessment prepares the stage for evaluation.

2.2.1 Who Undertakes Training Needs Assessment

When training needs assessment is undertaken, there are those in the organisation who must be involved in and how training needs assessment has to be conducted (Erasmus et al., 2006). Since needs assessments are conducted to decide whether training is required, it is imperative to involve the managers and the employees in the assessment process (Du Plessis et al., 2010). Grobler et al. (2006, p. 309) argue that management involvement in needs assessment is important given that managers in general have accurate information concerning their employees' performance and managers are "*in an improve position to assess the need for training in the work groups.*" Werner and DiSimone (2011) also refer to management involvement in training needs assessment, maintaining that immediate managers play a specifically important role in person analysis (the third step in training needs assessment; the other two steps include organisational analysis, and task analysis). Person analysis is that which "*examines knowledge, skills, and current performance to determine who needs training,*", whereas task analysis is that which "*examines tasks performed and KSAOs required to determine what employees must do to perform successfully,*" and organisational analysis is that which "*examines company-wide goals and problems to determine where*

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training is needed" (Landy and Conte, 2010, p. 319). Managers are not only in a position to observe their employees; rather, it is also their task to do so (Werner and DeSimone, 2011).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT STAGES		EVALUATION LEVELS

Stage 1:
What are the
business needs?

Level 4:
Business Needs (*Were the business needs met? Was the forecasted ROI achieved?*

Stage 2:
What are the performance
needs?

Level 3:
Job Performance (*Can they perform as required back on the job?*

Stage 3:
What are the learning
needs?

Level 2:
Knowledge and skill mastery (Learning) (*Did they learn what they were supposed to learn?*

Stage 4:
What are the learner
needs?

Level 1:
Learner Reaction (*Were they happy with the learning experience?*

Training
Recommendations   Training Design

Non-Training
Recommendations   Training Delivery

Figure 2.1.   Needs assessment set the stage for evaluation.
(Source: Tobey, 2005, p. 5).

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As regards the involvement of employees in needs assessment would also indicate that such an involvement is vital given that a feeling of participating in needs assessment process improves employee motivation to undertake training and development. Cummings and Worley (2009) argue that there is an assumption in employee involvement literature that this involvement would bring about higher productivity. Employee involvement practices, for example, participation in work place decisions, are argued to enhance productivity in three ways, according to Lawler III and Ledford (1981; cited in Cummings and Worley, 2009, pp. 252-253): this involvement can enhance communication and coordination among staff and the firm's departments, as well as helping integrate various jobs or departments which subscribe to the whole task; employee involvement can develop employee motivation, especially when they meet important individual needs; and employee intervention can increase employees' competences; hence, helping them better.

In the Libyan context, employees' non-contribution or non-participation in the nomination process has been referred to in Libyan organisations almost two decades ago (Agnaia, 1996) and it appears that not much have so far changed in these organisations, given the highly centralised type of management which have dominated the public sector . This may also point to the absence of representative participation, a form of indirect employee participation (Brown, 2002), in which employees do not participate directly in decisions; instead employees are represented by a small group of workers who really participate (Odendaal, 2009). Representative participation (also referred to as indirect participation) is implemented by means of several interest-representing associations, such as unions, and factory's or company councils (Makó and Simonyi, 1995). Cornelius (2001, p. 114) defines indirect participation as follows: *"Indirect participation is where representatives of employees meet with representatives of management, within a predetermined and agreed forum, to discuss matters of mutual interest to both groups."* Representative participation described as "the

most widely legislated form of employee involvement around the world" (Brown, 2002, p. 35). The literature (for example, Gilman and Marginson, 2002; Addison and Belfield, 2002) refers to the works councils and board representative as two most common forms of representative participation. These two forms are described by Odendaal (2009, p. 176) as follows: "*Works councils are groups of nominated or elected employees who must be consulted when management makes decisions involving personnel. Board representatives are employees who sit on a company's board of directors and represent the interest of the firm's employees.*" Works councils link employees with management (Odendaal, 2009); such councils are not found in the Libyan context. The disbanded 'Sh'abeyat', founded under the toppled Libyan regime, were in theory workers' representatives, but in reality they were governmental instruments for controlling workers in the public sector, which was until recently the main and predominating sector in the Libyan economy.

2.2.2 Reasons for Conducting a Training Needs Assessment

According to Swist (2001, p. 1), the following are the reasons for conducting a training needs assessment:

- "*To determine what training is relevant to your employees' jobs,*
- *To determine if training will make a difference,*
- *To distinguish training needs from organizational problems, and*
- *To link improved job performance with the organization's goals and bottom line.*"

Brown (2002, pp. 569-570) identifies four main reasons why needs assessment must be undertaken prior to training programmes are prepared, including the following:

1. "*To identify specific problem areas in the organisation. HR and management must know what the problem are so that most appropriate training (if training is the answer) will be directed to those organisational problems.* [This reason seems to contrast the third reason reported above by Swist (2001). While Swist distinguished between training needs from organisational problems, Brown proposes identifying problem areas within the organisation.]
2. *To obtain management support. Management usually thinks training is a "nice thing to do". This stance can be laid directly at the doorstep of poor (or nonexistent) needs assessment. The way to obtain management support is to make certain that the training*

directly affects what happens in that manager's department. [Swist (2001) failed to identify this issue as a reason for undertaking training needs assessment.]

3. *To develop data for evaluation. Unless informational needs are developed prior to conducting training, the evaluations that take place after the program may not be valid. In conducting a needs analysis first, trainers can measure the effectiveness of a program.* [Swist (2001) also failed to identify this issue as a reason for undertaking training needs assessment.] In the Libyan context, database for training needs assessment and for evaluation of the outcome of training is almost lacking.

4. *To determine the costs and benefits of training. Thorough needs assessment that identifies the problems and performance deficiencies, allows management to put a cost factor on the training needs.*"

Brown (2002) argues that training is appropriate when the organisation can expect to obtain more benefit from the training than it invested in its cost. However, despite TNA importance a number of organisations do not conduct a needs assessment as regularly or as systematically as they might (Sims, 2006; Werner and De Simone, 2011). Zemke (1998) and Gordon and Zemke (2000) indicate that if anything, the competitive pressures facing organisations have made it more difficult than before to undertake a needs assessment. Needs assessment are not performed for many reasons, including the following (Werner and De Simon, 2011, p. 109):

1. *"A needs assessment can be a difficult, time-consuming process. A complete needs analysis involves measuring a variety of factors at multiple levels of the organization.*
2. *Action is valued over research. Managers often decide to nuse their limited resources to develop, acquire, and deliver HRD programs rather than to do something they see as a preliminary activity.*
3. *Incorrect assumptions are made that a needs assessment is unnecessary because available information already specifies what an organization's needs are. ……*
4. *There is a lack of support for needs assessment. This can be caused by a lack of bottom-line justification or by the HRD professional's inability to sell needs assessment to management. Documenting the assessment and its benefits, and using analogies from respected fields (e.g., medical diagnosis, engineering scoping), are two ways to build support for doing needs assessment ...".*

2.2.3 Methods of Training Needs Assessment

There are a number of methods for collecting data from key staff members, such as, questionnaires, interviews, observations, group discussions, records and reports and job description analysis (Du Plessis et al., 2010). Jackson et al. (2012) maintain that there are three commonly employed methods of training needs assessment: examining performance

measures, self-assessment, and employee and customer surveys.

Performance measures represent a set of indicators, such as output, accident rates and absenteeism which can be measured locally and have local training implications (Wilson, 2005, p. 146). Jackson et al. (2012, p. 283) indicate that performance measures have a number of advantages, including the following:

- *"They can be selected according to their strategic importance.*
- *They often are easily quantified.*
- *When they show improvement, the value of training investments is readily apparent."*

However, the key disadvantage of performance measures is that "*such indicators reflect the past and may not be useful for anticipating future* needs" (Jackson et al., 2012, p. 283).

Self-assessment is one way of employers involving employees in assessing their training needs, which can be informal, for example, when a list of company-sponsored courses are posted by the employer asking employees who want to go for training, or formal by carrying out surveys concerning training needs (Jackson et al., 2012). Rees and Porter (2008, p. 256) argue that due to the increasing pace of change, employees might be better placed than their organisation to plan the career paths which may be accessible and the direction in which they want to go. Rees and Porter (2008, p. 256) also indicated that employees "*may also need to demonstrate that they are developing their knowledge and skills in order to retain membership of a professional body.*" Sims (2006, p. 57) argues that proactive planning for human resource development should continuously involve some self-assessment by the human resource development department, which differs from employees carrying out self-assessment, such as by means of carrying out a human resource development audit; examining future developments which may have an impact on the organisation and human resource development initiative, deciding "*goals for the function, setting objectives, and developing training plans that are responsive to the current and future training needs of the organization given its strategic agenda.*" However, van Eerde et al. (2008) argue that while

self-assessment of training needs implies the risk of not identifying the actual needs, it must be noted that the assessment by others does not ensure that actual needs are identified better. van Eerde et al. (2008, p. 65) refer to Chiu et al.'s (1999) conclusion of a review of the literature, which indicated that the 87% of the needs assessment is started by trainers, thus, may connote a supply-led approach to training needs analysis. Other issues may also play a role in opting for a particular training programme, such as programmes founded on subsidies provided by government, the conformity with a specific qualification framework, or legislative prerequisite (van Eerde et al., 2008). Such reasons may differ from the actual business needs of the employer. Specific training programmes may, for example, include training in system changes or acquisition of new equipment (McConnell, 2003). McConnell (2003) maintains that activities including the acquisition of new equipment, new laws, and changed department and job assignments can create potential training needs. Technical training is argued to be another specific training as it comprises courses on plant equipment and equipment programming, troubleshooting, robotics, computer training, and vendor training on a particular equipment and that this is very special training focusing on a certain of equipment or a process" (Berg, 1994).

Employee and customer surveys are attitude surveys completed by a manager's employees and/or customers which can provide information concerning the manager's training needs (Jackson et al., 2012). Aamodt (2013) argues that one common approach to determine training needs is that of designing and administering a survey (Aamodt, 2013), which is typically involves a sample, or representative group of the organisation, such as, some randomly selected employees and managers each completing a questionnaire, though is some cases a whole department or the whole organisation is included in the survey (Botha and Coetzee, 2007). Training needs surveys can be performed in a variety of ways; the most common method is using a questionnaire which asks employees to identify the areas where

there is a need for further or future training (Aamodt, 2013). A better method is possibly to provide a list of job-related tasks and elements of knowledge which employees need to rate the need for training on each; then, the results of such ratings are handed to superiors to corroborate the results, and such a process is employed to decide whether superiors agree with their staff's assessment and to prioritise training needs (Aamodt, 2013). In terms of customer surveys, Jackson et al. (2012) argue that these surveys can play two roles, that is, presenting information to management concerning service and identifying employee weaknesses. Performance appraisals/performance management systems, for example, 360° appraisal can also be used to provide information relating to the employees' training needs. Performance management is defined by Landy and Conte (2010, p. 233) as follows: "*System that emphasizes individual behaviour and organizational strategies and goals by defining performance in the context of those goals; jointly developed by managers and the people who report them.*" Performance appraisal is a key subset of performance `management, and can be defined as "*a formal and systematic process by means of which the job-relevant strengths and weaknesses of employees are identified, observed, measured, recorded and developed*" (Erasmus and Schenk, 2008, p. 369).

The literature also reports other "methods" for assessing needs (Tao et al., 2006). Grant (2002, quoted in Tao et al., 2006, p. 430) listed formal needs assessment methods regularly employed to identify group needs, including critical incident techniques, gap analysis, objective knowledge and skills tests, observation, revalidation, self-assessment (discussed above), video assessment, and peer review. Gilley and Eggland (1989) also mentioned the six most useful methods, including interviews, questionnaires, tests, group problem analyses, records and report studies, and job analysis and performance reviews. Botha and Coetzee (2007) and Aamodt (2013) identify similar methods to Grant's (2002) methods, though Both and Coetzee (2007) add performance appraisal data Grant's list of methods. Qualitative data

collection methods employed in training needs assessment, include interview, critical incident interview, focus group, and observation (Tobey, 2005) Interviews usually involve a selected number of employees (Aamodt, 2013); though they are not employed extensively as is the case in surveys, despite the fact that they generate more in-depth responses to questions concerning training needs (Patton and Pratt, 2002; Aamodt, 2013). Interviews can be used to obtain interviewee's reactions to carefully focused topics, yielding subjective and perceptive personal data and expressive narratives (Toby 2005). Tobey (2005) identifies a number of advantages as well as disadvantages of interview as a method of training needs assessment, as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1.   Advantages and disadvantages of interviews for TNAs

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Rich details • Careful structuring of interview protocol produces consistent data across interviews that can be compared to identify patterns and trends • Can be used to flesh out quantitative data collected in a survey	• Can be time-consuming for the volume of data gained • Interviewees must truly represent the targeted population or the data will be skewed • Frequency of responses does not get at the reason behind the responses (that is, why the respondents felt a certain way) • Interviewer must be careful to record interviewee responses, not interpret

Source: Tobey (2005, p. 52).

The American Society for Training and Development (2006) maintains that employee focus group assessment is a strategy to find out real and perceived training shortages, and that focus groups can facilitate the identification of the kinds of training required by the employees as well as the needed conditions for the provision of competent and successful training from an internal viewpoint. Focus group is a group interview providing rich data concerning the learners' job environment, current level of skill and performance, as well as their assessment of desired skill and performance level (Tobey, 2005). Downs (2008) argues in the same vein, maintaining that undertaking focus group interview helps provide information in relation to trainees' skill and performance levels, work environment, culture, and views of prospective

training participant. Downs (2008) adds that an advantage of such method is that all participants can listen to each other and develop each other's ideas. Advantages and disadvantages of this method are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2.   Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups for TNAs

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Develops hypotheses that can be tested with a larger population through surveys or observation • The facilitator can make note of nonverbal behaviours that accompany statements • Skilled facilitation results in all focus group members being heard rather than just the more verbal participants	• Very time- and resource-intensive • Sometimes a focus group can fall under tha influence of particularly verbal members and give the impression of unanimity when it is not necessarily the case • Difficult to facilitate with just one facilitator who must run the group and takes notes

Source: Tobey (2005, p. 59)

Critical incidents (samples of behaviour) method is used, particularly in an appropriate job description exists (Botha and Coetzee, 2007; Aamodt, 2013). In order to employ this method for training needs assessment, critical incidents are classified into dimensions, based on job description, and divided into examples of good and poor performance (Botha and Coetzee, 2007; Aamodt, 2013). Dimensions with numerous examples of poor performance specify areas where a large number of employees are performing poorly, and additional training is needed for such area (Botha and Coetzee, 2007; Aamodt, 2013). During critical incident interviews, the needs assessors ask interviewees to tell stories about times when they felt effective or ineffective while they perform the targeted skills (Tobey, 2005). These interviews also have their advantages and disadvantages, as demonstrated in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3.   Advantages and disadvantages of critical incident interviews for TNAs

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Provides rich anecdotal data • Focuses on the critical behavioural differentiators of excellent performance so the ultimate training will be focused as well • Identifies skills and attributes that are not differentiators of critical performance, thereby supporting a tighter, streamlined training design	• Requires a great deal of time • Very expensive • Individuals who conduct the interviews and implement thematic analysis must be unbiased about what it takes to perform the skill effectively • Must use multiple thematic analysts to ensure reliability

Source: Tobey (2005, p. 56).

Employees, during observation, are watched performing their jobs or certain parts of their jobs (Botha and Coetzee, 2007), whereby the observer watches employees performing their jobs and records information concerning their behaviour patterns, job performance, interactions with others, and use of time (Downs, 2008). The major advantage of observation method is that it does not disrupt an individual's or departments work (Botha and Coetzee, 2007). Nonetheless, the observer cannot record the employees' mental processes, and employees may behave differently around an observer than they would do under normal situations (Downs, 2008). Another disadvantage is that employees may at times react negatively and perceive the observer as spying on them (Both and Coetzee, 2007). Tobey (2005) identifies a number of advantage and disadvantages of observation, as presented in Table 2.4.

Tabe 2.4.　　　　Advantages and disadvantages of observations for TNAs

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Excellent for assessing training needs for physical/psychomotor skills • Creates a step-by-step procedure (algorithm) that can be standardized for all learners in the form of a flowchart, diagram, graphics, lists of steps, or a job aid. • If the observer notes job environment conditions that help or hinder performance, these can be included in the data	• Sometimes difficult to identify where a specific task begins and ends • Misses the performer's mental processes in making choices at each step unless accompanied with an interview • Some performers may act differently than they would normally simply because they know they are being watched (known as the Hawthorne Effect); interviewing the performer after observation and asking why certain things were done in certain ways can help control of this effect

Source: Tobey (2005, p. 61)

Despite the fact that the literature usually reports only the more formal methods of needs assessment, human resource development practitioners utilise a wide range of formal and informal means of identifying training needs as part of their everyday practice (Tao et al., 2006). Depending on the method employed, the needs data obtained can be regarded as "*felt needs (what people say they need), expressed needs (expressed in action), normative needs (defined by experts), and comparative needs (group comparison)*" (Grant, 2002, quoted in Tao et al., 2006, p. 430). Among those, the "felt-needs" methodology, which usually asks employees to simply list or rank desired training courses, has regularly been employed to assess needs of large numbers of employees (Holton et al., 2000). Nonetheless, this approach is also largely criticised for not being capable of gauging true needs for the reason that employees generally do not know what the organisational objectives are and often report "wants" instead of "needs (Tao et al., 2006).

Olivas (2007) maintains that while there is no specific methodology or technique for the assessment of the training needs of an organisation, experts in the field of training and development in the main have nine basic assessment methods from which to choose.

Additionally, the checklist given below can help in some additional criteria to take into account in fitting a relevant assessment strategy to a specific situation (Olivas, 2007). Olivas, however, warned that one must be aware that not all of the criteria listed have to be taken into consideration each time a needs assessment is ongoing, rather he advised instead to select those criteria that are most suitable for one's assessment needs. Olivas's (2007, p. 28) checklist is as follows:

"*What resources are required and available for the needs assessment?*
(1) Time involved for both client system and the consultant in the needs assessment effort:
    (a) In developing the data collection process.
    (b) In administering or implementing the process.
(2) Money needed for the effort:
    (a) Direct costs for processing a computerised survey.
    (b) Indirect costs for excusing staff from regular duties for interviews."

2.2.4 Training Needs Assessment Models

The literature indicates that there are a number of training needs assessment models. These models have been introduced by their authors in a Western context. Vaughn (2005) has presented a training needs analysis model, referred to as the Instructional System Design (ISD) model, which is comparatively simple and uncomplicated and is satisfactorily all-embracing to meet the needs of the majority of researchers, and can be implemented across seven steps, as explained below (Vaughn, 2005):

1.   Understanding the basics of training and adult learning. Vaughn (2005) argues that all types of resources can be limitations, such as time, tools, funds, space, management and trainer skills and human resources. Vaughn advices that all such limitations should be taken into account when designing any training process, adding that one of the most imperative limitations is the extent of senior management and administrative buy-in.

2.   Determining organisational and individual training needs; proposing solutions. Irrespective of the ISD model employed, development of a training programme starts

with defining the organisational needs to perform specific tasks, then identifying what knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) employees have are identified. The difference between what KSAa needed and what are available, that is, the training gap, defines the main KSAs that should be trained on.

It may be necessary to make a formal proposal at this stage, so as to obtain funding and approval to develop and present a training programme to close such gap (Vaughn, 2005).

These two steps relate to the present study more than the rest of Vaughn's seven steps; that is, developing training objectives, developing measures of learning, designing the training, conducting the training, and evaluating the training. Vaughn (2005) maintains that there is a feedback loop across all the seven steps from one stage to the other, given that the process is iterative, and that the loop represents the likelihood that it may be required to start again and re-enter the process.

Identification of the significance of a thorough training needs assessment process is described in Figure 2.2. This is Olivas's (2007) model; the second model. This model, according to Olivas (2007, p. 38), can serve as a key "*purpose in helping organisations approach their own needs assessment process in a more systematic and effective manner,*" adding that working through the six stages in the model, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, and provides an instrument for examining options and avoiding tacit or unaccomplished assumptions. He adds that the model is a helpful method for insuring that all data required for decision making in relation to training is gathered and well thought-out. Used in this way, the model provides organisations with new ways of examining what they do in assessing training needs and how they might improve their process to make more effective and efficient use of training money (Olivas, 2007). Olivas (2007) also indicates that the model which he has used on many assessments provides a means by which organisations can embark on evaluating their needs assessment processes. A summary of the major points of the needs assessment model is

outlined below (see Olivas, 2007, pp. 39-40).
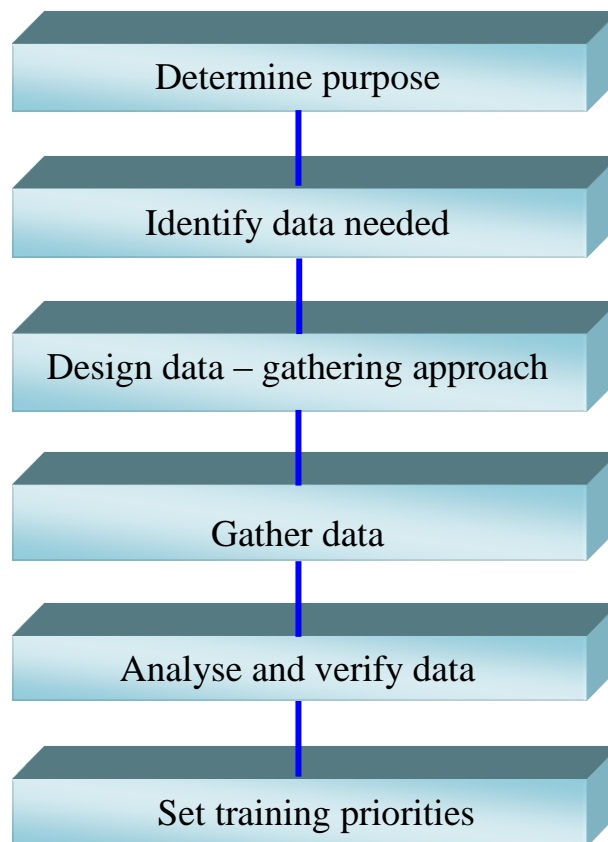
Figure 2.2. A model for needs assessment.
(Olivas, 2007, p. 38).

STEP 1: *Determine the Purpose and Objective of the Needs Assessment*

The purpose and objectives of the needs assessment should be clearly defined at the initiation

of the process so as to substantiate that management will have the amount and kinds of

information they require to make effective decisions concerning work force planning and staff

development (Olivas, 2007). This step will be included in the first stage of the proposed

framework for training needs assessment (see Chapter Six).

STEP 2: *Identify the Kinds of Information Needed*

For a comprehensive needs assessment, data should be gathered in each of the following four

categories: Data to define the need; data to identify the solution; data to specify those needing

training; data to provide the planning details for delivery of training; and data for defining

training needs should be gathered for both immediate and long-range needs (Olivas, 2007). As regards the present study, this step is useful in relation to stage 3 of the proposed framework [Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database)] (Chapter Six).

STEP 3: *Design the Data-Gathering Approach*

Data-gathering for needs assessment must make use of both non formal data-gathering methods and formal needs assessment mechanisms. Selection of a formal needs assessment instrument ought to be based on analysis of the data needed and of the e and limitations of various instruments in gathering such data. Design of the data-gathering approach needs to include validation of the instruments used (Olivas, 2007). This step is useful for the proposed framework (Stage 2). Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs) (Chapter Six).

STEP 4: *Gather Data.*

Barbazette (2006, p. 7), who argued that training needs assessment is a three phase process and this phase is his first phase (Gather Information), refers to this phase as: "*Any analysis involves gathering information to help make appropriate decisions.*" He adds that: "*Gathering information can be the process of collecting existing information or developing new information.*" The present work collects existing information (this chapter) as well as new information gathered from the study samples (the managers and the focus group members). This step is also useful in relation to stage 3 of the proposed framework [Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database)].

STEP 5: *Analyse and Verify Data*

Analysis of needs assessment data needs to aim as finding out patterns and trends relating to recurring problems and also to identify irregularities. Comparison of newly gathered data with previous years' findings is a significant part of this process. Data analysis provides a more accurate picture of the organisation's needs if an effort is made to verify findings with

those who provided the data input (Olivas, 2007).

Barbazette (2006, p. 7) argues that after information is gathered, it has to be analysed and interpreted, and conclusion are to be drawn from the information. Barbazette also maintains that this phase is the most effective phase given that it is a collaborative process which involves all stakeholders.

STEP 6: Set Training Priorities

Establishment of training priorities is vital to insuring that the training and employee development programme is oriented to and effectively supports achievements of agency goals. Hence, management must be clear as to how training priorities are set within their organisation. Priority systems for training need to be clear to the people using them, and they must effectively distinguish among different types of training as to which are most critical to the organisation (Olivas, 2007). Barbazette (2006) indicates that having analysed and interpreted the information, and conclusions are presented, the information represents the basis for a training plan that indicates how to solve the performance flaws.

Other models or frameworks relating to training needs assessment include performance analysis of training. Rossett (2009, p. 227) defines performance analysis as follows:

> "*Process by which you partner with clients to identify and respond to problems and opportunities, and to study individuals and the organization and to determine an appropriate cross-functional solutions system. A systematic and systemic approach to engaging with the client; this is the process by which you can determine when and how to use education and information resources.*"

Burner (2010, p. 144) argues that due to their main dependence on analysis, performance analysis and training needs assessment are two distinct processes, adding that one emerges from the other. Training needs assessment is argued to be a tighter repetition of a performance analysis. Performance analysis detects areas of need within an organisation, presuming that training is element of the suggested set of solutions, though this is not always the case, whereas training needs assessment is undertaken to articulate, verify and resolved

distinctively what training is required and how best to bring such training to the performers needing it (Burner, 2010).

One of the performance analysis models is that of Gilbert (1996); the '*Behavior Engineering Model*'. Binder (1998, p. 48) refers to Thomas F. Gilbert as contributing a number of influential ideas and models concerning the practice of improving human performance in organisations. Gilbert's most important of such practices and models was emphasising the products of behaviour rather than focusing on behaviour itself (Binder, 1998). Gilbert's model describes a stimulus-response-reinforcer relationships among three means of behaviour, that is, information (stimulus), instrumentation (response), and motivation (reinforce) on two levels' The two levels comprise the environment (the organisation) and the individual, as illustrated in Figure 2.3.

Key to Gilbert's model is that the ensuing six components of the model are not meant to be understood in isolation, and according to Gilbert (1996) the six components represent six ways of examining the same event. Gilbert's (1996) model is summarised as follows (in Burner, 2010, p. 144):

Environmental Supports
Information = Data: performance feedback, performance expectations, and guides to performance;
Instrumentation = Instruments: science-based tools and materials needed for work;

Motivation = Incentives: financial, non-monetary, and career development opportunities;

Repertory of Behavior
Information= Knowledge: scientifically designed training and placement of workers;
Instrumentation = Capacity: Considered and tailored approaches to maximizing workers' abilities;
Motivation = Motives: assessing and understanding extant motives, selecting motivationally aligned workers. (Gilbert, 1996).

S^D Information	R Instrumentation	S_r Motivation
Data 1. Relevant and frequent feedback about the adequacy of performance 2. Descriptions of what is expected of performance 3. Clear and relevant guides to adequate performance	Instruments 1. Tools and materials of work designed scientifically to match human factors	Incentives 1. Adequate financial incentives made contingent upon performance 2. Nonmonetary incentives made available 3. Career development opportunities
Knowledge 1. Scientifically designed training that matches the exemplary performance 2. Placement	Capacity 1. Flexible scheduling of performance to match peak capacity 2. Prothesis 3. Physical shaping 4. Adaptation 5. Selection	Motives 1. Assessment of people's motives to work 2. Recruitment of people to match the realities of the solution

The left column of the table contains, aligned with the first data row: **E Environmental Supports**, and aligned with the second data row: **P Person's Repertory of Behavior**.

Figure 2.3. Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model
Source: Gilbert, 2007, p. 88).

Gilbert (2007) maintains that his model serves one purpose only; it helps observing behaviour in a systematic way and also to ask obvious questions; that is, the questions often forgotten to ask, toward the specific end of improving human competence. The model can also help seeing where and how many 'experts' on human behavior might serve people. It can be argued, based on the analysis of Gilbert's model, that it is a form of mainly person analysis as well as a form of task analysis.

Another performance analysis model is the Six Boxes^TM Model introduced by Binder (1998). This model is described by Binder (1998, p. 48) as "*A Descendent of Gilbert' Behavior Engineering Model.*" This model, like Gilbert's behavioral engineering model, consists of six boxes, which are arranged in two rows of three boxes. The first row examines the environment and the second row examines the individual, as depicted in Figure 2.4.

	(1) Expectations and Feedback	(2) Tools and Resources	(3) Consequences and Incentives
Environment			
Individual	(4) Skills and Knowledge	(5) Selection and Assignment (Capacity)	(6) Motives and Preferences (Attitude)

Figure 2.4. The Six Boxes^{TM} Model.
(Source: Binder, 1998, p. 50).

Binder (1998, pp. 49-50) provides a full discussion of the six boxes model. A summary of the parts of this model is provided by Burner (2010, p. 152), as follows:

Environment

Box 1—Expectations and Feedback: clearly stated performance objectives and processes plus performance feedback;

Box 2—Tools and Resources: everything the performer needs to meet the stated performance objectives, from the tangible to intangible, for example, workstation to mentoring; and

Box 3—Consequences and Incentives: results of the performer's efforts, typically compensation and incentives, but extends to intended and unintended, positive and negative outcomes.

Individual

Box 4—Skills and Knowledge: what the performer needs to know and do to be successful;

Box 5—Selection and assignment: performer characteristics that are a prerequisite to organizational membership; and

Box 6—Motives and Preferences: individual performer's drivers and druthers.

A third model is the PIP Model, developed by Harless (1987) [PIP = Performance improvement process]. Harless (1987) included in his PIP model a new process, referred to as front-end analysis. The PIP model presented a basis on which numerous later models have been developed (Stolovitch and Keeps, 2006). This model consists of many steps linked to each other, as summarized below:

1. *Plan and organize the performance improvement program;*
2. *Conduct organization alignment to identify improvement projects to be undertaken;*
3. *Conduct project alignment to produce plan for each project;*
4. *Conduct front-end analysis for each project to produce recommendations for interventions needed (Design and develop personnel selection intervention, Design and develop skills for knowledge intervention, Design and develop environment intervention; Design and develop motivation-incentive);*
5. *Test, revise, and implement interventions;*
6. *Evaluate projects;*
7. *On-going monitoring for continuous improvement. This step links to Step 4 above.*

The three performance analysis models share some common features. For example, they refer to issues such as motives/incentives, skills/knowledge, and selection/assignment.

In Libya, and also in other Arab countries, training needs are not satisfactorily identified, and state-owned companies provide their managers with training programmes without assessing their training needs and making sure that such needs are fulfilled by attending these programmes (Abdulrahim, 2011). This has resulted in rather wide discrepancies in the knowledge and skill levels of those managers attending such programmes (Abdulrahim, 2011). Agnaia (1996) gave an example of training needs assessment in Libyan state-owned companies, indicating that oil companies have difficulty in identifying the training required for their employees. Concerning weaknesses related to the training system in Libyan companies, it is argued that there are unsystematic training approaches operating in Libyan oil companies and that some employees are nominated for training as a reward for long service (Maihub, 1992). Agnaia (1996, p. 39) identifies some factors which, he believes, lie behind these problems:

- *Training programmes are not based on identified needs, which have led to difficulties in evaluating these programmes.*
- *There are economic, political and social factors which provide some constraints on these programmes."*

Nonetheless, Agnaia (1996) did not elaborate on or explain what the economic, political and social factors are. Nonetheless, in the Libyan context, Landy and Conte's OTP model is influenced by the government, through the General People's Committee for Education and Scientific Research (the merger of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research) (see Chapter Three, Section 3.5), which has much stronger decision making role in Libya than it does in Western countries. However, as a result of the collapse of the old regime, these committees have been disbanded, and play no role at all in the new regime.

2.3   Human Resource Development

The term HRD, like other related terms, such as HRM, has been defined from different perspectives by different authors. Nonetheless, notwithstanding the numerous attempts to define the field of HRD, "*consensus does not yet exist on a specific definition of what HRD is and includes*" (McGuire, 2011, p. 1). Abdullah (2009) argues that academics, researchers and professionals have attempted to define HRD. McGuire (2011, p. 1) has recently reported that a number of authors have refused to define HRD, citing Blake (1995) who argued that *"the field of HRD defies definition and boundaries. It's difficult to put into a box*" (Blake, 1995, p. 2). Korte (2011, p 1) also argues that within HRD, researchers "*continue to grapple with the definition and theoretical foundations of the field.*" Korte (2011) also indicates that at the extremes, there are those, for example, Lee (2001) and McLean and McLean (2001), who argue for a pluralistic and multidisciplinary stance which strains the limits of definition; and also those authors, for example, Swanson (2001, 2009) and Wang and Swanson (2008), who argue for a more focused perception founded on systems theory, economics, or psychology as the main theoretical foundations of the field. Korte (2011) argues that considering together the arguments for and against many definitions and foundational theories have created multiple views of HRD, and, according to Abdullah (2009), this has engendered confusion in

the literature, and demonstrated the subtle nature of HRD; as a result, a universal and definite

conceptual definition of HRD has not yet been ascertained. This agrees with Beardwell and

Claydon's (2007) views in this field, who indicated that HRD is often applied loosely, which

causes problems of definition. It has been conceptualised differently by different theorists,

and the way it is also operationalised differently by different organisations (El-Sawad, 2002).

El-Sawad (p. 285) maintains that although there is concurrence regarding the broad objective

of human resource development, that is, "*to enhance individual (and hence organisational)*

development and performance, disagreement centres on the means to this end." She argued

that despite the fact a simple though comprehensive definition is often an advantageous

starting point for exploring a specific concept, the extent of the human resource development

concept, and the ensuing lack of a consensus definition, confounds such treatment.

McGuire (2011, pp. 4-5) cites 25 definitions of HRD found in the relevant literature,

indicating that *"[E]xamining these definitions provides an insight into the development of the*

field over time and the interests served by HRD" (p. 3). These definitions are listed in

Appendix 2. The earliest definition of HRD by Harbison and Myers (1964):

> "*...the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills and the capacities of all the*
> *people in a society. In economic terms, it could be described as the accumulation of*
> *human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In*
> *political terms, HRD prepares people for adult participation in the political process,*
> *particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view,*
> *the development of human resources helps people lead fuller and richer lives, less*
> *bound to tradition. In short, the processes of HRD unlock the door to modernization*"
> (Harbison and Myers, 1964, in McGuire, 2011, p. 4).

This definition, according to McGuire (2011), acknowledges the role HRD plays at an

economic and societal level, and perceives HRD as a means for modernising and advancing

society as a whole. Harbison and Myers' definition also contrasts with the emphasis

identified by later definitions that are inclined to focus on the individuals' and organisations'

interests (McGuire, 2011). There is certain evidence of recent expansion of the boundaries of

HRD (McLean and Wang, 2007). For example, McGuire (2011) quotes Donovan and Marsick (2000) arguing that HRD at present includes organisational leadership, organisational values, workforce development and labour economics, and also quotes Dilworth (2003) indicating that it includes strategic change management, knowledge management, insourcing and outsourcing of training, team-building and leadership development within the boundaries of HRD. Stewart and McGoldrick (1996, p. 1) argue that the issue of what it is, "*is not yet amenable to a definitive answer,*" instead they offer a provisional definition, as follows:

> "*Human resource development encompasses activities and processes which are intended to have impact on organisational and individual learning. The term assumes that organisations can be constructively conceived of as learning entities, and that the learning processes of both organisations and individuals are capable of influence and direction through deliberate and planned intervention. Thus, HRD is constituted by planned interventions in organisational and individual learning processes.*"

The last sentence of this definition specifically sums up the tentative model of human resource development, suggested by Stewart and McGoldrick (Stewart, 1999). This definition, as argued by Beardwell and Claydon (2007, p. 257), "*emphasises HRD of the individual and her or his relation to the organisation,*" though it can be perceived much more broadly than this. Watkins (1989, p.427; 1995, p. 2) provided a definition of HRD [not included in McGuire's (2011) list in Appendix 2] maintaining that HRD includes issues such as training, career development and organisational development:

> "*Human resource development is the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group, and organizational levels. As such, it includes—but not limited to—training, career development, and organisational development.*"

HRD can be differentiated from training and development based on a several issues. For example, HRD can be perceived as a rational construction that utilises existing discourses to construct activities which are concerned with training and development in a new way, given that HRD is framed as being strategic, proactive, and organisational-oriented (Sambrook,

2002, p. 384). The literature (for example, Swanson and Holton, 2009; Werner and DeSimone, 2012) argues that training and development is one component of HRD; organisational development and career development are the two other components of HRD. Rothwell et al. (2003, p. 3) differentiate between training; HRD and Work Place Performance (WLP). Differences between training and HRD are highlighted given that WLP is outside the scope of this study. As regards the meaning, goals, and nature of training and HRD, Rothwell et al. (2003, p. 3) refer to training as: "*Thorough planned learning interventions, training focuses on identifying and developing key competences that enable employees to perform their current jobs,*" whereas HRD "*is the integrated use of training and development, organization development, and organizational career to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness.*"

In terms of the key goals of training and HRD, Rothwell et al. (2003, p. 3) indicate that the key goal of training is improved knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to the job; whereas the key goal of HRD is to integrate training and development, organizational development, and career development for the purpose of accomplishing performance by means of planned learning. As regards the nature of each field, training and development is argued to focus on three-fold purposes of giving individuals the knowledge and skills they need to perform, and help them to formulate and realise career goals, as well as helping individuals to interact effectively in groups.

Hence, it can be argued that HRD is an umbrella under which there are three components and that HRD is a multifunction field and that HRD can be conceived as being more strategic and proactive approach relative to training function, which is thought of as involving reactive, step-by-step interventions in response to specific problems (Wilson, 1999). HRD is considered to be more positive than training, since it furthers the involvement of a number of stakeholders rather than just the training providers (Harrison, 2002). HRD, according to Joy-

Matthews et al., 2004), requires that individuals must be future-oriented; that is, to anticipate knowledge and skills required in the future, rather than only reacting after the problems have occurred.

The present study is an HRD study given that training needs assessment, and training and development are two of the areas of HRD. Staff training and development (T&D) comprises "*the largest realm of HRD activity*" (Swanson and Holton, 2001, p. 204). Training needs assessments are argued to be fundamental to the effective generation of data and information (Garavan et al., 2007). These analyses have value in deciding which problems can be resolved by HRD, and a number of HRD theories emphasise that the skills which employees have should be managed and controlled (Fomburn et al., 1984). The literature, for example, Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992), maintain that any strategic change in direction, adaptation of policy or procedures or adjustment of structures and work systems should be assessed for its impacts in terms of learning needs. It is also imperative that when HRD strategies are selected, compliance with the organisation strategy and culture has to be taken into consideration (Garavan et al., 2007). Sims (2006, p. 57) argues that an efficient human resource development cannot develop unsystematically in reaction to problems as they happen; rather a planned, as well as methodical approach to developing training endeavours necessitates that some kind of needs assessment has to be undertaken to compare the benefits of the endeavours with the anticipated costs and resolve the long-term consequences of the programme. This clearly indicates that training needs assessment is a key element of human resource development, and according to Sims (2006, p. 57), there is the "*need for ongoing training needs assessment.*" Sims (2006) also maintains that when the need for needs assessment is being considered or where there might be alternative, the needs assessment step becomes fundamental, and that such a step also concentrates on the impact adding to the human resource development workload. Sims (2006) concludes that a well planned and

centralised human resource development field expects needs, protect against crises, and eradicates duplication of services.

Sound planning for human resource development is argued that it should at all times include certain self-assessment by the HRD area, such as, by means of undertaking human resource development audit, focusing on future trends which may possibly influence the organisation and the HRD programme, establishing goals for the function and objectives, as well as the development of training plans which are responsive to the organisation's existing and future training needs given the organisation's strategic agenda (Sims, 2006). Sound planning aids HRD professionals to make things taking place in the organisation in contrast of watching things taking place, and with such planning, HRD professional perceive needs assessment as an instrument to help the organization identify problems and opportunities which might be best dealt with by either training or non-training interventions or both (Sims, 2006). The role of HRD needs assessment, as perceived by HRD professionals, is to work with other members of the organisation in order to determine the nature and extent of performance problems or learning opportunities and prospective solutions (Sims, 2006). Sims (2006) used the term 'HRD needs assessment; possibly using it as interchangeably with or as a synonym of training needs assessment. Ganihar, N.N. and Nayak, S.V. (2007) indicated that HRD has been viewed as synonymous with training and development, and that some organisations renamed training department as HRD departments.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is about boosting organisational performance as a result of the effective development and use of organisational human resources (El-Sawad, 2002). HRD, according to Joy-Matthews et al. (2004), is a term which has been in current use during the past two [and half] decades despite the fact that it is a fairly new field of management practice and inquiry. Joy-Matthews et al. (2004, p. 4) argue that HRD is set, similar to other general management, "*against a background of turbulence and change in*

organizational life, changes in business environments, work processes and organizational cultures, which drives a need for successful change management strategies." This is due to the fact that organisations need to adjust to rapid changes given that they operate in a highly technological environment, to manufacture high quality goods as well as to develop new products to stay competitive in the global market place (Hargreaves and Jarvis, 2000).

Wilson (2005, p.6) maintains that HRD is the term he uses to describe "*an integrated and holistic, conscious and proactive approach to changing work-related knowledge and behaviour using a range of learning strategies and techniques.*" He adds that such strategies and techniques are in the main planned to help individuals, groups and organisations achieve their comprehensive potential for operating in a way which allows for individuality; yet, enhances effectiveness within specific framework. A more recent definition of HRD has been put forward by Werner and De Simone (2011, p. 4): "*HRD can be defined as a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands.*" For the purposes of this study, Werner and DeSimone's (2011) definition of HRD will be adopted, given that the management of the investigated company tries to provide its employees with training opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills and to improve their attitudes. It also supports Stewart's (2003) work (model of HRD, Figure 2.5, described below) which clearly illustrates that HRD consists of three systematic and planned activities to facilitate, direct and change knowledge, skills, values, competence and culture, which lead to changing behaviour. One of the study objectives is to: "*Explore Training and development perspectives and the range of models of training needs assessment (TNA) used in HRD practices*" (see Chapter One, Section 1.4).

In 2003, Stewart developed a new model of HRD (Figure 2.5), arguing that three points come from his 1999 definition, arguing that the last sentence of that definition, referred to above

includes the essence of the definition; the second point is that the highlighted words are critical, maintaining that interventions "*abound in everyday experience, but only those which are intended, deliberate and planned constitute HRD practice or processes*" (p. 89); and the third point is that there are two key components of HRD: interventions and learning process. Stewart (2003) argues that it is essential to explain his HRD model, indicating that this model clearly illustrates no direct connection between intervention and learning, since there is no necessary and definitely causal relationship that a direct connection might suggest. He explained that the down right side of the model indicates that both biological and social views would support the perspective that learning is an influencing factor on behaviour. The down left side suggests that interventions represent HRD practice, in which three commonly identified categories of education, training and development are described (Stewart, 2003). Issues relating to training and development are discussed later in Section 2.6.
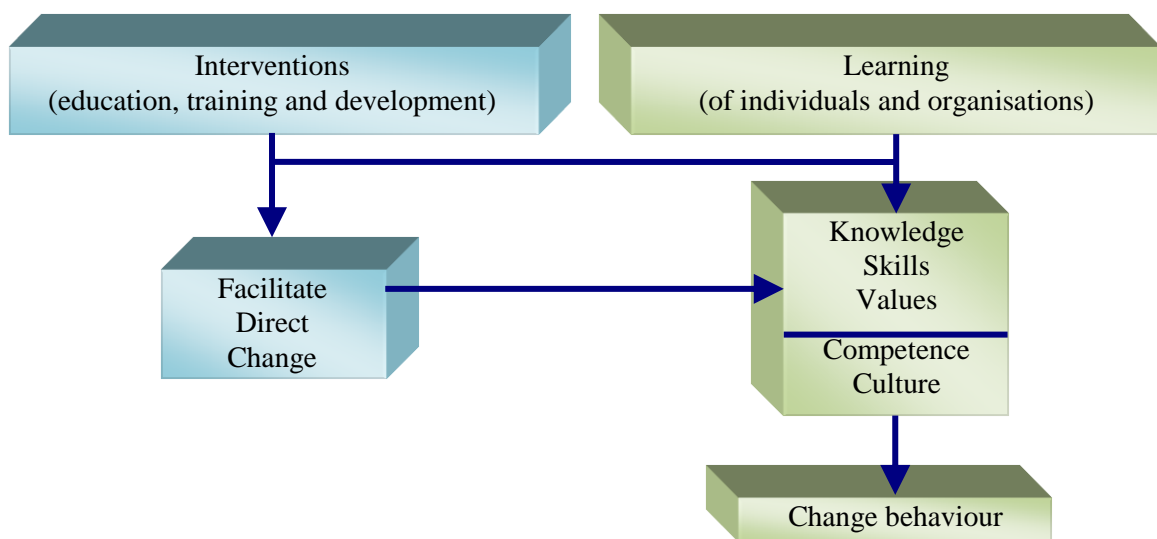
Figure 2.5. A model of HRD

(Source: Stewart, 2003, p. 89).

Human resource development is one of the primary functions of human resource management (HRM) (Sims, 2006; Werner and De Simone, 2011). HRM has been defined differently by

different authors. For example, Storey (2001, p. 6) defines HRM in a way that may suggest that ideologies relating to an integration of culture, organisational hierarchy and personnel performance are associated with HRM:

> "*a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel technique.*"

Armstrong (2012) maintains that the literature has reported extensive discussion, largely by academics, concerning the organisational relationships between HRM and HRD. Armstrong adds that in general there is a consensus in the literature that HRM and HRD are strongly linked and in the majority of organisations the HRD function is a component of the human resources (HR) function. Walton (1999, p. 146) refers to the Cabinet Office which, in 1995, summarises this as follows:

> "*The usual definitions of HRM and HRD often seek to put boundaries between the two. But the theoretical and practical perimeters are extremely blurred. For example, most HRM systems (eg performance management) contain a strong HRD element. In practice it is not particularly useful to maintain artificial distinctions. Indeed it could be argued that the whole system of ideas embodied in an HR approach argues for a single, integrated set of policies covering all aspects of people management.*"

It has been concluded that HRD has been established to complement HRM (Sambrook and Stewart, 1998). O'Donnell et al. (2006, p. 9) argue that it is practically unfeasible for HRD to evade, or operates in superlative isolation from, HRM.

However, the literature also reports certain differences between HRM and HRD. Andrews (2009, pp. 26-28) argues that HRM conventionally has been reactive rather than proactive, having its main focus on: improving productivity, improving quality of work life, responding to the environment (internal and external environments), and making the human resources cost efficient.

In contrast, HRD embraces an entirely new philosophy. Andrews (2009, p. 28) maintains that first of all, HRD perceives *"employees as an asset with potential for development for the individual and organisational good."* He concludes that (p. 28):

- *Every person has a potential arising from his/her strengths.*
- *Potentials are of different types in different people suiting different roles and situations.*
- *In the same role people may have more or less potential.*
- *At any given time, whatever the level of achievement, a person's potential is under-utilised.*
- *Potential changes in complexion with better utilisation.*
- *Potential can temporarily erode due to disuse or misuse.*

Another function of HRM, which is also linked to HRD and training needs assessment, is human resource planning (HRP). HRP fits in with the planning for training and development of the organisation's employees, given that planning is one of the managerial functions of HRM. This view is substantiated by Compton et al. (2009) who indicated that one of the key purposes of HRP is that HRP provides a foundation for planning workforce development which gives rise to using employees' aptitudes. Compton et al. (2009) argue that the key underlying principle is to make sure that firms have enough employees having the essential skills, knowledge and abilities to efficiently produce the goods or services needed to attain organisational objectives. Zula (2007) argues that strategic planning acts as the guide for instituting long-term plans as well as the objectives to attain such plans for businesses, maintaining that one means for these plans to succeed is human resource planning. Required skills, knowledge and abilities are further obtained or increased through staff training and development.

2.4   Training and Development

Training and development, according to Estep (2008, p. 27), highlights identifying, assuring, and helping develop, by means of planning learning, the main capabilities which allow individuals to perform existing or future tasks. Estep (2008) adds that training and

development's main emphasis is on individuals in their job roles, and that the key training and development solution is planning individual learning, whether achieved by means of training, on-the-job learning, coaching, or other measures of advancing individual learning.

Werner and DeSimone (2011) argue that training and development focuses on changing or expanding individuals' knowledge, skills and attitudes, adding that training usually involves providing the workforce with the knowledge and skills to help them perform particular activities or jobs, as well as possibly changes in attitude might be attempted. Developmental activities, on the other hand, have a longer-term focus on the preparation for future work tasks and in the meantime increasing workforce's' competencies to perform their current jobs (Werner and DeSimone, 2011).

Training, according to Gibb (2008, p. 5), is defined as "*learning and development undertaken for the purposes for supporting development and maintenance of operational capability in employment: skills for work and in work, on-job or off-job, to enable effective performance in a job or role.*" This definition focuses on purposes of providing skills to facilitate perform a job or a role. In the Libyan context, Article 1 of Law No. 37 of 1973, and Law No. 97 of 1990 define training as follows (quoted in Al-Zawie, 1991, pp. 7-8).

> "*Training means preparing, and qualifying individuals by providing them with necessary skills and knowledge, and by altering their attitudes in different activities in order to promote their productivity and to cover quantity and quality shortages which contribute towards achieving the goals of development plan.*"

Off-the-job training is defined as: "*Training provided away from the job site*" (Hodgetts and Kroeck, 1992, p. 375). On-the-job training is either structured or unstructured. Unstructured on-the-job training takes place when trainees are trained on job knowledge and skills from unplanned explanations or presentations by others, "*through trial and error questioning on their own; or simply initiating the behaviour of others*" (Jacobs, 2003, p. 22). Structured on-

the-job training, on the other hand, is defined as: "*One-on-one training that occurs at or near the actual work setting and is delivered by a designated trainer who follows specific written guidelines; provides observable and measureable performance objectives and is developed and delivered in an orderly and systematic manner*" (Walter, 2002, p. 3). Jacobs (2003, pp. 28-29) defines it as follows: "*The planned process of developing competence on units of work by having an experienced employee train a novice employee at work setting or a location that closely resembled the work setting*" (Jacobs, 2003, pp. 28-29).

Development is a "*long-term change effort intended to broaden individuals through experience and to give them new insights about themselves and their organisation*" (Botha and Coetzee, 2007, p. 49). Development is distinguished from both training and education, and is defined as: "*learning which changes the whole person in some substantial way and helps people to grow, not just to change their vocational skill level or academic knowledge*" (Gibb, 2008, p. 5). Gibb also indicates that development is a task which faces people always, from childhood throughout lifespan. Table 2.5 compares training and development.

Table 2.5.　　Comparison between training and development

	Training	*Development*
Focus[1,2]	Current job	Current and future jobs
Scope[2]	Individual employees	Work group or organisation
Time Frame[2]	Immediate	Long Term
Use of work experiences[1]	Low[1]	High[1]
Goal[1,2]	Preparation for current job[1]; Fix current skill deficit[2]	Preparation for change[1]; Prepare for future work[2]
Participation[1]	Required[1]	Voluntary[1]

Sources: (1) Noe (2002, p. 283), (2) Gómez-Mejia et al. (2003, p. 260).

2.5   International Human Resource Development

Human resource development roles and competencies, from a global point of view, are affected by the culture and value systems of the country, government policies on HRD, the level economic development, life cycle of the discipline, and the nature of the organisation (McLean and McLean, 2001). The present study can benefit from pratices of international human resource development (IHRD), given that some of these practices can be employed in a Libyan context and also in relation to the investigated company. IHRD has been defined in various ways. For example, McLean and McLean (2001, p. 322) defines IHRD as:

> *"…any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group or team gain, or for the benefit of an organisation, community, nation or ultimately, the whole of humanity."*

However, the most recent and broader definition of IHRD is that of Wang and McLean (2007, p. 105) who define the term as:

> *"a field of study and practice that focuses on for-profit, not-for-profit, and/or governmental entities and individuals cooperating in some form across national borders. The purpose of this interaction is systematically to tap existing human potential and intentionally shape work-based, community-based, society-based, culture-based, and politically based expertise through multiple means for the purpose of improving cross-national relationships collaboratively across all involved entities through greater mutual understanding, improved individual and organizational performance, improved standards of living and quality of life, reduced conflict between entities and individuals, and any other criteria that would be deemed useful by the involved entities. International HRD is aspiration rather than realized and serves as a challenge for continuous efforts at improvement."*

Marquardt et al. (2004) indicated that HRD researchers have identified nine particular factors which distinguish existing practices of international HRD from traditional national HRD, including: learners/trainees, culture, administration, learning styles, physical and financial resources, political and economic environment, role of trainers, language, in-country HRD partners. Possibly, two of these factors relate to the present study, including administration,

and political and economic environment. The remaining factors are not of any benefit to the investigated company. All trainees are Libyan nationals. None of the Administration factors, such as transportation, relocation, cultural orientation, language translation, host government relations, housing, facilities, and support services (Marquardt et al., 2004) are not applicable to the investigated company. The learning styles in the investigated company differ from those of international organisations, and so do the physical and financial resources. The role of trainers in IHRD also differ from that of local HRD trainers, as the latter do not need to adjust their training roles, and the language used in training in the Libyan training, especially on-the-job training and local off-the-job training is Arabic. Training materials in the Libyan settings are all in Arabic. The exception is that when training in English Language courses. The culture factor in IHRD is also totally different from local HRD practices.

As regards the political and economic environment factor, the HRD programme might occur in a country in which the government is democratic or totalitarian, martial or civilian controlled (Marquardt et al., 2004). The investigated company, the LGEC, has operated for decades in a totalitarian, strictly controlled environment, and highly centralised administrative and political environment. It is worth noting that the issues discussed above in relation to the Libyan context are discussed in Chapter Three and iIssues relating to culture and its impact on HRD and TNA are explained in Section 2.7.

2.6   Human Capital Theory

Reference has been made to the term 'human capital' in Harbison and Myers' (1964) definition of HRD (Section 2.3) and also in Chapter One (Section 1.2). There is much discussion in the literature concerning the effectiveness of training (learning) and development programmes and their impacts on performance outcomes (Combs et al., 2009). Chen and Klimoski (2007) in their review of the training literature noticed a general positive relationship between training (learning) and development on organisational performance

outcomes. The literature indicates that training and development tends to lead to employee productivity improvements (Tharenou et al., 2007), skill acquirement and transfer of training are predictive of personal job performance (Alliger et al., 1997), and that training can affect performance further than the micro level; that is, teams and organisation performance (Alliger et al., 1997). Overall, an emphasis on training and development by both academics and practitioners is widespread as a consequence of its direct connections to the development of human capital (Zula and Chermack, 2007) and its relationship to organisational performance result (Salas and Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Salas and Kosarzycki, 2003). Combs et al. (2009) note that essential to such conclusions is the concept that employee training programmes, when run successfully, increase employee productivity and performance outcomes. However, though the debate above presents empirical support for the positive impacts of employee training and development interventions on performance, there exists examples in the literature in which these programmes may not yield the anticipated outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2000; Saks, 1995) and where the design of development programmes cannot explain the inconsistency found in transfer outcomes (Baldwin and Ford, 1988).

The term 'human capital, was coined by Schultz (1961), and two decades later he put forward the following definition:

> "*consider all human abilities to be either innate or acquired. Every person is born with a particular set of genes, which determined his innate ability. Attributes of acquired population quality, which are valuable and can be augmented by appropriate investment, will be treated as human capital*" (Schultz, 1981, p. 21).

Bontis et al. (1999, p. 393) presented the following detailed definition of human capital:

> "*Human capital represents the human factor in the organisation; the combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organisation its distinctive character. The human elements of the organisation are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative thrust which if properly motivated can ensure the long run survival of the organisation.*"

The concept of human capital is argued to be most favourably perceived as a bridging concept; in other words, it defines the link between human resource practices and firm performance in terms of assets rather than firm processes (Scarborough and Elias, 2002). Scarborough and Elias (2002, p. 5) maintain that "*human capital is to a large extent non-standardized, tacit, dynamic, context dependent and embodied in people.*"

Schuller (2000) argues that the concept of human capital focuses on the economic behaviour of individuals, mainly on the way their accumulation of knowledge and skills allows them to increase their productivity and their earnings, and hence, increasing the productivity and wealth of the societies they live in. He adds that the basic implication of a human capital perspective is that investment in knowledge and skills produces economic returns, individually and collectively.

Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) argue that human capital theory emphasises how education increases the productivity and competence of employees by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human potential which is a product of intrinsic capabilities and investment in human beings. Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008, p. 158) add that the "*provision of formal education is seen as a productive investment in human capital, which the proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more equally worthwhile than that of physical capital.*"

2.7 Training and Development in the Middle East

The 'Middle East' defines a cultural region; hence, it lacks exact borders (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). While there are various versions of what is included in the Middle East region, for the purposes of the present study, North African countries with clear connection to Islam (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia, are included in addition to other Arab countries, Iran, Turkey and Israel).

The current literature lists a number of training and development-related studies for the

Middle East (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2006). This literature underlines the absence of efforts by practitioners concerning Arab management styles and their effect of the efficiency of cross-cultural negotiation and organisational development activities in the Middle East (Ali, 1996).

Budhwar and Mellahi (2006) reported that the literature about the Middle East also highlighted the impact of Arab culture (see for example, Al-Faleh, 1987; Bakhtari, 1995; Mellahi, 2003; Yasin, 1996) as well as Arab value systems (see Ali and Al-Shakis, 1985; Elsayed-Elkhouly and Buda, 1997; Hunt and At-Twaijri, 1996) on management practices and management. Ali (1995) argues that relevant management theories and organisations in the Arab countries can be worked out by giving due consideration to the Arab environment, in which foreign element is at best not contributing to developing sound management practices in the Middle East.

Al-Rasheed (2001) suggests that Arab management and Arab organisations are mainly traditional that is manifested in certain characteristics which are limited in future orientation and lack of delegation of authority. In a similar way, in the Turkish context, it was found that managers in public organisations are inclined to lean toward a compassionate authoritarian system but less toward participative styles (Yucelt, 1984). Yucelt (1984) suggested introducing participative managerial system to train future managers prior to assuming managerial responsibility.

Debrah and Budhwar (2004) indicate that Middle Eastern countries might have management systems which highlight sensitivity to local cultural customs and constrained participation in decision making. Ali (1992, 2004) and Tayeb (1997) emphasised the important impact of Islamic values, Islamic work ethics and Islamic doctrine on the management of human resources in Islamic countries. Culture in the Arab countries is argued to be closely linked to religion, given that this culture relates to all aspects of life among Moslems (Almhdie and

Nyambegera, 2004). Aswathappa (2010) argues that religion motivates society members to fulfil their responsibilities and commitments by passing on meaning and purpose to such activities. Religion is one of the most essential and characteristic aspects of Arab culture (Obeidat et al., 2012), and the literature (for example, Kalliny and Gentry, 2007; Shahin and Wright, 2004) has identified religion as a prevailing variable that influences nearly all aspects of the Arab culture. Islam is perceived as being the factor that has helped form culture within Islamic countries in general; and within Arab countries in particular (Obeidat et al., 2012). Arabic language, social life, and traditions are all rooted in Islam which is considered to be a complete way of life (Kavoossi, 2000). Almhdie and Nyambegera (2004) argue that the main sources of Arab managerial conceptualisation and practices include Islam, Arab culture, the Westernisation impact, and the political, economic, and social systems. However, Arabs and Muslims link 'modernisation' with 'westernisation', and this link between 'modernisation' and 'westernisation' emerged in the Middle East, first in Turkey in the 1920s, when Turkey was established under Kamal Ataturk as a secular state (Jones, 2010). This is followed by Iran after the Second World War (Daniel, 2001) and later on in the mid 1950 by Egypt (Cleveland, 2004). Further discussion of this topic is provided in Chapter Six (Section 6.7.2).

In Libya, management practices are said to be ineffectively undertaken so as to meet required standards as a result of political and cultural factors (Agnaia, 1996). In public sector companies, on the other hand, it is difficult for foreign nationals to occupy jobs due to the selection requirements imposed by the Libyan authorities (Almhdie and Nyambegera, 2004).

The responsibility for training and development in Libya is divided between education, planning and treasury (Agnaia, 1996; Almhdie and Nyambegera, 2004). Accordingly, companies face major problems obtaining the information and finances they need (Almhdie and Nyambegera, 2004). This is a problem in the majority of developing countries, given that their educational systems were designed or influenced by the former colonial powers

(Almhdie and Nyambegera, 2004), and such educational system, according to Banutu-Gomez (2002), is not effective regarding the challenges, growth and opportunities required for the twenty-first century companies in developing economies. In spite of all the problems encountered, such as the shortage of appropriately trained staff, some managers resist attending training and development programmes, as they perceive this as an admission of incompetence, and the apparent adverse consequences for their careers and social status (Almhdie and Nyambegera, 2004).

2.8   Organisational Culture

The term 'culture' has been referred to above on many occasions, for example, compliance with the organisation's culture has to be taken into consideration when organisational HRD strategies are selected (Garavan et al., 2007), organisational cultures (among other factors) as driving a need for successful change management strategies (Joy-Matthews et al., 2004), defining HRD in relation to culture (and also other factors) (Abdullah, 2009), and many citations above. Schein (2010, p. 18) defines culture as:

> "*a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.*"

Schein (2010) argues that organisational culture comprises three major levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (See Table 2.6).

The literature (for example, Denison and Spreitzer, 1991; Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Pisapia, 2009) identifies four types of organisational cultures: Group culture, developmental culture, hierarchical culture, and rational culture (Figure 2.6).

Table 2.6. The three levels of culture

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1. **Artifacts**
   - Visible and feelable structures and processes
   - Observed behaviour
     ─ Difficult to decipher
2. **Espoused Beliefs and Values**
   - Ideals, goals, values, aspirations
   - Ideologies
   - Rationalization
     ─ May or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts
3. **Basic Underlying Assumptions**
   - Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values
     ─ Determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling

Source: Schein (2010, p. 24).

Flexibility and Adaptability

Internal Focus and Integration

Group Culture
Flexibility and internal focus
Affiliation/Belonging
Information sharing trust/Nurturing
Participation

Developmental Culture
Flexibility and external focus
External support and
Resource acquisition
Adaptation and Entrepreneurship

External Focus and Differentiation

Hierarchical Culture
Flexibility and internal focus
Structure and Control
Clear rules and documentation
Continuity and Control

Rational Culture
Stability and external focus
Results oriented
Competition and productivity
Efficiency and accomplishment

Stability and Control

Figure 2.6.   The four culture patterns of competing values framework.
(Adopted from Pisopia, 2009, p. 95).

Organisational culture is argued to have a strong impact on training and development outcomes (Garavan et al., 1995; Salas et al., 2012). Garavan et al. (1995) argue that organisational culture presumes importance mostly due to the organisation's strategy, the type

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of people holding power, and the organisation's structure and system reflecting the prevailing managerial ideology or culture. Horwath and Morrison (1999) argue that organisational culture toward training effects the approach to and the results of training needs analysis in relation to who determines whose needs. In his paper, "Training Failure as a Consequence of Organizational Culture", Bunch (2007) suggests that ill-conceived or poorly implemented training programmes reflect more than incompetence or unwillingness; rather he argues that training failure can be a manifestation of the values, beliefs, and assumptions [that is, the elements of the organisational culture] shared by members of different levels of organisational culture. Bunch (2007) also adds that the indifference for sound practices is an immediate cause of failure, as well as a reflection of cultural barriers which can impede the best-designed programme.

2.9   Discussion of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two focused mainly on the literature relating to training needs assessment (TNA), followed by reviewing, analysing and discussing literature concerning related topics to training assessment, including human resource development (HRD), training and development, international HRD, training and development in the Middle East, and organisational culture.

Authors (for example, Erasmus et al., 2006; van Eerde et al., 2008; Du Plessis et al., 2010) indicate that assessment of training needs is the initial step in planning a training programme and can be associated with the organisational success. The literature (for example, Gilley and Eggland, 1989; Swist, 2001; Brown, 2002; Tao et al., 2006; Bowman and Wilson (2008); Van Eerde et al., 2008; Landy and Conte, 2010 and others cited in Chapter Two, Sections 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, and 2.2.5) relating to training needs assessment was reviewed and discussed in some detail, given the importance of assessing the company's training needs. At this stage of the study, the definition of training needs assessment provided by Rossett (1987)

is still adopted; though needs assessment definition by Du Plessis et al. (2010) might be also useful to examine and amend later in this study, as part of the study contribution to knowledge. Some authors, including, Brown (2002), McClelland (2002) and Swist (2001) point to the rationale for undertaking training needs assessment, including the following: determining the type of training required by the workforce, determining whether training makes the difference, distinguishing training needs from organisational problems; linking improved job performance with the organisation's goals and bottom line; ensuring the development of training programmes based on identified needs; and relatively easy to implement. Authors such as Anderson (1994), Vaughn (2005), Barbazette (2006) and Olivas (2007) identify a number of formal needs assessment methods often used to identify group needs, such as, critical incident techniques, gap analysis, objective knowledge and skills tests, observation, revalidation, self-assessment, video assessment, and peer review, and also refers to interviews, questionnaires, tests, group problem analyses, records and report studies, and job analysis and performance review as the most useful assessment approaches methods in HRD. This discussion was of importance to the present study as it identified two models of training needs assessment (Oliva's, 2007 model, and Vaughn's 2005 model) which were used as the basis to put forward a training needs assessment framework in a Libyan context, which include other factors that affect the determination of training needs assessment in a Libyan context. However, at this stage of the study, such factors have not been established. Responses to semi-structures interview questions by managers responsible for training in the GLEC, and responses of focus groups members to interview question will determine these factors and how they affect the process of training needs assessment. These factors will be taken into consideration and will be added to the final version of the proposed framework in Chapter Six.

Recent literature (Abdulrahim, 2011) reports that in Libya, and other Arab countries, training needs are not satisfactorily identified, and that public sector organisations offer their managers training programmes without assessing their training needs and making sure that their needs are realised by attending these programmes, which has led to rather wide discrepancies in the skill and knowledge levels of those managers attending these programmes.

Authors, for example, Gilley and Eggland (1989), Grant (2002) and Tao et al. (2006) have identified many tools used in training needs assessment, including: observation, questionnaires, key consultation, print media, interviews, focus/group discussion, tests, record reports, work sample, and checklist. Advantages and disadvantages of these tools have been highlighted in Section 2. 2.3). Findings of these authors helped in the creation of the training needs assessment framework, in terms of the methods/procedures to be used for determining employees training needs, such as using questionnaires, nomination, observation, etc., in a Libyan context.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is stated in the literature (El-Sawad, 2002) to be concerned with furthering organisational performance owing to the effective development and use of organisational human resources and to advance and contribute to preferred attitudes at work and employees' behaviour (Meyer and Smith, 2000, Bartlett, 2001, 2007; Tansky and Cohen, 2001; Benson et al., 2004; see Chapter Two, Section 2.40). Like HRM and other related terms, the term HRD has been defined in the literature in different ways and by the way it is operationalised differently by different organisations. However, it is argued that, for the purposes of the present study, Werner and DeSimone's (2009) definition of HRD is adopted ("*HRD can be defined as a set of systematic and planning activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands.*" Chapter Two, Section 2.5), given that it links with the objectives of the present study, especially with the objective to: '*Explore Training and*

development perspectives and the range of models of training needs assessment (TNA) used in HRD practices'. This can be linked to international HRD definitions in that international HRD is influenced by the culture and value systems of the country, government policies on HRD, the level of economic development, life cycle of the discipline, and the nature of the organisation (McLean and McLean, 2001). Some of the factors distinguishing current practices of international HRD from traditional national HRD include culture, administration, learning styles, and political and economic environment (Marquardt et al., 2004). These factors are discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.15As regards Human resource development (HRD) activity, the literature (El-Sawad, 2002; Meyer and Smith, 2000, Bartlett, 2001, 2007; Tansky and Cohen, 2001; Benson et al., 2004) maintains that it is typically classified under training, development and/or education. Literature relating to training and development is reviewed in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, respectively. Training has been defined in different ways, and such definitions are argued to differ in their focus or approach to training paradigm. Two main approaches to training have been identified in the literature (for example, Jacobs, 2003, Werner and De Simone, 2009): on-the-job training, provided at the workplace and off-the-job training, provided away from the workplace. On-the-job is classified as either structured, carried out on the basis of one-on-one training at or near the actual workplace, or unstructured, that is, training taking place when trainees are trained on job knowledge and skills from unplanned explanations or presentations by others. The study findings (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.1) referred to internal training, that is, on-the-job training as well as training off-the-job in some Libyan training or academic institutions, such as universities and technical institutes. The findings in Chapter Five (Section 5.2.1) also referred to overseas training (abroad off-the-job training) provided for many of the Company staff.

Finally, issues relating to international HRD were discussed, given that the TNA model designed in this study was developed within an international HRD context.

Chapter Three

Libya: A General Profile with Special Reference to Education, Training and Training and Development in LGEC

3.1   Introduction

The rationale of this chapter is to provide information concerning Libya in general, and about education, training, and training and development in the country in particular, and the key factors that play major roles in the life of the Libyan society. It was perceived important to have an idea or a background of Libya, in general, and also about its education system, especially in relation to Training and vocational education system, as well as about the country's culture that will help in discussing similar issues raised in the interviews with the managers responsible for training and employees (engineers) who have attended training programmes and courses. This chapter consists of six sections and two sub-sections. A general introduction to the chapter and to Libya is provided in this section (3.1). In Section 3.2, a general country profile of Libya is provided with regard to its geography, climate, population dynamics (growth, age and gender) and culture. Education in Libya is reviewed in Section 3.3, including an overview of secondary education (Sub-Section 3.3.1); given that early learning and training of Libyan workforce is undertaken by Higher Technical and Vocational Institutes and by higher education institutions (colleges and universities) before these individuals are recruited in various organisations as well as training at the secondary education level (Sub-Section 3.3.2). Issues relating to higher education (Section 3.4), vocational education and training (VET) (Section 3.5) and training and development sector in Libya (Section 3.6) are also reviewed.

Libya is an oil rich country, nevertheless it has one of the least diversified economies in the Maghreb region (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and among the oil producing countries, as indicated in Table 3.1. Libya has a long legacy of central economic

management and heavy dependence on the public sector, though it started its transition to a market economy in 2002 after ten years of international economic sanctions related to the Lockerbie bombing of 1988 (International Monetary Fund, 2007). Since 2006, Libya has made efforts to liberalise its economy and foreign trade, realising upward economic growth while maintaining macroeconomic stability. Libya's current secure financial situation provides an ideal opportunity to deepen structural reform, and accelerate the transition to a market economy. Libya's social indicators are favourable by Middle East and North Africa (MENA) standards (International Monetary Fund, 2007).

Table 3.1.   Libya: Comparative indicators. 2006 (in percent of GDP unless otherwise specified)

	Libya	Maghreb[1]	OPEC[2,3]
GDP per capita (in US$)	8,430	3,577	8,641
Non-hydrocarbon GDP per capita (in US$)	2,211	1,935	7,022
Share of non-hydrocarbon GDP (in total)	26.2	71.4	57.3
Real GDP growth	5.6	7.1	6.5
Government expenditure	32.3	31.1	30.3
Fiscal position (deficit)	38.6	9.9	13.3
Government Revenue	71.2	41.0	43.6
External trade balance (deficit)	51.5	12.6	19.3

Sources: WEO; and Fund staff estimates.
[1]Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia;
[2]OPEC: Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Venezuela.
[3]Excluding Iraq.

3.2   Libya: A General Country Profile

Libya is situated in North Africa and has a coastline along the Mediterranean of about 1,900 kilometres. It is bordered from the north by the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt and Sudan to the east, the Niger, Chad and Sudan to the south, and Algeria and Tunisia to the west (Figure 3.1). Libya is divided into three separate regions: Tripolitania in the north-west; Cyenaica in the east; and the Fezzan in the south-west (Otman and Karlberg, 2007, p. 1). The coastal region, which runs from west to east, is interrupted by two hilly, occasionally mountainous areas at

the western and eastern fringes of Libya, which is steadily rising as it moves towards the

south (Otman and Karlberg, 2007, p. 1). Libya has a very large land area of about 1,760,000

square kilometres, making it the fourth largest country in area among the Arab countries and

third among the African countries (Najeh, 2006; Weir et al. 2006).

Figure 3.1. Map of Libya
(Source: GeographyIQ, 2010).

The climate of Libya is characterised mainly by its aridity and wide differences in

temperatures, being influenced by both the Sahara and the Mediterranean Sea. Aridity is

claimed to have an evident limitation to the development of economic activities (Mguili,

1995).

Since independence in 1951, six censuses have been carried out. Before that, two censuses

were carried out during the Italian control. Data relating to these eight censuses are presented

in Table 3.2, and illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.2. Population growth in Libya, 1933-2006

Year	Population	Annual Growth Rate (%)
1933[1]	655,000	-
1936[1]	704,123	2.3
1954[2]	1,041,599	1.9
1964[2]	1,515,501	3.3
1973[2]	2,257,354	4.3
1984[2]	3,231,059	4.2
1995[2]	4,389,739	2.5
2006[3]	5,323,991	2.2

Sources: el Mehdawi and Clarke (1982, p.68)[1]; Secretariat of Planning (1995, p.3)[2]; Otman and Karlberg (2007)[3].
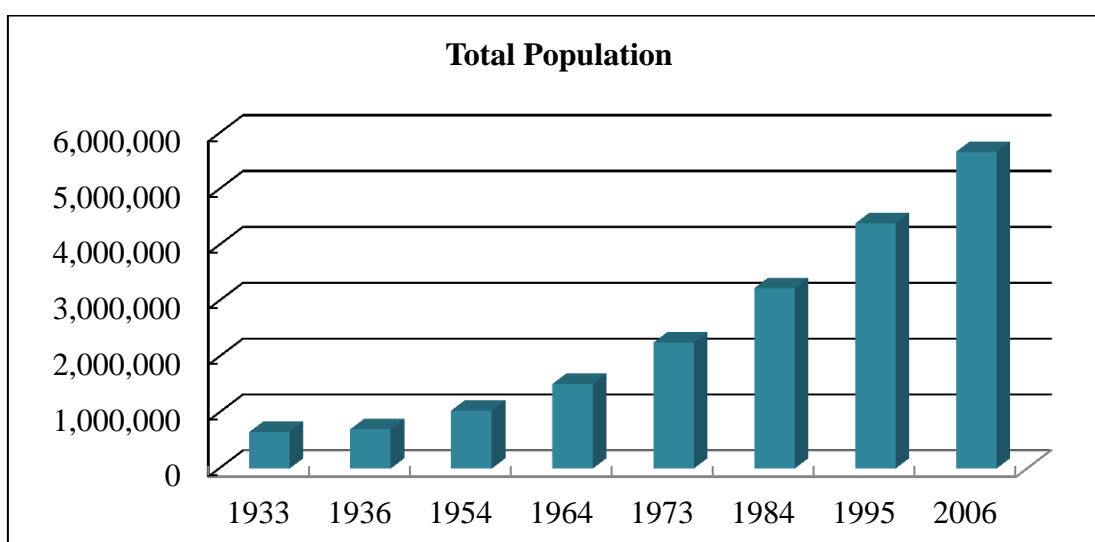
Figure 3.2.   Growth of the Libyan population between 1933 and 2006.
(Source: Data in Table 3.1).

Data presented in Table 3.1 clearly indicate that the growth rate of the Libyan population was slow before independence, as a result of high mortality rates, given the economic situation of that period of time. On the other hand, the Libyan population expanded rapidly between 1954 and 1984, with annual growth rate of around 4.0%. This high growth rate is caused by the high level of natural birth and the return of many Libyans who left the country to live in neighbouring countries during the Italian control and the Second World War (el Mehdawi and

Clarke 1982). The growth rate, however, declined to around 2.5% and 2.2% in 1995 and 2006, respectively, which indicates that the population have started a new stage of growth due to the improvement in education and participation of women in work (Elzalitni, 2008). **Al-Rubeai et al. (1983)** reported that the family size in Benghazi was 10.67 for parental generation, and 7.77 for the younger generation (1983), and a more recent data by the Pan Arab Project for Family Health (2008), the family size was reported to be around 6.1, which is lower than 1983.

As regards the Libyan population distribution according to age and gender, Data presented in Table 3.3 clearly show the dominance of Libyan population by people over 15 year old, according to the 1995 and 2006 censuses. Three fifths of the population in 1995 (2,675,467, 60.95% of the total population) were represented by people over 15 year old, and male and female populations were almost equal (50.9% males, and 49.1% females) (Otman and Karlberg, 2007). In 2006 census, 3,599,278 (67.6% of the total population) were over 15 year old. As regards the distribution of male and females in this group, it can be noticed that the over 15 year old group increased in 2006, compared to 1995 census, and the below 15 year old population declined.

Table 3.3.   Distribution of the Libyan population (1995 and 2006), according to age and gender

Population	Ages	Number in Population			Percentage of Total Population		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1995	Below 15	870,342	843,921	1,714,263	39.01	39.09	39.05
	Above 15	1,360,737	1,314,739	2,675,476	60.99	60.91	60.95
	Total	2,231,079	2,158,660	4,389,739	100.00	100.00	100.00
2006	Below 15	847,098	877,615	1,724,713	31.43	33.38	32.40
	Above 15	1,848,047	1,751,231	3,599,278	68.57	66.32	67.60
	Total	2,695,145	2,628,846	5,323,991	100.0	100.00	100.00

Source: Otman and Karlberg 2007, p. 91).

The Libyan culture has some distinctive features, in common with other Arab and Islamic countries. It involves an intimately interconnected network of relationships which take time to establish and maintain. Favouritism and the concept of '*Wasta*', generally translated as "*influence*", is a direct outcome of such personal relationships alongside family ties, trust and honour. In Libya, this relates to the significance of having personal contacts in influential places and as a result rules can be bent or things done more quickly. As a system based on giving favours in return, '*Wasta*' infuses all aspects of Libyan society and is mainly prominent in business settings. In the Arab and Middle East countries, favouritism is called '*Wasta*', which according to Loewe et al. (2007) is the Arabic word for 'relationship' and indicates the use of personal connections to obtain preferential treatment. Loewe et al. (2007, p. 22) maintain that unlike favouritism, 'Wasta' describes such differential treatment from the perspective of the individual granted the favour, but not the individual who is doing the favour.

Three parties are generally involved in Wasta, excluding the principal: "*(i) the client who desires a certain service, (ii) the agent who is supposed to grant preferential treatment to the client, and (iii) a mediator, who helps the client to get in touch with the agent and perhaps puts in a good word for him*" (Loewe et al., 2007, p. 22). The mediator is commonly referred to as the '*wasta*', though is not always needed. Wasta either is acquired by birth, such as the client is a member of a well-known family, whereas other types of wasta are acquired via investing in social relations (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Lovett et al., 1999; de Sardan 1999).

'**Face**' is another feature of the Libyan culture. The values of social status, respect, and personal dignity are fundamental to Libyans. In Arab culture, the human face symbolises honour and dignity, and this symbolic meanings are shown in everyday talk in which people describe experiences or incidents in connection with its impact on their face (Al Suwaidi,

2008). An account of a positive and proud experience, for instance, may entail that it 'whitened' the person's face," whereas if the experience is negative and a person is felt degraded, it means that the experience 'blackened' that person's face (Patai and De Atkine, 2007). Hellriegel and Slocum (2010) argue in relation to the 'face concept', that saving face entails holding back one's reaction to offer the other party a means of way out of the circumstances with least embarrassment. They add that this concept includes compromise, patience, and on occasions looking the other way to give things time to regain normality. 'Face', plays an important role in the Libyan culture, in which protecting the honour of one's family and the collective good is paramount. Consequently, all business dealings are based on reputation and depend on the development of trust.

The third and very important feature of the Libyan culture is religion; that is, Islam. Religion is one of the most essential and characteristic aspects of Arab societies (Obeidat et al., 2012), and the literature (for example, Kalliny and Gentry, 2007; Shahin and Wright, 2004) has identified religion as a prevailing variable that influences nearly all aspects of the Arab culture. Islam is perceived as being the factor that has helped form culture within Islamic countries in general and within Arab countries in particular (Obeidat et al., 2012). The great majority of Libyans are Sunni Muslims and their traditions are that of Muslim society. At present, Libyans are, in general, conservative without being fundamentalist in their approach to religion. Nevertheless, as a Muslim state, the heritage of Islam is deeply inculcated in the character of the Libyan people and for most, is an essential part of their daily life. Islamic rules also encompass Libyan customs and culture, providing the context for the behaviour of individuals in both social and business contexts.

Islam is also regarded as the main source of legislation. The new Libyan leaders have recently announced that Islam is regarded as the main source of legislation and that laws contradicting Islam's tenets would be nullified, and that polygamy would be legalised

(). This might mean that there are other sources that can be used in legislation. Islamic laws ('*Shari'ah*') are perceived as a fundamental requirement for any Muslim society as they guide people towards correct action, provide justice, equality and security, as well as addressing family and society relationships in great detail (Weir et al., 2006). As regards politics, Islam provides a set of general guidelines and rules concerning their relationship between the ruler and the public, as it clearly demonstrates the duties and rights of either party and defines the general policy of the Islamic state both the interior and the exterior (Weir et al., 2006). As for the economy and economic activities, Islam allows trade though it prohibits usury, encourages thrift though never waste, promotes hard and useful work and denies laziness and dependency. In education, Islam calls for knowledge and encourages learning which is free from atheism, life ineffectiveness and false principles. It can be argued that Islam extensively influences almost all aspects and walks of life in the Libyan society.

Three elements play key roles in the Libyan society, which can be represented as a triangle, in which Islam occupies the top of this triangle, that is, Islam is the major force in society, with its key impact of all aspects of life, whereas the other two elements, tribe and family, occupy the base of the triangle, as illustrated in Figure 3.3. Al-Hamadi and Budhwar (2006) refer to the triangle of Islam, tribe and family as playing an imperative role in virtually all aspects including HRM. Budhwar and Mellahi (2006) maintain that several researchers have identified the huge influence of Islamic values and work ethics, and Islamic tenets on the management of human resource in Islamic countries. These values, work ethics and tenets of Islam are also applicable to Libya, in which these factors play a key role in shaping HRM system and other related practices that determine human resources.
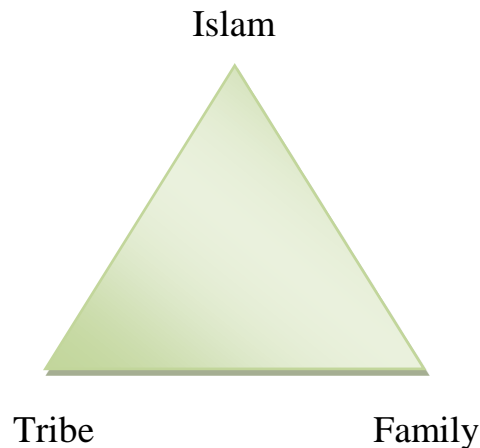
Islam

Tribe   Family

Figure 3.3.   Triangle of Islam, tribe and family.

Blanchard (2009, p. 12) maintains that the majority of Libyans accept an essential role for Islamic traditions in public life, and that *"Islam is the official religion and the Quran is the basis for the country's law and its "social code."*

3.3   Education in Libya

Education in Libya is managed by the people's committees in the District (Sha'biat). There are 32 Sha'bia (municipality), three administrative districts and 350 basic people's congresses (UNESCO, 2007). In each basic people's congress there is a member in charge of the management and follow-up of education and training within the administrative borders of his Sha'bia, and in each Sha'bia there is an assistant secretary for education affairs selected from among the members of education in the basic people's conferences (Lagga et al., 2004; UNESCO, 2007).

The Libyan educational system comprises five stages: kindergarten, basic education, intermediate education (secondary), university education, and postgraduate studies. Information relating to secondary education and above is provided in the following sections.

It must be added here that after the 2011 Revolution and the collapse of the old regime that the role of the Sha'biyat was abolished and possibly a new educational system might be introduced. Nonetheless, it is too early to speculate about this matter and that it might take

some time to have a new educational system.

3.3.1 Secondary Education

Secondary (intermediate) education is a three to four year education (Lagga et al., 2004; UNESCO, 2007). Secondary education consists of several school types: general and specialised schools; vocational training centres; sector specialised secondary schools and institutes (UNESCO, 2007). The vocational training centres and sector specialised secondary schools and institutes train and prepares young people for work.

Students are awarded the Secondary Education Certificate after successfully passing their course, except for students in vocational training centres who are awarded the Intermediate Training Diploma (UNESCO, 2007).

3.3.2 Training at the Secondary Education Level

The restructuring of secondary education in Libya during the 1980s looked to realise, as a future aim the transformation from traditional secondary education (science and literature), to the specialised technical secondary education, where its graduates either enrol in university education or directly join the job market. The key aim of this change was the development of students to be equipped to live and work in modern technical society as well as to be soundly linked with international development in the fields of life, economy and culture (Zarrough et al. 2001; Lagga et al., 2004). Accordingly, secondary education changed to include specialised secondary schools and vocational secondary schools.

Specialised Secondary Schools became an alternative to public secondary education since its endorsement by the new educational structure in 1982, and this new structure came into being when a number of local and international transformations in all social, economical and technical levels, as well as in the communications and information escalate during the last decade of the twentieth century which drove the international education systems to develop

and change to match the requirements of new era. This issue obliged the Libyan educational authorities to develop specialised secondary education system such as a technical secondary education, leading to vocational secondary education (vocational secondary schools) and teacher training institutes at the university level (Lagga et al. 2004). Nonetheless, the schools aimed to some extent to prepare students for university study, which requires some in-depth study of the theoretical studies of the fields of specialisation. The study period is four years during which the first two years general subjects are studies, then the last two years offer specialised studies, as illustrated in Table 3.4.

The vocational secondary schools, the second type of the new secondary schools, are vocational occupational education applied in institutions known as the intermediate training centres (secondary) (Lagga et al., 2004).

Table 3.4. The Specialisation Sectors of each Specialised Secondary School in Libya 2004

Specialised Secondary School	Specialisation Sectors			
Life Sciences	Medical Sciences	Agricultural Sciences	-	-
Basic Sciences	Biology-Chemistry	Physics-Math	-	-
Engineering Sciences	Building	Electricity and Electronics	Information and Statistics	-
Social Sciences	Arabic Language	Religious and Sciences	English Language	Social Sciences
Arts and Media	Fine and Practical Arts	Medial Arts	-	-

Source: Lagga et al. (2004, p. 19).

The intermediate (secondary) vocational education is perceived as the most key development in the Libyan educational system, in which most of the graduates are dispatched directly to the labour market to fill in the critical absence of properly skilled vocational and technical

workforce, and to improve the national production rates, as well as to decrease the number of students in higher education institutes. This would have some implications for organisations and their training needs assessment, as new recruits need to have induction training and other on-the-job training by their supervisors or peers to introduce them to their jobs. Furthermore, vocational education aims at preparing and qualifying efficient technical and occupational workforce, to be ready for work and production in keeping with the recent needs of the economic movement and expected quantity of trained workforce (Legga et al., 2004). As a result, the outputs of these educational institutions create a key part of employees in the labour market, and also the graduates of these secondary schools, known in Libya as "the Intermediate Vocational Training Centres" establish a linkage between the graduates of higher vocational institutes and inefficient employees in the workforce pyramid (Zarrough et al. 2001). Nonetheless, graduates of this type of vocational education entering job market still need further training when recruited by various sectors of economy to introduce them to their organisations, their cultures and other aspects of work. It can be argued that there are certain implications in organisations in terms of assessing the knowledge and skills of such new recruits and to train them on-the-job in aspects of work in areas where they will work. Training needs of these new recruits are also assessed at the time when their probation time is due to identify the gaps in their skills, knowledge and attitudes, so as to train them in the context of the gap identified.

The number of trainees at vocational secondary schools amounted to 59,318 students of both sexes (Lagga, 2004), distributed over 345 schools. These students are taught and trained by 10,030 teachers. Vocational secondary schools are controlled by the same conditions and standards applied to managing specialised secondary schools (Lagga et al., 2004). Table 3.5 demonstrates the development and increase in enrolment rate over a period of more than three decades. It is evident that the numbers of female students increased within this period of time

and even exceeding the numbers of male students.

Table 3.5.   The development in the Number of Students at the Intermediate (Secondary) Education Level according to Gender and Rate Compared to the General Total Number

Year	Males	Females	Total	Rate to Total	
				Males	Females
1972-1973	18,976	10,049	29,125	65.5%	34.5%
1995-1996	111,246	166,868	278,114	40.0%	60.0%
2002-2003	107,944	149,062	257,006	42.1%	58.0%

Source: Lagga et al. (2004).

3.4   Higher Education

Higher education is vital for any country to achieve the required level of economic and global development, and is also indispensable for improving citizens' participation in living standards, for social mobility, and for achieving harmony, justice, and comprehensive peace, at both national and global levels (UNESCO 1998). It is also argued that education in general and higher education in particular have long been regarded as the main driving force for the development and advancement of societies and countries.

During the long colonial period, over about four centuries (1551-1951), higher Education in Libya was almost absent (Agnaia, 1996; Ahmed, 1995). In fact, not only that higher education was not available, but also primary and secondary education was also very limited. As a result, when Libya achieved its political independence in 1951, a policy or infrastructure upon which to build higher education system was absent. Nonetheless, over the past few decades this undesirable state of affairs changed substantially, and by 1966, the Faculty of Agriculture was founded in Tripoli, and in 1967, with the UNESCO's help two higher colleges were established in Tripoli; the College of Advanced Technology and Higher Teacher Training College; these were then renamed as the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Education, respectively (El-Hawat, 2003).

Libya has embarked, since the 1969 Revolution, on a policy of rapid socio-economic development plans. Such plans resulted in a policy for the massive expansion of higher education opportunities. Libya's record at higher education is impressive, with many Libyan students also achieving tertiary education at institutes overseas, in spite of the difficulties imposed during the sanctions period (Otman and Karlberg, 2007). Libya, at present, has eighteen government universities, of which Al-Fateh University (formerly known as University of Tripoli) and Garyounis University (formerly known as University of Benghazi) are the two oldest and largest universities in Libya, the former has 115,000 students enrolled and the latter has 60,000 students enrolled (Rehma and Miliszewska, 2010). These two universities had about 15 faculties covering a range of courses (Aldhaif and Al-Salem, 2006; El-Hawat, 2003). In fact, during the past forty years, Libyan higher education has experienced significant growth. Table 3.6 demonstrates this growth, which is attributable to the increase of oil revenues which offered Libya the opportunity to speed up the process of education development. As a result, the number of higher education institutions increased significantly from one university and four VET in 1970 to eleven universities with seventy-six faculties and from fifteen VETs in 1989/1990 (El-Hawat, 2003) to eighty-four TVET institutions in 2000.

Table 3.6. Development of higher education in Libya between 1960 and 2000

Type of Institution	1960	1970	1980	1995	2000
Comprehensive University	1	1	5	5	8
Specialised University	-	-	5	5	5
Open University	-	-	1	1	1
TVET	-	4	15	54	84

Sources: NCETR (1996) and GDHVECs (2000).

However, with the steady growth of industry, the contempt view towards vocational training started to decline, but such disregard was still very much in evidence towards the end of the

1980s (Garrett and Farghaly, 1987). According to the GPCE (2008), the number of students in the Libyan universities reached 279,150 in 2006/07 and it is anticipated that such numbers would increase to more than half a million students by 2025. It can be argued that such massive numbers of university graduates to enter job market has some implications for them, their recruiting organisations and their work. In Libya, like some other Middle-Eastern and North African countries, these graduates have more theoretical than practical knowledge; accordingly, their recruiting organisations; in the main in public sector organisations, are assessed in terms of their practical experience and trained in tasks of their recruiting organisations.

There are three types of tertiary institutions in Libya: universities, technical colleges, and Higher Vocational Institutions. Three types of qualifications are offered by the Libyan universities: The first degree, the bachelor degree requires four years of study in the majority of programmes after obtaining the secondary school certificate. The duration of the bachelor degrees in dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, engineering and architecture is five years, whereas the duration of the bachelor degree in medicine and surgery is six years (European Commission, 2011). Programmes leading to a Master's degree in most specialisations are also offered by the universities, which requires between two to three years of study after obtaining the bachelor degree. Ph.D. degree is offered in selected specialisations and at certain universities, and requires three to four years of study. Master's and Ph.D. programmes should be approved first by the National Committee for Universities in accordance with the regulations set by GPCE&SR, which also decides the admission requirements for both degrees (European Commission, 2011).

As regards the technical colleges, there are sixteen high technical colleges which offer "technical bachelor degrees" in certain fields. Duration of study is three years of study after obtaining the secondary school certificate (European Commission, 2011).

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There are sixty-three high vocational institutions in Libya, which offer programmes in many vocational subjects. The study period is three years after obtaining the secondary school certificate. Graduates of these institutions are awarded high vocational/technical diplomas (European Commission, 2011). The number of students in Libyan higher education institutions in 2005 is presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7.　　　Number of students in Libyan higher education institutions, 2005

	Number of students
Universities	246,000
Higher Institutions	3,286
Higher Medical Institutes	5,260
Total	254,546

Source: Adopted from Otman and Karlberg (2007, p. 104)

The number of students with Master's or PhD qualifications also increased substantially between 1972/73 and 2004/05, as demonstrated n Table 3.8.

Table 3.8.　　　Development of domestic higher education, 1972-2005

	Number of students with Master's/PhD Qualifications
1972-1973	Less than 80
1994-1995	2,350
1998-1999	5,627
2004-2005	20,000

Source: Adopted from Otman and Karlberg (2007, p. 104).

One of the key objectives of the Libyan education policy is to decrease gender differences (Keibe, 1998). Accordingly, it is notable that the growth in female student enrolment is, almost certainly, the most positive characteristic of the government's commitment to open access to higher education. Over the past two decades or so, gender inequality has declined substantially, and since then, the share of female participation in higher education has

increased constantly, increasing from 21.1% in 1987/1988 to 50.4 in 1999/2000, according to El-Hawat (2003).

3.5   Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Libya

Vocational education and training, from a conventional perspective, was referred to as a 'Programme of Studies to Prepare Technicians'. Nonetheless, the scope of vocational education and training has transformed given the fact that the world has become more technologically oriented. Recently, there has been several technical skills of value to students, parents, consumers, and workers, and the demand for technicians in the labour force has increased considerably both in number and in variety (Karam, 2006). Vocational education and training provision may be seen as an economic growth and development strategy, since it is the source of graduates with skills totally applicable to the economy sectors, such as, industry (Vlaardingerbroek and El-Masri, 2008).

Higher Education in general and vocational education and training in particular play a key role in the development of countries. Vocational education and training is one of the fundamental parts of education which provides the human resources which render industry more productive, improve the quality of production, and also it narrows the gap between the developed and developing countries.

In Libya, research relating to vocational education and training is rather limited. While a relatively only some research has been produced in Arabic language, none have been published in English language. As a result, the published work in Arabic concerning vocational education and training in Libya needs to be translated into English when writing research papers or theses in English. It is imperative to note that meaning can be lost inadvertently during translation. Having said this, it is also important to indicate that vocational education and training is an important sub-sector of the public education system in

Libya, and has been subjected to an active process of re-designing and has become the centre of the government's strategy in recent years (El-Hawat, 2003). Consequently, to address this key issue a network of vocational education and training institutions have been established in Libya, during the 1990s with the intention of increasing the supply of skilled workforce required by the manufacturing industry and the socio-economic transformation plans. As indicated earlier, there were eighty-four vocational education and training institutions by 2000 distributed throughout Libya. The vocational education and training institutions are post-secondary institutions and offer both theoretical- and practical-based curriculum. The key objective of these institutions is to provide highly qualified workforce to meet the requirements of the socio-economic development plans. Accordingly, vocational education and training have been perceived by the government as the major supplier of highly skilled human resources and also as a factor in accelerating economic growth and social development (Elzalitni, and Lee, 2006; El-Hawat 2003). This will have some positive implications for better understanding of training needs assessment in a non-Western country. Table 3.9 presents the type of vocational education and training institutions, their numbers and the number of students enrolled during the academic year 1999/2000.

Table 3.9. Higher Technical and Vocational Institutions in Libya, 1999-2000.

Type of Institutions	Number of Institutions	Number of Students
Polytechnic	32	13,563
Specialised Higher Institutes	25	17,676
Higher Institutes for Trainers	9	6,836
Higher Teachers Training Institutes	27	26,895
Total	84	64,970

Source: El-Hawat, (2003, p.393)

In 2009, the Authority of Labour and Vocational training was established as a result of the merger of the General People's Committee for Education (the Ministry of Education) and the

General People's Committee for Higher Education (the Ministry of Higher Education) into one General People's Committee for Education and Scientific Research (British Council, 2010). The Authority has the following responsibilities (British Council, 2010):

- Developing the approved training curriculum for training institutions and the level of skills required

- Developing training plans for the rehabilitation of Libyan nationals at home and abroad.

- Developing the controls, standards and conditions necessary to engage in training activity.

- Developing the controls, standards and conditions necessary to engage in training activity.

- Granting licenses to carry out training in accordance with regulations and conditions.

- Directing vocational training centres so they produce the training needed by the local labour market, use modern training methods, and make the most of employment opportunities, and economic and social development programmes.

- Proposing training agreements with other countries, organisations, and local and international companies.

- Motivating and encouraging non-qualified job seekers to engage in vocational training programmes so they gain the technical skills necessary to engage with the labour market.

- Monitoring medium-accredited training courses at training institutions and developing regulations for examinations, tests and follow-up to ensure better outputs from vocational training.

While these responsibilities have some implications for TNA; it can be argued that such responsibilities might be reviewed under the current political environment. Privatisation of many of the public sector companies, especially oil sector companies, might change everything and TNA and training and developing employees might not be a priority by the management of the privatised companies.

3.6 Training and Development Sector in Libya

This is national policy and frameworks that influence organisational models in Libya; nonetheless, the changes after the revolution might have brought about changes in the training and development sector in the country, given that the authority for drawing policies and strategies relating to training in Libya might have changed. The authority which was responsible for drawing policies and strategies relating to training in Libya was the General Popular Committee (the local government). This Committee was responsible for training plans and providing them to all sectors it supervises. The Committee was concerned with developing human resources and raising the competence of personnel working in various sectors. The local government has paid much attention to training and perceives it as the main pillar in supporting the development of the state in general.

To achieve this, Libya since 1969 has created an independent ministry concerned with and supervising training and development during the past forty years during all that period of time and even at the times when this Secretariat (Ministry) merged with Education Secretariat given that it undertakes the same tasks concerning the supervision of training and development in the country. In 2009, the Training Secretariat was abolished and its jurisdiction was transferred to another authority; the Administration of Labour and Vocational Training.

The Administration of Labour and Vocational Training was established by the Local Government Resolution No. 124 of 2009. It enjoys an independent legal person status and is affiliated to the General Popular Committee. This Administration undertakes, through its offices in the different 'Shabiat' the organisation of all aspects of work, recruitment and vocational training within the framework of resolutions issued by the government. The most important tasks undertaken by this Administration in the training and development sector include the following:

- Extending the findings of studies undertaken by the Administration to develop the vocational education and training institutions.

- Preparing studies and suggesting plans in co-operation with the different sectors in the country such that to balance supply and demand in the labour market.

- Accrediting public and private centres and institutions and quality monitoring.

- Suggesting the annual training plan in order to facilitate its sanctioning by the government and following up its implementation and evaluation.

- Drafting training curricula of vocational centres.

In the light of these tasks each ministry, agency or public company suggest their annual training plans in accordance with their requirements and suggesting the cost for implementing training programmes, and referring them to the local government to sanction and approve them, and subsequently implementing them.

However, training and career development programmes in Libya are focused, if at all available, on narrow priorities rather than providing employees with the skills required working in the current job market (Otman and Karlberg, 2007). In the private sector, there is more motivation to train employees to the highest standard and using the latest techniques; nonetheless, such more motivation can be attributed to the private sector's own self-interest (Otman and Karlberg, 2007), rather than they want a highly trained and competent employees for the employees' sake, but for the private sector organisations to have a better competitive advantages than their competitors in the market.

3.7   Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company

The Training Department's jurisdiction is concerned with the implementation of the policies and plans endorsed by the company's top management to develop and train the company's workforce. To achieve its tasks, the Training Department assumes the following (LGEC, 2009):

1. Listing the requirements of the company's administrations and stations.

2. Preparing the general plan for training each year, including the numbers and qualifications to be trained annually and also to determine the aspects of training and suggesting the funds to expend on training.

3. Recommending projects relating to the establishment of training centres within the company.

4. Supervising the progress of work at the company's training centres.

5. Communicating with national and international organisations, institutes, universities and research and training centres specialised in the field of electricity in order to benefit from the expertise available at these institutions.

6. Providing the company training centres with their requirements of raw material, equipment and human resources to help operate these centres efficiently.

7. Determining the date of courses and also the beginning of the annual training at the centres supervised by the company.

The second task assumed by the Training Department, indicted above, is to preparing the general plan for training each year, including the numbers and qualifications to be trained annually and also to determine the aspects of training and suggesting the funds to expend on training. In this task, reference to suggesting funding is made, that is, asking for a budget allocated to undertake training employees. The company has an annual budget, including a reference to an annual budgeting for training workforce. Budgets are of many types; including incremental (discretionary budgets), zero-based budgets (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009; Mayers, 2004). Incremental budgeting is based on what has happened in the previous year, which is the most widespread type of budgeting in local and central government, as well as in other public bodies (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009; Mayers, 2004). This widespread type of budgeting is due to it being easy to do and involves little calculation, and it does not require analysis of goals or policies (Mayers, 2004). Zero-based budgeting (ZBB) endeavours to provide some accountability through

starting from a base of zero, in which each suggested expenditure should be justified (Mayers, 2004). These types of budgeting, as well as many others, are undertaken in a Western context. It is worth indicating that Libya's accounting system has been based on the UK and the USA accounting systems, despite the explicit environmental differences between Libya, as an emerging economy, and the UK and the US, as developed countries (Shareia, 2010). This, according to Shareia (p. 10), has meant that much of the *"accounting principles, auditing standards, accounting education and the institution of an accounting profession have been adopted from outside Libya and applied without a thorough consideration of local environmental factors."* The literature in this field (cited by Shareia, 2010, for example, El-Sharif, 1978; El-Sharif, 1980; El-Sharif, 1981; Bakar and Russell, 2003; Derwish and Elghli, 2006) argues that such a practice is problematic, given that it is commonly recognised that in developing or emerging economies, it is not possible, or even advisable, to impose Western accounting systems without a consideration of the unique political, economic, social and religious dynamics of such economies.

In the field of raising the efficiency of the company's workforce, the Training Department undertakes spreading training awareness among the workforce by way of issuing bulletins and publications and provide the facilities that help raise the workforce efficiency, and to follow-up the recent technological developments in the field of production and services. In order to achieve these tasks, the Training Department has formulated a set of objectives to:

1. draw training policies and plans for the company's workforce at their various levels in order to raise the efficiency and following up technological developments through training so as to increase their productivity;

2. determine the levels of skills in all professions and jobs within the company and take into consideration job descriptions and requirements;

3. develop training systems, procedures and methods relating to raising the company's workforce efficiency;

4. follow up research and recent developments in the field of raising efficiency to achieve technical progress, increase productivity, and contact national and international academic organisations to benefit from their experiences and expertise;

5. prepare programmes of efficiency raising courses every year which include numbers and qualifications to be trained and specifying their aspects;

6. formulate annual training programmes for the top management in the form of seminars to top senior management staff;

7. select employees for efficiency raising courses through nominations by the company's administrations these employees work for;

8. linking financial and non-financial incentives with passing efficiency raising courses successfully, and grant promotion rewards for talented employees; and

9. candidates for training courses have to attend the training courses.

3.8   General Discussion

A general profile of Libya, with special reference to education and training, was presented in Chapter Three. The Libyan population has more than doubled within thirty years, and around two-thirds of the population (67.6% of the population) are older than 15 years. Libya, as a Middle Eastern and North African country, can be argued to have interconnected network of relationships, with the concept of '*Wasta*" being the direct outcome of such relationships, along with family ties, trust and honour. Islam plays a major role in the lives of the Libyan people. Three elements were shown in the literature (Chapter Three, Section 3.2) play key roles in the Libyan society, which can be represented as a triangle, in which Islam occupies the top of this triangle, that is, Islam is the major force in society, with its key impact of all aspects of life, whereas the other two elements, tribe and family, occupy the base of the triangle. As indicated in Chapter Two (Section 2.9. Discussion of the Literature Review), assessment of training needs in Western context is the initial step in planning a training programme and can be associated with the organisational success (Erasmus et al., 2006; van Eerde et al., 2008; Du Plessis et al., 2010). However, in a Libyan context, there are certain

social and cultural factors intervening in this process, including favouritism, 'Wasta', and social relationships.

Education in Libya has advanced in all levels during the past four decades. The restructuring of secondary education in Libya during the 1980s realised, as a future aim, the transformation from traditional secondary education (science and literature), to the specialised technical secondary education. The literature in this area (for example, see Zarrough et al. 2001; Lagga et al., 2004; Chapter Three, Section 3.3.2) argues that the main aim of this change is to prepare students to live and work in modern technical society as well as to be well linked with international development in the fields of life, economy and culture. This led to including specialised secondary schools and vocational secondary schools. Libya's record in higher education is impressive, and currently it has eighteen government universities, of which Al-Fateh University (formerly known as University of Tripoli) and Garyounis University (formerly known as University of Benghazi) are the two oldest and largest universities in Libya. It is anticipated that these universities will be renamed after the collapse of the old regime and the establishment of the new regime. Technical and Vocational education has also advanced markedly and currently there are 32 polytechnics, 25 specialised higher institutes, 9 higher institutes for trainers and 27 higher teachers training institutes. This information links to our argument about training needs assessment and national HRD as it explains how Libya provides the Foundations for a more mature skilled workforce that would contribute to a more sophisticated approach to the development of Libya's skill base through national policies; hence raising of the Libyan national HRD up to level displayed by, for example, Stewart (2003) (See Chapter Two, Section 2.3).

In conclusion, and based on the models identified in the literature and also on the issues discussed in this chapter, a framework for determining the effectiveness of training needs determination (Figure 3.4) is drafted to which is added the ideas in this chapter based on the

Libyan context. This would form a speculative model which can be explored as to its applicability as a result of the study findings, analysed Chapter Five and discussed in Chapter 6.

In Stage One [Establishment of Training Framework (Plans, Budget, goals and objectives of Training, Types of Training)], the framework is to be set by the managers of Training Department in liaising with the Company's senior management and also in coordination with the Company's Departments. The difficulties that encountered the Training Department were that employee training plans were influenced strongly by the Ministry and other command economy systems, given the highly centralised and bureaucratic economy, as well as by the organisation's top management. Due to the toppling of the old regime and the intention of the new government in adopting market economy, it is hoped that such difficulties or limitations are removed, and the company departments are empowered to identify their employees training needs and leave it to the Training Department to arrange setting training programmes and courses in the light of departmental training needs assessment. In other words, the plan is to be set by the Company in accordance with the ministerial guidelines and directives rather than by ministerial or other higher management interventions. In the event that no external pressure or influence directly or indirectly from the Ministry and other commanding systems, the company management, at this stage, needs to involve employees to participate in determining their training needs. There is the intention by the new government to liberalise the economy, and privatisation of oil companies to improve their performance and productivity. In this case, the private oil companies will be free from government interventions. When this training framework has been undertaken [Yes], then Stage Two is implemented, whereas in the absence of such a framework [No], then the company has to establish such framework before moving to the second stage. Further discussion of this stage and also other stages of the framework and of any other stages or influences that might be

added to the framework will be provided in the final chapter (Chapter Six) when the final

version of this framework is formulated.
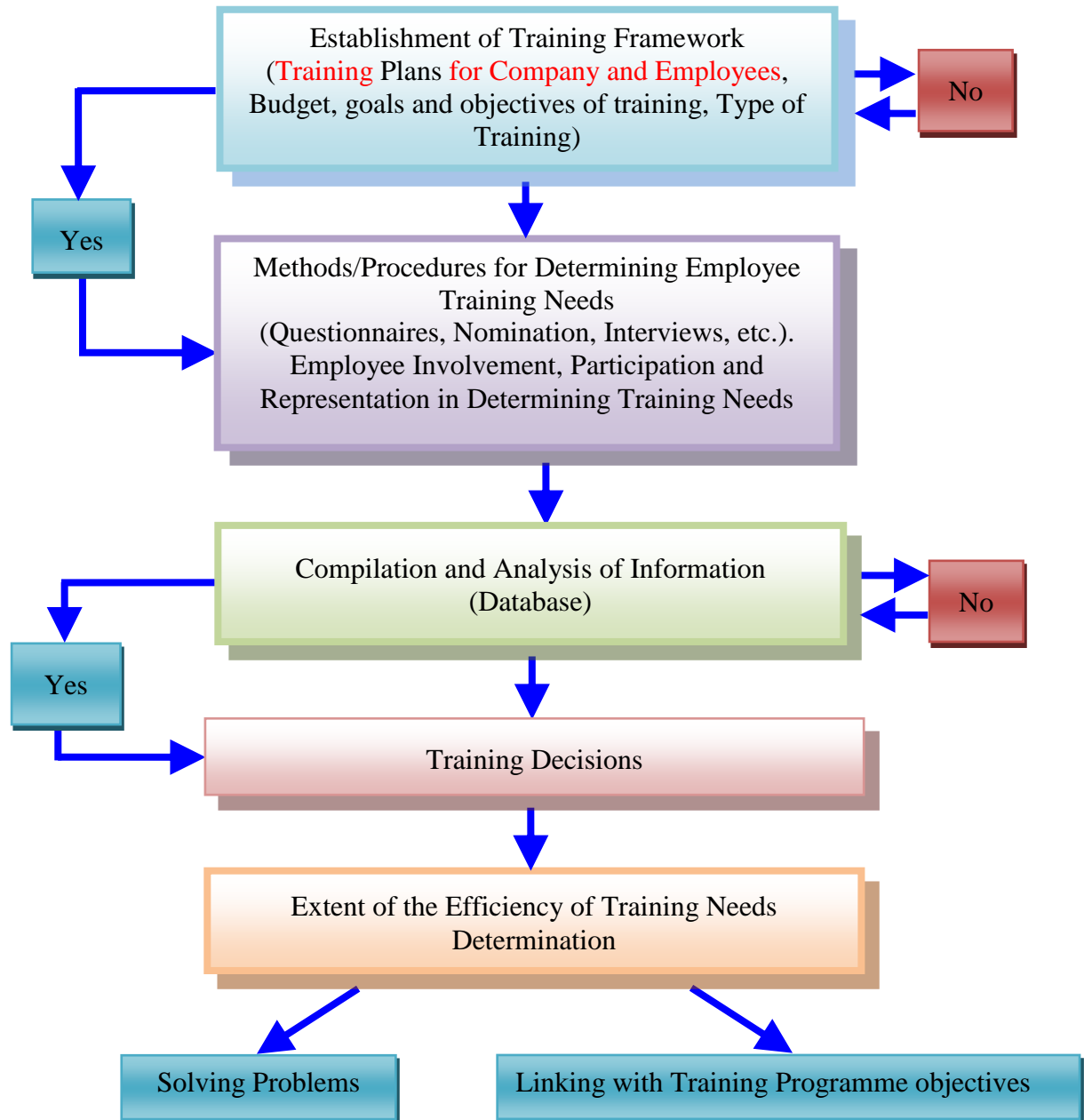
Figure 3.4. A draft of framework for determining the efficiency of training needs.

In Stage Two [Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs (Questionnaires, Nomination, Interviews, Observation, etc.) (Employee Involvement, Participation and Representation in Determining Training Needs)], methods and procedures to be adopted by the company in determining employees who need training, and procedures and steps undertaken when nominating employees for training, as well as whether there is a specific system through which employees are nominated. This stage can be realised in the light of decentralisation of decision making, as explained in Stage One.

Stage Three [Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database)] indicates whether the company has a database system for compiling and analysing data and information that helps it identify employees who need training without external intervention or some other practices, such as favouritism or 'Wasta'. If such a database system is available [Yes], then Stage Three is implemented. If such system does not exist [No], then the company has to establish this system before moving to Stage Four.

Stage Four [Training Decisions] is concerned with making training decisions; that is, how training decisions relating to the nomination of individual employees to attend training courses, and the extent of employees' participation in training decisions, nomination for training courses), or whether the training decision is made by the managers and supervisors, without any participation by the trainees themselves.

Stage Five (Extent of the Efficacy of Training Needs Determination) is undertaken in order to identify the extent of the efficacy of training needs determination by means of certain procedures, such as sitting a written test, filling in questionnaires, and supervisors' reports. It is also implemented to know whether or not there is a link between training courses and the objectives of training programmes, and whether or not training programmes have achieved their objectives, which is realised through nomination of employees who actually need training.

This suggested framework will be revised in Chapter Six in light of the data and information discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, as well as data and information generated from semi-structured interviews with managers responsible for training in the company as well as data generated by focus group members (trained engineers).

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

4.1   Introduction

This chapter identifies the key research paradigms, research approaches, research strategies, research methods and methodologies, issues relating to data collection and population and sampling procedures employed in the present study. This chapter starts with providing a review of the research paradigms employed by the researcher and indicates which paradigms the present study has adopted. Research approaches adopted by researchers are also reviewed and reference to the approaches used in the present study is made. Research strategies employed to generate primary data are then reviewed and reasons justifying their use will be provided. A number of data collection methods will be reviewed and those adopted in the present study will be referred to. Sampling and sampling procedures are reviewed and approaches and procedures employed for the purposes of the present study will be highlighted. Framework for determining the effectiveness of training needs determination. Trustworthiness (Credibility, Transferability and Dependability) of the qualitative research is explained. Ethical considerations are addressed and finally, a summary of the issues addressed in the present chapter will be provided.

Prior to starting the research, certain assumptions were made, and such assumptions involved a point of view towards how the researcher knows what he knows, that is, epistemology; the nature of reality, that is, ontology, and the research methods to be used in the course of research, that is, methodology. The literature (for example, Bradbery, 2008) indicates that these assumptions have usually been recognised as dichotomous and as intricately linked in parallel. In the present study, the LGEC managers responsible for training and trained engineers will be interviewed, either one-to-one, as is the case with the managers, or as groups, in the case of engineers. Accordingly, the ontological assumption is that reality is

subjective, which indicates that the epistemological assumption has to highlight the subjective aspects in experience and acknowledges that personal experiences are the basis of true-life knowledge, and in turn, the methodological assumption must be inductive and interpretive; that is, qualitative (Bradbery, 2008).

4.2   Research Paradigms

It is argued that social research is generally carried out alongside a setting of certain tradition of theoretical and methodological ideas, and such tradition, developed and changed over more than ten decades are called research paradigms (Blaikie, 2010). Blaikie also indicated that these paradigms are sources of theoretical ideas as well as of ontological and epistemological assumptions.   Epistemology is defined as "*a crucial philosophical concept for social scientists, which considers questions to do with the theory of knowledge*" (Henn et al., 2009, p. 12). Blaikie (2010, p. 18) refers to epistemology as a "*theory of knowledge, 'a theory of science of the methods or grounds of knowledge. It is a theory of how human beings come to have knowledge of the world around them (however this is regarded), of how we know what we know.*"   In epistemological assumptions there are two largely opposing perceptions concerning the nature of knowledge, referred to as competing paradigms that can be categorised as follows: A positivist paradigm, which is commonly associated with quantitative research strategies, and an interpretive paradigm which is commonly associated with qualitative research strategies (Henn et al., 2009). Hughes (2003, p. 30) argues that though interpretivism has a number of variants, "*it is, more generally, viewed as central to qualitative approaches to research.*"

Positivism and interpretivism are two paradigms that have dominated the literature on social research and have formed research practice more than other perspectives (Gibbs, 2005). These two paradigms differ in relation to their perceptions of the position of various claims to knowledge and in how to evaluate knowledge claims (Henn et al., 2009).

Ontology deals with the nature of reality which results in assumptions concerning the way the world operates and the obligation held to specific perspective by researchers (Collins, 2010). Objectivism and subjectivism are two aspects of ontology (Collins, 2010; Saunders et al., 2009).

4.2.1 Positivism

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) maintain that positivist science implements several basic beliefs pertaining to the nature of knowledge, which together shape positivist epistemology, the basis of the quantitative paradigm.

The logic of positivist research design is that to search for identifying processes of cause and effect in order to explain phenomena, and to test theory; knowledge must be founded on what can be tested by observation of substantial evidence, and that researchers have to employ the scientific method that highlights control, standardisation and objectivity (Henn et al., 2009). The connotations are that the research design has to be highly structured, methods must be reliable, and the research design will seek to bring about large-scale, statistically based research (Henn et al., 2009).

Positivism is a research paradigm that is not applied in the present study given the fact that the study is qualitative in nature, using both semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Data generated in research adopting a positivist approach is of a quantitative nature (Bell, 2005); the research questions (Chapter One, Section 1.3) are of qualitative nature.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

The key principle of interpretivism is that there exists a major difference between the subject matters of the natural and social world (Blaikie, 2010). Blaikie (2010, p. 124) argues that studying natural phenomena demands a scientist to "*invent concepts and theories for*

description and explanation; a scientist has to study nature from the 'outside'. Through the use of theories, a natural scientist makes choices about what is relevant to the problem under investigation." Interpretivism (social world) is referred to by Rubin and Babbie (2012, p. 56) as: "*A research paradigm that focuses on getting an emphatic understanding of how people feel inside, seeking to interpret individuals' everyday experiences, their deeper meanings and feelings, and the idiosyncratic reasons for their behaviours.*"

Balikie (2010) argues that in relation to interpretivism, investigating the social phenomena necessitates an insight of the social world which people have created and that they replicate due to their systematic activities.

The focus of the interpretivist is on qualitative research, instinctively searching for a deeper and wider knowledge of the research topic. The role of the interpretivist is to seek and understand the subjective reality of the study participants in an attempt to know and recognise their motives, actions and intentions in a significant way (Guba and Lincoln, 2000). Interpretivism is argued to value subjectivity, and that interpretive researchers endeavour to develop an in-depth subjective knowledge of people's lives (Rubin and Babbie, 2012).

The research questions (Chapter One, Section 1.3) are of qualitative nature; they are not asked to generate statistics, rather, they are asked to obtain interpretive information relating to the nature of the processes used to identify the methods of training needs assessment; the factors impacting the effectiveness of the training needs assessment; the level of involvement of managers and employees in training needs assessment decision and programmes; and the type of methods that are used to assess training needs in a Libyan context. Accordingly, the present study is interpretive in nature. This work is also inductive (as will be explained later).

The main characteristics of interpretivism include the following (Gibbs, 2005, p. 139):

1. *A challenge to the positivist assumption that objective reality exists;*
2. *An assumption that reality is complex and uncontrollable;*

3. *Social phenomena are socially constructed, context influenced and reveal multiple interpretations.*
4. *Knowledge is situational and context specific, rather that being universal;*
5. *The researcher cannot maintain a distant, or neutral stance, rather they have values which influence their worldview and research.*

4.2.3 Objectivism/Subjectivism

Objectivism perceives 'things' as possessing inherent meaning, and the researcher's role is to determine the meaning which already exist in them (Blaikie, 2010). Blaikie (2010, p. 18) provides a good example to this effect, maintaining that "*a tree is a tree regardless of who observes it or whether it is observed at all; its meaning is independent of human consciousness and is simply waiting to be discovered.*"

Subjectivism, on the other hand, is the reverse of objectivism. Subjectivism is argued to attempt to depict "*how people experience or conceptualize the world, and then how they act in accordance with it*" (Baert and De Silva, 2010, p. 36). Blaikie (2010, p. 19) indicates that things make no input to their meaning; "*the observer imposes it.*" Blaikie adds that since there is no interaction between the observer and the thing, the thing plays no role in the meaning which the observer gives to it. Accordingly, a thing may be given very different meanings by different observers; what an observer names a tree, another might name it a shelter.

To achieve two out of four objectives of the present study (Chapter One, Section 1.5), namely, Objective 2: "*Assess, through a single company investigative study of a Libyan public utility company, the engagement of managers and staff in the TNA processes and decision making*" and Objective 3: *"Identify the factors that impact the training needs assessment";*" the present study has adopted paradigm (epistemological assumption), and subjectivism paradigm (ontological assumption). Both paradigms are linked to qualitative approach to research. Accordingly, based on achieving these objectives and the above discussion of the paradigms,

the present study can be perceived as being interpretivist and subjectivist.

4.3   Research Approaches

Researchers can employ several research approaches when they carry out their research, and utilise a diversity of research methods and techniques to collect data and information needed for their research topics as well as the purpose and framework of their studies. A number of these research approaches commonly used by researchers are explained.

4.3.1   Inductive Approach versus Deductive Approach

The inductive approach is founded on collecting empirical evidence in a particular situation and subsequently making a general statement covering all situations (Curwin and Slater, 2008), in other words, proceeding from the specific to the general.

In contrast to the deductive research, inductive approach principally reverses the process of the deductive research, in which researchers develop their hypotheses and theories with the intention of explaining empirical observations of the existent world (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). Such empirical observations can be established on a number of factors, such as, simply being founded on personal experiences, or, alternatively, theories can be developed to explain observed data (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). It is claimed that owing to this approach, plans are formulated to obtain data, then such data are analysed to observe whether any patterns come to light that entail associations between the variables (Gray, 2009). Rubin and Babbie (2010, p. 39) define inductive methods as a "*research process based on inductive logic, in which the researcher begins with observations, seeks patterns in those observations, and generates tentative conclusions from those patterns.*" Inductive approach can be argued to link to interpretivism, given that, and as indicated earlier in Section 4.2.2, the focus of the interpretivist is on qualitative research. It is argued that qualitative research is often connected with interpretivism as a general philosophy (Decrop, 2004), and interpretivism is

based on an inductive approach (Berger, 2011).

This approach has its own advantages as well as its own disadvantages. According to Crowther and Lancaster (2008), its greatest strength is its flexibility. Altinary and Parakevans (2008, p. 73) sum up the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, as indicated below:

> "1.   *Advantages:*
> - *It helps you make a cause-effect link between particular variables and the way in which humans interpret these variables in their social world*
> - *It is flexible in that it helps you to identify alternative theories on the research topic and permit changes of the research emphasis as the research progresses*
> - *It helps you explain why a particular phenomenon is taking place*
> - *It acknowledges that you are a part of the research process*
> - *It allows research of topics that may have very little existing literature to support them*
> - *It uses empirical evidence as the beginning of the reasoning process and can be easily applied.*
>
> 2.   *Disadvantages*
> - *It is more effective with a small sample, so there is a limit to the sample size*
> - *It is generally more time consuming, as ideas are generated over a much longer period of data collection and analysis*
> - *The risk of the research yielding no useful data patterns and theories is higher than with deductive research.*

The above mentioned list of advantages and disadvantages has some implications for the present study. First of all, inductivism helps make a cause-effect link between particular variables (in the context of the present study, these variables include training needs assessment, training decisions, factors which have an impact on TNA process, and linking TNA and LGEC's goals and objectives) and the way in which humans (managers responsible for training and trained engineers in the LGEC in the case of the present study) interpret these variables in their social world. Inductivism is also flexible and helps allow changes of the research emphasis as the research progresses. Much of the research issues have been changed, such as the various themes of study, and also helps the researcher explains the reason of a particular phenomenon is taking place (training needs assessment in the case of

the present study). It also acknowledges that the researcher is a part of the research process, and in the case of the present study, the researcher interviewed managers and members of the focus groups in person and face-to-face; hence, he was a part of the research process. Inductivism is also said to allow research of topics which might have very little literature to support them. While there is a wealth of publications about training needs assessment, training and development and other issues relating to training (for example, academic textbooks, papers published by TNA academics and professionals in learned journals in Europe, USA and Asia), such research is almost lacking in the Libyan context and in an Arab context; hence, inductivism allows the researcher to investigate topics (TNA, training and development, etc.) that have very little literature to support them, or none at all in a Libyan context, and especially in the Libyan power sector context.

As regards the disadvantages of inductivism, the sample limitation was overcome given that all managers responsible for training (8 managers) in the LGEC were involved in the study and engineers' participants (ten focus groups) represented a small sample. As regards consuming more time, it was inevitable issue, and the researcher had to meet with eight managers and focus group members and to translate their responses from Arabic into English followed by dividing such responses into different themes. There was no risk of the research yielding no useful data patterns, since responses of the sample members yielded useful data which helped the researcher to discuss the study findings (responses of the managers and trained engineers) and also helped in formulating a framework for training needs assessment.

It is this research approach which has been used in the present study to obtain data and information concerning the present investigative study, due to the flexibility it offers for collecting data and information in relation to employee training and development in the LGEC. Researchers using inductive approach also tend to utilise qualitative data and to apply a number of methods to generate such qualitative data so as to find out various aspects of

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phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). In the present study, two qualitative methods were used; semi-structured interviews (with managers) and focus group interviews (with trained engineers), in order to gain an insight of interviewees' perceptions regarding issues relating to training needs assessment, and also to get an insight of what the research objectives require.

Deductive research, on the other hand, is said to develop theories or hypotheses and then tests out such theories or hypotheses by means of empirical observation (Crowther and Lancaster, 2008). Crowther and Lancaster (2008) maintain that it is fundamentally an array of techniques for applying theories in the actual world so as to test and evaluate their validity. A deductive approach is defined as: "*research process based on deductive logic, in which the researcher begins with a theory, then derives hypotheses, and ultimately collects observations to test the hypotheses*" (Rubin and Babbie, 2010, p. 40). Deductive approach is quantitative in nature; numerical data are collected, accordingly, this approach was not used for the purposes of the present study, since, only qualitative methods, using semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were employed as the only sources of collection of data and information from the research samples.

4.3.2 Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is small-sample design used to have insights and ideas about research problems as well as the variables and issues relating to such problems (McNabb, 2004). Krishnaswami et al. (2009) indicate that this type of research can be employed as an introductory part of a large study, such as in a two-stage research process. Exploratory research is most characteristically undertaken for three purposes: "*(1) to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study*" (Babbie, 2009, p. 98).

The literature indicates that exploratory research is necessary when very little is known concerning the topic under investigation, or about the context in which the research is to be carried out, or conducted in a research problem or issue while little or no previous research exists to which information can be referred (Gratton and Jones, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2009; Blaikie, 2010). In terms of the present study, there is almost no research concerning training and training needs assessment in the company investigated, the LGEC, or in Libyan organisations as a whole. Exploratory research is said to be often followed by further research that explores any ideas or hypotheses generated (Gratton and Jones, 2010).

There are three main methods for conducting exploratory research, namely, a survey of the literature; interviewing 'experts' in the subject (experience survey); and conducting focus group interviews (Kothari, 2008; Saunders et al., 2009). The survey of the literature is the simplest and largely productive method of accurately formulating the research problem or developing hypothesis, and hypothesis previously formulated by other researchers may be re-examined and their value assessed as a basis for more studies (Kothari, 2008). Interviewing 'experts' in the subject, also known as experience surveying, refers to surveying people who had practical experience with the problem investigated; the object of such a survey is to obtain insight into the relationships between variables and new ideas relating to the research problem (Kothari, 2008). Based on the discussion above, it can be argued that the present study is exploratory, given that a survey of the literature has been conducted and focus group interviews were employed to generate part of the primary data. The other part is generated using a semi-structured interview with training managers, who can be considered as 'experts' in employee training and development and assessment of their training needs. The general design of exploratory research is flexible, requires non-probability sampling design, no pre-planned design for analysis, requires unstructured instruments for data collection, and regarding its operational design, there is no fixed decisions concerning the operations

procedures (Kothari, 2008).

4.3.3   Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is described as an interpretive methodological approach which is assumed to yield more subjective data than quantitative research (Burns and Grove, 2005). It is also described as an extensive approach to exploring social phenomena, and its different types are "*naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and that they employ multiple methods of investigation*" (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Qualitative approaches to research are also described as a distinct foundation, the position from which to undertake research, that advances certain means of thinking through problems (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). Qualitative research is argued to be concerned with collecting and analysing data in various forms, mainly non-numeric, and is likely to focus on exploring small numbers of examples that are perceived as being interesting or informative, and endeavours to attain depth rather than breadth (Blaxter et al., 2010).

The present study has opted to employing qualitative approach, and this choice was based on a number of the characteristics of qualitative research. For example, qualitative research is carried out in naturalistic setting (Marshal and Rossman, 2011), and interviews with managers and focus group members were held at the Company premises (see Chapter Two, Section 2.11.3. Methods of Training Assessment). Qualitative research is argued to focus on context (Marshal and Rossman, 2011).

4.3.4   Quantitative Approach

Some authors (for example, King et al., 1994; Thomas, 2003; Gratton and Jones, 2010) claim that quantitative research is inclined to be founded on numerical measurements of particular aspects of phenomena, to summarise from specific situations to obtain general descriptions or to test causal hypotheses, and to obtain measurements and analyses which are straightforwardly replicable by other researchers. Some others (for example, Ary et al., 2010;

Bryman and Becker, 2012) claim that quantitative researchers look for explanations and predictions which will generalise to other people and places. Quantitative research involves relatively large-scale and representative sets of data, and is often falsely, in Blaxter et al.'s (2010, p. 65) view, *"presented or perceived as being about the gathering of 'facts'."* However, while there as several differences between qualitative and quantitative research (Table 4.1), there are also similarities between them, as illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1.   Differences between qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative paradigms	Quantitative paradigms
• Concerned with understanding behaviour from actors' own frames of reference • Naturalistic and uncontrolled observation • Subjective • Close to the data: the 'insider' perspective • Grounded, discovery oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, inductive • Process oriented • Valid: real, rich, deep data • Ungeneralizable: single case studies • Holistic • Assumes a dynamic reality	• Seeks the facts/causes of social phenomena • Obtrusive and controlled measurement • Objective • Removed from the data; the 'outsider' perspective • Ungrounded, verification oriented, reductionist, hypothetico-deductive • Outcome oriented • Reliable: hard and replicable data • Generalizable: multiple case studies • Particularistic • Assumes a stable reality

(Source: Oakley, 1999, p. 156).

Table 4.2.   Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research

• While quantitative research may be used mostly for testing theory, it can also be used for exploring an area and generating hypotheses and theory. • Similarly, qualitative research can be used for testing hypotheses and theories, even though it is used mostly for theory generation. • Qualitative data often includes quantification (e.g. statements such as more than, less than, most, as well as specific numbers. • Quantitative approaches (e.g. large-scale surveys) can collect qualitative (non-numeric) data through open-ended questions. • The underlying philosophical positions are not necessarily as distinct as the stereotypes suggest

(Source: Blaxter et al., 2010, p. 66).

In chapter Five, it can be seen that some quantification has been used, for example, 'most of the managers', 'most of the respondent trainees', or 'most engineers'.

4.3.5 Explanatory Research

Explanatory research tries to explain "*patterns in observed social phenomena, attitudes, behaviour, social relationships, social processes or social structures*" (Bulmer, 1986; quoted in Blaikie, 2010, p. 71). Gratton and Jones (2010) argue that explanatory research (also referred to as, analytical research) is occupied by explaining why a phenomenon occurs and measuring causal relationship among variables. This indicates that explanatory research tends to be analytical and quantitative in nature and measures causal relationship among variable, which is not the methodology adopted for the purposes of this study; accordingly, this type of research was not adopted, given that the present study is inductive and qualitative in nature, rather than deductive in its approach. This study also neither measures any causal relationship among variables nor why a phenomenon occurs, as explained earlier (Section 4.3.1. Inductive Approach versus Deductive Approach). It can be argued, based on this discussion, that explanatory research is not relevant to the present study; hence, it was not adopted for the purposes of this study.

4.3.6 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research is argued to try to "*present an accurate account of certain phenomenon, the characteristics in some demographic category, group or population, the patterns of relationships in some social context, at a particular time, or the changes in those characteristics over time*" (Bulmer, 1986; quoted in Blaikie, 2010, p. 71). Such descriptive accounts can be expressed in words or numbers and might necessitate developing sets of categories or types (Blaikie, 2010). Robson (2002) maintains that this type research describes phenomena as they take place, and is used to identify and obtain information concerning the characteristics of a specific problem, with the objective to describe a defined profile of individuals, events, or situations. McNabb (2010, p. 109) argues that researchers employ two different approaches when they generate data in descriptive quantitative research

investigations; that is, collecting data by observing and counting explicit acts of behaviour, or using a questionnaire to generate responses to particular questions. The present study neither employed collecting data through observation or counting explicit acts of behaviour nor it use questionnaires to generate data from the research participants (training managers and trained engineers in the case of the present study). On the basis of the discussion above, it can be said that the present study is not a descriptive research; hence, descriptive research is not relevant to the present study, and was not adopted for the purposes of the present study.

4.4   Research Strategy

There are a number of research strategies that researchers can use to carry out their investigations, including: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory; ethnography, and archival research. The present study is an investigation of training needs assessment which took place in a single organisation; that is, the LGEC, which can be perceived as a single company investigative study strategy, involving the investigation of training needs assessment in a single organisation.

Applying this single company investigative study strategy facilitates understanding training needs assessment and HRD practice in the LGEC. Data for this type of study have been collected from LGEC documents and publications, interviews with all managers responsible for training in the LGEC, and with members of ten focus groups (trained engineers).

4.5   Population and Sampling Procedures

The key concept of sampling is that selecting some of the elements in a population will help researchers to draw conclusions concerning the whole population. A population element is "*the subject on which the measurement is being taken. It is the unit of study,*" and a population "*the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences*" (Cooper and Schindler, 2000, p. 163).

Anderson (2009, p. 201) define sampling as "the deliberate choice of a number of people to represent a greater population." Anderson (2009) argues that it might be conceivable to gather data from everyone in a very small organisation; nonetheless, in the majority of cases it is essential to select a sample of people from whom information will be gathered. For the purposes of the present study, given the large number of engineers who have attended training course during the past five year when the study started, a sample was selected (the selection process for engineers is discussed in Section 4.5.2 below), in the form of ten focus groups, each consisting between six and nine participants. As for managers, only managers dealing with training and development issues were selected, a total of eight interviewees.

There are many reasons for sampling, such as low cost, a greater accuracy of results can be achieved using a sample, speed of data collection, availability of population elements, and sample versus census (Cooper and Schindler, 2000).

There are two major ways of determining an appropriate sample, probability sampling, and non-probability sampling. The former involves determining a sample which is statistically representative of the study population; hence, it should reflect the characteristics of the study population. Probability sampling is the: "*Selection of sampling techniques in which the chance, or probability, of each case being selected from the population is known and is not zero*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 603). Probability methods include random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, and double sampling. The advantage of probability sampling is that sampling error can be estimated. Sampling error is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population.

Non-probability sampling is defined as: "*Selection of sampling techniques in which the chance or probability of each case being selected in not known*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 559). Non-probability sampling includes convenience sampling, judgment sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. As regards the training managers, no sampling procedure

was adopted, given that the eight managers involved represent the whole population of the training managers, as will be explained below (Section 4.5.1). Selection of focus groups' participants is explained in Section 4.5.2.

4.5.1   Selection of Managers for Semi-structured Interviews

Managers responsible for staff training and development at the Training and Development Administration were interviewed. Due to the fact that only eight managers were responsible for staff training and development; all of them were selected to participate in the study. This means that the whole population in this category of managers were involved in the study. All accepted to participate and gave their consent to this effect. Each of these managers was interviewed in their offices. The LGEC top management's approval and consent was obtained prior to contacting these managers.

4.5.2   Selection of Engineers for Focus Group Interviews

Given the fact that the LGEC have many stations, it was decided to establish ten focus groups at the different stations (see 4.6.4. Focus Group Interviews). Each focus group was to consist of twelve participants. These participants were selected using a simple random sampling (SRS) technique (a probability sampling technique). In SRS all units of the study population (sampling frame) are numbered in one or another way; hence, each of these units have an equal chance of being selected (Hall, 2008). The sampling frame for each station was determined as follows:

First of all, a list of employees at the different LGEC stations was first obtained from the Administrative Affairs Managers. The second step was to select engineers who have been working for the company for not less than five years and have attended training Courses. The numbers of these engineers varied among the stations, given the different sizes of these stations. For stations which employ around fifty engineers who had been trained, the number

selected was the first number then every fourth number were selected, for example, Engineer No. 1 on the list, Engineer No.5 on the list, followed by Engineer No. 9 and so forth. By this way, twelve engineers were selected at random. For stations with around thirty engineers, the sample was selected as follows: Engineer No. 1 on the list, followed by Engineer No. 4, followed by Engineer No. 7, and so forth. It can be said that the percentage of the number of engineers in each sample to the total number of engineers in the sampling frame varied between 20% and 40%. This ensured that the samples obtained are representative of the total population in each station, and also in the total population (engineers) in the company as a whole.

Station administrations where the selected interviewees work provided the researcher with a room to hold the focus group meetings. Not all members of the focus groups attended the focus group meetings, rather only between six and nine of the selected engineers attended the interviews; the rest were either busy at work at the time of the interviews; hence they were unable to attend or they declined to participate in the focus group meetings, possibly for some reasons, such as they did not want to express their views fear of any possible repercussions that they might experience, or they might not be confident to meet with others and get involved in the discussion. These figures (six to nine participants per focus group) are in line with the literature concerning the number of participants per focus group. There is some difference in the literature concerning the best size of focus groups (Blee and Taylor, 2002). Authors (for example, Morgan, 1997; Carey, 1994) recommend six to ten members as the ideal size. Some authors (for example, Berg, 1998) maintain that a smaller size of five to seven participants in a focus group as a more effective size, four to eight (Kitzinger, 1996), and four to five (Twinn, 1998). However, Merton et al. (1990) recommend a larger sample of groups of 12 to 15, or even 15 to 20 participants. McLafferty (2004) concludes, based on these figures that the number of participants may vary between four and twenty. Krueger and

Casey (2000, p. 5) define focus group as a *"carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment."* Krueger and Casey (2000) also refer to focus groups as having five distinctive characteristics, including the following: focus groups involve between 5 and 10 people; participants in focus groups share certain characteristics which are significant to the research questions, that is, homogeneity of the participants; focus groups provide qualitative data and that in an inductive research the researcher's intention is to develop a perception of consumers' needs and requirements founded on discussion rather than attaining a conclusion; the discussion in focus groups has a clear focus on the relevant subject; and a focus group is not aimed at developing an perception of an issue regarding complete agreement, rather, at understanding consumers' needs and requirements concerning the participants' feelings and thoughts.

4.6   Data Collection Methods

There are two classes of data; primary data and secondary data. Primary data are those collected directly from the research participants (Agrawal, 2006), using different types of research instruments, such as questionnaires or interviews (Gratton and Jones, 2010). In the case of the present study, primary data were collected from the individuals interviewed, using semi-structured interviews, and from a group of individuals, using focus group interviews.

Secondary data are those which have been collected by other researchers (Agrawal, 2006). The present study contains such data in the form of the reviewed literature relevant to the study topic, as documented in Chapter Two (Literature Review).

A number of methods of qualitative primary data collection has been reported in the literature (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), such as, interviews, direct observation, analysis of artefacts, documents and records, use of visual material, as well as personal experience. The researcher

has employed multiple sources of evidence, such as semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis in order to have a better picture of the study, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. The documents analysed related to the LGEC and also about Libya and its education system, vocational educations and training (VET), and culture [see Chapter One (Section 1.9), Chapter Three and Appendices 1, 4, and 5).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of managers, and focus group interviews were held with groups of trained engineers. A number of documents published by the company have been examined and critically reviewed and analysed (See Chapter Three, Section 3.7. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company, Appendix 1. Training Courses Implemented by the LGEC, Appendix 4. Types of Training Programmes Provided by the LGEC, and Appendix 5. The LGEC – Vision. Mission, Values).
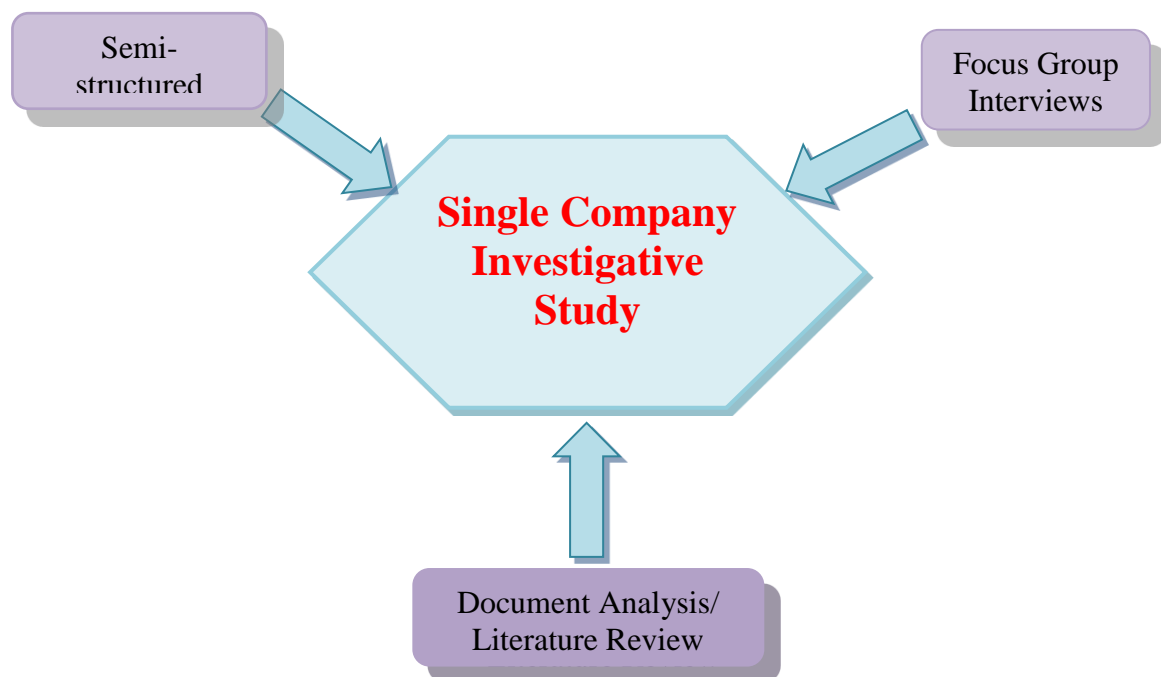
Figure 4.1.
Qualitative data collection techniques used in the present study

4.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Davies (2006, p. 157) defines an interview as a "*method of data collection, information or opinion gathering that specifically involves asking a series of questions. Typically, an interview represents a meeting or dialogue between people where personal and social interaction occur.*" There are several interview types (Finn et al., 2000; Kumar, 2011, Saunders et al., 2009; Yin, 2009), including unstructured interviews, structured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Kumar (2011, p. 144) classifies interviews according to the degree of their flexibility into unstructured interviews, on the one extreme and structured interviews, on the other extreme, and in between these two extremes are interviews at different levels of flexibility and , as illustrated in Figure 4.1. As explained earlier in this chapter, the present study is interpretivist (epistemological assumption), and subjectivist (ontological assumption) as well as inductive and qualitative in nature. To generate data and information from the research participants (managers and trained engineers) and in the light of the paradigms and research approaches mentioned above, the type of interview selected is that of a semi-structured interview, which according to Kumar's (2011) typology, presented in Figure 4.2 below, lies between unstructured interview and structured interview.
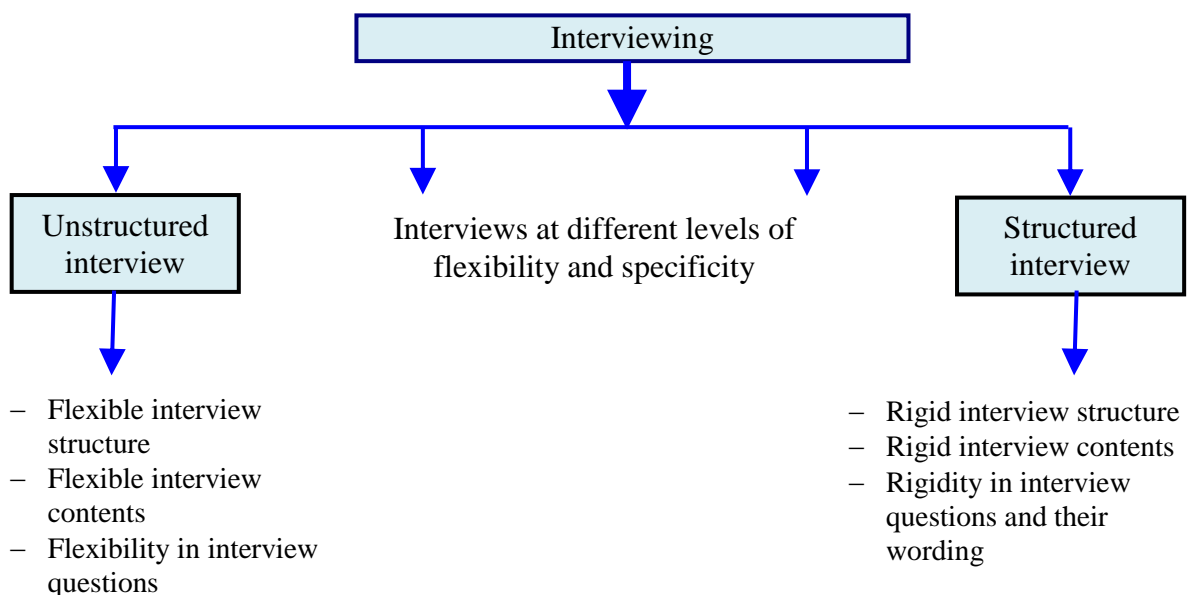
Figure 4.2. Types of Interview (Source: Kumar, 2011, p. 144).

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Semi-structured interviews were selected to generate qualitative data from the eight managers responsible for training in the LGEC, due to their advantages. This type of interview provides the researcher with the opportunity to 'probe' what the interviewee says, the interviewer can get the respondents' actual perceptions and beliefs; the depth of information is improved; response rates can be very good, given that the interviewer is present to ensure completing data collection; and the interviewer can provide help and guidance, and explain questions and providing further information where it is necessary (Walsh, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews are structured around a core of standard questions, and the researcher can expand on any question so as to explore a given response in greater depth (Mitchell and Jolley, 2010). A semi-structured interview also informs the interviewer how interviewees answered the standard questions, as well as allowing the interviewer to ask further "*questions to follow up on any interesting or unexpected answers to the standard questions*" (Mitchell and Jolley, 2010, p. 277). Nonetheless, this advantage of being capable of following up on questions is often counteracted by two key disadvantages: (1) "*data from the follow-up questions are difficult to interpret because different participants are asked different questions*, and (2) *even the answers from the standard questions are difficult to interpret because the standard questions were not asked in the same standard way to all participants*" (Mitchell and Jolley, 2010, p. 277). However, semi-structured interviews "*combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data at the factor level*" (Schensul et al., 1999, p. 149).

4.6.2 Designing and Formulation of Semi-structured Interview Schedule

A set of questions were developed, based on the research questions and research aim and objectives, as well as from relevant data and information reviewed in Chapter Two (Literature Review). These questions were presented to the study supervisors who provided the

researcher with their comments to amend or change the format of certain items. These comments and amendments were taken into consideration (see Section 4.6.3. Interview Schedule Piloting) and the first draft of the interview schedule was thus prepared. The first draft of the questionnaire was translated into Arabic, given that all participants are Arabic speaking and better understand the questions in Arabic than in English. There are several translation methodologies that can be used to translate research instruments, such as questionnaires and interview schedules, from the source language (in the case of the present study the source language is English) into the target language (Arabic in the case of the present study, including one-way translation, forward translation, back-translation (double translation), parallel translation, and mixed translation.

One-way translation (also referred to as 'direct translation') involves using a bilingual translator to translate the instrument from the source language to the target language (Waltz et al., 2010). This type of translation has the advantage of being simple and inexpensive, though the disadvantages are that translation depends only on the translator's skills and knowledge and that the translated instrument tends to have less evidence for reliability and validity when compared with the original copies (Waltz et al., 2010). As regards the forward translation ('mixed technique), several translators collaborate to do a source-to-target language translation; then a second group of translators judges the equivalence of the two versions (Waltz et al., 2010).

In parallel translation, two or more independent translators who are bilingual simultaneously translate the research instrument and then both translations are compared to make modifications that are agreeable to all the translators (Neelankavil, 2007).

Backtranslation (double translation) involves using two translators, and while working independently, one translates the items from the source to the target language, and the other translator translates the items back to the original source language (Waltz et al., 2010). The

two original language versions are compared to find errors in the target language version. This type of translation was adopted for translating the interview schedule from English (Source language) into Arabic (target language).

4.6.3 Interview Schedule Piloting

The pilot study was carried out in order to know how well the interview approach would generate the types of responses required for developing the research topic. After designing and formulating the first draft of the interview schedules, two interviews were carried out with one manager (Head of Department) and one focus group, which were not included in the study sample. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the reactions of these participants through the questions asked, and whether or not these questions were understandable by them. Furthermore, it was also wanted to know whether there are certain difficulties in understanding these questions as well as whether or not the participants agreed with these questions. It was thought that, prior to conducting the interviews, it was necessary to explain the importance of these interviews and to ensure the confidentiality of these interviews in order to obtain good results. The interviewees agreed with the majority of the questions asked but they indicated their view concerning some of them and suggested that they would be divided into more than one question each, as illustrated in the following table.

At the beginning, two 'pilot' interviews were conducted in order to identify the difficulties or problems that the researcher might experience when conducting the interviews so as to overcome such difficulties or problems. In fact, the amendments that were suggested were with regard to rephrasing some of the questions before undertaking the remaining interviews. These suggestions were taken into consideration and the questions were rephrased. Details of the two pilot interviews (manager and focus group) are given in Appendix 3.

Original Questions	Suggested Questions
1. How are training needs are identified in the company; that is, what is the procedure adopted?	1. What are the procedures adopted by the company when it starts identifying their training needs? 2. Do the management undertake individual analysis, profession analysis and organisation analysis in order to identify the actual needs of the individuals?
2. How training needs plans are formulated and organised?	3. How are training plans formulated, and what is the mechanism adopted? Who participates in formulating training plans? And, is there any consideration for cost, return on investment and budgets?

4.6.4 Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups are small unstructured groups with a number of participants, usually controlled by a moderator, which are established so as to explore particular topics, and individuals' perceptions and experiences, by way of group interactions (Litosseliti, 2003). Mack et al. (2005, p. 51) define focus groups as "*qualitative data collection method effective in helping researchers learn the social norms of a community or subgroup, as well as the range of perspectives that exist within that community or subgroup.*" Focus group interviews depend on the interaction which occur among participants in the group to generate data with the interviewer characteristically acting as a moderator encouraging interviewees to generate discussion concerning specific topics (Hatch, 2002). Hatch adds that it is such interaction among the participants which gives focus group data their unique character. Groups of interviewees are called focus groups given that "*they are designed to focus on a particular topic. Such a focus can generate a lot of data in a relatively short period of time as compared to observations and individual interviews*" (Hatch, 2002, p. 132). A further strength, or advantage, of focus groups is that they have the capability of capturing the dynamics of group interaction which are not available in individual interviews and perhaps few and far between in observation studies.

Focus group interviews, like any other research method, have their advantages and

disadvantages. Babbie (2010, p. 323) quotes Krueger (1998) indicating the following

advantages:

1. *"the technique is a socially oriented research method capturing real-life data in a social environment.*
2. *It has flexibility.*
3. *It has high face validity.*
4. *It has speedy results.*
5. *It is low in cost."*

Babbie (2010) refers to other advantages, including: group dynamics frequently produce

aspects of the topic which would not have been expected by the researcher and would have

not come to light from interviews with individuals.

Disadvantages of the focus group method include the following (Krueger, 1998, p. 48, quoted

in Babbie, 2010, p. 323):

1. *"Focus groups afford the researcher less control than individual interviews.*
2. *Data are difficult to analyse.*
3. *Moderators require special skills.*
4. *Differences between groups can be troublesome.*
5. *Groups are difficult to assemble.*
6. *Discussion must be conducted in a conducive environment."*

The interview schedule was translated into Arabic in a similar way to that of the managers'

semi-structured interview schedule, using a back-translation method.

4.7   Document Analysis

Document analysis refers to the study of available documents, either to categorise their

content or to clarify deeper implications, as demonstrated by their style and coverage (Gray,

2009). The sources of such documents differ, for instance, they might be public documents,

such as government papers, organisation's publications [some of the LGEC's documents

relating to training and development have been analysed in Chapter Three, Section 3.6], etc.,

or, for example, minutes of meetings, formal letters and financial accounts. In addition, and

for the purposes of the present study, the contents of an extensive academic and professional articles published in academic and professional journals and text-books published by learned authors in the field of training and development of employees and human resource development (HRD) were reviewed and critically analysed in Chapter Two, as well as textbooks published in the field of research methodology, as documented throughout this chapter. Furthermore, publications of the LGEC, and about Libya in general, as indicated above, are documented in Chapter One (Section 1.9), Chapter Three and Appendices 1, 4, and 5, referred to earlier (Section 4.6.1. Semi-Structured Interviews).

4.8 Field Work Process

In order to generate data required for the present study, the researcher travelled back to Libya at the end of July 2009 where the Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC) operates and where the fieldwork was undertaken. LGEC represents the research investigative study.

The interviews started with the targeted population of the study in early August 2009, which consisted of managers and trained engineers. All training managers of the company's Training Department were targeted, given that they are commissioned with the preparation, implementation, and supervision of training plans. As regards the trained engineers, ten focus group interviews were conducted in order to benefit from their training experiences of the method employed for their nomination to these courses and also of the procedures and measures adopted by the company in relation to their nomination for these courses (see Section 4.5. Population and Sampling procedure).

Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher contacted the company's Administration of Public Relations to obtain their consent to conduct interviews. This administration coordinates all types of communications within the GLEC and also with other governmental organisations and agencies. It is the administration through which access to the GLEC

management can be obtained; accordingly, the researcher had to contact them to get such access to the management to obtain their consent to select the study participants and interview them. A timetable for conducting interviews was arranged such that the researcher can conduct all interviews under suitable circumstances. Given that all managers in the Training Department were targeted, their consent was obtained personally and dates suiting them were arranged.

Arabic Language was used in all interviews since all are Libyans or Arab nationals and speak Arabic. The time of each interview varies from one interview to the other, ranging between 60 to 90 minutes each.

A file was opened concerning these interviews using a notebook prepared for this purpose whereby all of the interviews were recorded in this notebook given that the majority of interviews were not willing to audio-record their interviews, which is attributed to the interviewees' socio-cultural factors.

Before starting any interview, the objective and the aim of these interviews was explained verbally and some concepts were also explained to help interviewees answer all questions confidently and knowingly. Interviewees were also assured verbally that the interviews are confidential and would be used only for the purposes of academic research.

All interviews were conducted at the managers' offices at pre-arranged dates. Developing the questions of the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews and their piloting in order to formulate the final versions are explained in Sections 4.6.2, 4.6.3, and 4.6.4. The two pilot studies concerning the semi-structured interview and the focus group interviews are presented in Appendix 3.

As regards the focus group interviews, ten interviews were conducted with engineers at their workplaces within the different administrations of the Company, after the consent of the

Company General Management was obtained in co-ordination with the other departments of the Company. Twelve engineers were selected for each focus group from the daily register in a random way which guaranteed credibility of the selection. However, the number of participants in each group varied between six and nine members given that some were not willing to participate or they were busy with some important task during the time of conducting the interviews. The focus group interview was conducted at the participants' workplace whereby an office was used for meeting the groups. The duration of each interview varied between 75 and 120 minutes. Audio-recording was used in three focus group interviews only since the majority of the participants were not willing to audio-record their interviews. Each participant was given a number which is used before the respondents wanted to participate in the discussion. This facilitated the identification of each participant by the researcher to record or write interviews as accurately as possible.

Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used when conducting the interviews. The research questions were distributed over six themes, which covered all the researcher's queries. Each participant was given the opportunity to participate to help collect as much data and information as possible that can be used in this study.

4.9 Data Analysis

Data generated have to be processed to render them informative and significantly understood. Saunders et al. (2009) argue that data gathered have to be classified into groups before analysis is carried out. As for the focus group interviews, data collected are to be transcribed and coded in relation to the participants and/or the emerging themes (Mack et al., 2005). For the purposes of analysing qualitative data gathered during semi-structured interviews and focus group first of all, interviews were translated into English, then analysed in accordance with a number of themes.

4.9.1 Coding the Semi-structured Interview and Focus Group Interviews

Coding in qualitative research "*is the process whereby data are broken down into component parts, which are given names*" (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 567). According to these authors, coding is the initial point for most forms of qualitative data analysis. Zikmund at al. (2010) maintain that in qualitative research the codes are often words or phrases representing themes. As regards the semi-structured interviews, the interviews were translated into English and were edited in preparation for their analysis.

It is clear from the data obtained from Focus Group Interview a certain code, in the form of words (or abbreviations of words) or phrases could be identified.

The managers were coded in terms of numbers rather than by their names or occupation. In the data analysis and discussion they will be referred as follows:

M1 = First Manager	M5 = Fifth Manager
M2 = Second Manager	M6 = Sixth Manager
M3 = Third Manager	M7 = Seventh Manager
M4 = Fourth Manager	M8 = Eighth Manager

As regards focus group participants, examples of their coding are indicated in Table 4.3.

Prior to analysing the semi-structured interview and the focus group a set of themes or categories were identified. Semi-structured interview questions and focus group questions were grouped as themes (categories); each theme deals with responses to a set of questions. This thematic categorisation helps in designing and formulating the final version of the framework for the determination of effectiveness of training needs determination, presented and explained briefly in Chapter Three (Section 3.8. General Discussion). Six themes have been identified, as indicated below.

Theme 1:   Establishment of training framework

Theme 2:   Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training
            Needs.

Theme 3:   Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database).

Theme 4:   Factors Affecting the Determination of Training needs.

Theme 5:   Training Decisions.

Theme 6:   Significance of Training Needs Determination

Table 4.3.   Examples of coding focus group participants.

Focus Group Interview No.	Participant	Coding
First	First	P1-1
	Second	P1-2
Second	First	P2-1
	Second	P2-2
Third	First	P3-1
	Second	P3-2
Fourth	First	P4-1
	Second	P4-2
Fifth	First	P5-1
	Second	P5-2
Sixth	First	P6-1
	Second	P6-2
Seventh	First	P7-1
	Second	P7-2
Eighth	First	P8-1
	Second	P8-2
Ninth	First	P9-1
	Second	P9-2
Tenth	First	P10-1
	Second	P10-2

These themes were labelled or 'coded' as such to facilitate retrieval of data (Pope et al., 2007) and undertake narrative analysis of data. Thematic analysis allows clear identification of key themes, and it is also flexible, allowing extensive leeway to researchers (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006).

4.10 Trustworthiness (Credibility, Transferability and Dependability)

Pitney and Parker (2009) indicate that qualitative researchers focus on the overarching concept of trustworthy and the equivalents of validity and reliability, that is, credibility, transferability, and dependability with a variety of strategies (Figure 4.3).

Trustworthiness

Credibility   Transferability   Dependability
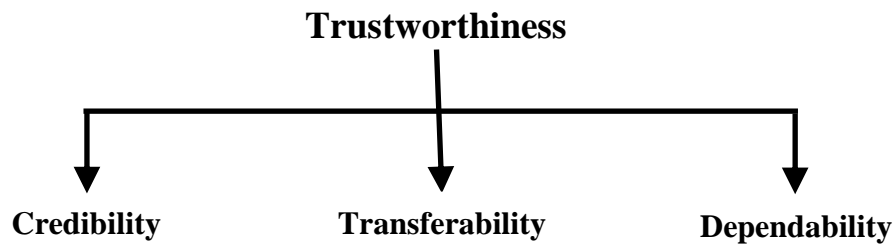
Figure 4.3. The three components of worthiness.
(Source: Pitney and Parker, 2009, p. 63).

Pitney and Parker (2009, p. 63) outline the questions and strategies associated with credibility, transferability, and dependability, as follows:

> *"Credibility:*
> - *Defnition: the plausability of a study's findings.*
> - *Key question or issue addressed: do the results capture what is really occurring?*
> - *Research tactic: triangulaton of data; long term engagement; member checks."*
>
> *"Transferability*
> - *Definition: the ability of applying the findings of a study to similar environments.*
> - *Key question or issue addressed: is there enough dewscriptive information to allow the reader to determined whether the results are applicable to similar contexts?*
> - *Analogous to external validity*
> - *Research tactic: rich description of research partricipants and the emergen themes"*
>
> *"Dependability*
> - *Definition: the ability to learn and understand what is really occurring*
> - *Key question of issue addressed: Are the results believable?*
> - *Analogous to reliability.*
> - *Research tactic: triangulation of data, peer debriefing, and member checks."*

Credibility is argued to relate to whether the research findings are believable; accordingly, researchers have to "*take steps to ensure that their findings are accurate and supported by the data*" (Pitney and Parker, 2009, p. 63). The key issue that the research was occupied with is

that the participants' responses sum up what was really taking place with regard to training, training and development, training needs assessment, and other factors that have an impact on training needs assessment at the LGEC. Lodico et al. (2006, p. 273) define credibility as referring:

> "*to whether the participants' perceptions of the setting or events match up with the researcher's portrayal of them in the research report. In other words, has the researcher accurately represented what the participants think, feel, and do and the processes that influence their thoughts, feelings, and actions?*

Lodico et al. (2006) also indicated that credibility is the equivalent of the criteria of validity in quantitative research, though qualitative researchers do not discuss unrelated variables in assessing credibility. Instead, qualitative researchers focus on whether the researcher's methods tend to yield correct and deep depiction of the research setting and participants.

Transferability "*refers to the degree of similarity between the researcher site and other sites as judged by the reader. Transferability is assessed by looking at the richness of the descriptions included in the study as well as the amount of detail provided regarding the context within which the study occurred*" (Lodico et al., 2006, p. 275).

Dependability is a criterion for qualitative research which is equivalent to reliability, though it is not assessed by means of statistical procedures (Lodico et al., 2006). It refers to "*whether one can track the procedures and processes used to collect and interpret the data*" (Lodico et al., 2006, p. 275).

4.11   Ethical Consideration

There are at least two ethical issues concerning the analysis and reporting of qualitative research (Babbie, 2010). First of all, due to the fact that qualitative analysis directly demands subjective judgements, there is an evident risk of seeing that what the researcher is searching for or wants to find (Babbie, 2010). To avoid any risk to the research participants, the researcher obtained participants' informed consent to the risks that might arise due to their

participation and also made the participants aware of any consequences that might be due to such participation. The researcher also referred to all participants using some sort of coding to secure their anonymity and confidentiality. The second ethical issue is that concerning the protection of participants' privacy. The qualitative researcher frequently analyses and reports data collected from certain, identifiable persons (Babbie, 2010). It is therefore imperative not to reveal what is known about the participants and when writing up the findings of the analysis, it is very important to keenly obscure the identity of the participants, for example, by giving individuals, organisations and communities pseudonyms to hide their identity (Babbie, 2010). Klenke (2008, p. 53) indicates that qualitative research ethics place distinct "*demands on the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy and freedom from risk and harm to the research participants.*" This procedure was adopted in the present study to protect the privacy and identity of the participants, in addition to obtaining their consent and approval to participate in the study and to decline from participation whenever they want to do so. Participants' anonymity was maintained so that they would not experience any repercussion which may harm them.

4.12   Summary

This chapter identifies the key research philosophies, research approaches, research strategies, research methods and methodologies, issues relating to data collection and population and sampling procedures employed in the present study. A number of research paradigms were discussed, including two epistemological assumptions (positivism, and interpretivism), and two ontological assumptions (subjectivism and objectivism). The discussion of these research paradigms categorised the present study as being an interpretivist study, as explained earlier in this chapter (Section 4.2.2) and subjectivist study, as also indicated in this chapter (Section 4.2.3). Various research approaches were also discussed, including deductive approach, inductive approach, exploratory approach, qualitative approach, quantitative approach,

explanatory approach, and descriptive approach. Based on the discussion of the various research approaches, the present study can also be categorised as being inductive (explained in Section 4.3.1), exploratory (explained in Section 4.3.2), and qualitative (explained in Section 4.3.3) in nature. The study involved only one organisation to investigate training needs assessment within the GLEC, as the only research strategy adopted for the purposes of the present study.

The field work process carried out was explained and discussed in some detail, in which the procedures for identifying the targeted population and selecting the research sample, how to conduct the semi-structured and focus group interviews, and who was to be involved in these interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of the Company managers and the focus group interviews were conducted with ten groups of engineers who have attended training courses; hence; capable of responding to the interview questions and issues raised during the interviews.

Finally, issues relating to the trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, and dependability) and ethical consideration were also explained and discussed. To this effect, the participants informed consent was obtained in order to safeguard their anonymity and confidentially.

Chapter Five

Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

5.1   Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets responses of the study respondent samples (Managers and trainees – Focus group members). As indicated in Chapter Four (Section 4.5.1) eight managers responsible for training in the GLEC were involved in the study; they represented the whole population of the managers responsible for training. As regards the focus groups, ten focus groups participated in the study (Chapter Four, Section 4.5.2), each consisting of six to nine engineers who have had training during the past five years. Responses to the semi-structured interview questions (responses of managers) and responses of the focus group members are analysed across six themes (illustrated in Figure 5.1), as follows:

Theme 1: Establishment of training framework

Theme 2: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs.

Theme 3: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database).

Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training needs.

Theme 5: Training Decisions.

Theme 6: Significance of Training Needs Determination.

These themes were identified in Chapter Four (Section 4.1.9). These themes helped in formulating the framework for the determination of the effectiveness of training needs determination, as will be presented and discussed in Chapter Six (Section 6.11.1; Figure 6.1). Hence, it can be argued that they are linked to the framework development. In addition to linking this framework on the study findings as revealed in participants' responses to questions included in the six themes, it is also based on Western literature models (mainly on Olivas's, 2007 model and Vaughn's, 2005, model).

Figure 5.1.   Training needs assessment six themes.

5.2 Analysis and Discussion

Theme 1: Establishment of Training Framework

5.2.1 Types of Training Plans Adopted by the Company when Implementing its Training Programmes

This question was addressed to all the respondents in this study through interviewing managers and trainees. The responses are divided into two sections:

- Training plans adopted by the Company and their types.

- How to prepare a training plan? And who prepares it?

When the first question regarding the training plans undertaken by the company and their types was answered by the respondents in this study, the following can be concluded:

All the interviewed managers unanimously agreed that there is an annual training plan prepared and implemented by the company. This indicates that the company's training and development needs are reviewed each year so as to prepare the annual training plans (Reid and Barrington, 1997; Reid et al., 2004). The preparation begins with the beginning of the last quarter of each year and includes the proposed or the targeted numbers for training in the following year. The plan also includes the dates, the estimated financial cost, and the proposed training locations, and the coordination with the authorities which will implement the training whether inside the training centres of the company or outside the company. One of the interviewed managers states the following: M2 "*among the functions of the training department in the company is the preparation of the annual training plan, defining the locations where the programmes will take place and the supervision after the annual training plan is approved by the General Management of company*." As indicated in Chapter Three (Section 3.6), the Company draws up its training plan according to its perceived requirements as well as

according to the procedures adopted when formulating the Company's annual plan. Appendix 1 illustrates some of the training courses implemented within and outside the Company and also shows the administrations benefited from such training courses. Nonetheless, it was not possible to obtain the full annual training plan, and how it had been prepared since the Company management treat such issues as confidential and not in the public domain. The Company's Training Administration prepares this plan in co-ordination with the Company's administrations and departments. This seems that preparing an annual training plan is the strategy adopted by the LGEC.

As regards the funding of training, this is provided by the Ministry concerned and included in one of the Company's annual budget clauses. As indicated later in this chapter (Section 5.2.2) that the Company has an annual budget and the type of this budget is claimed to be traditional (incremental) budget, being based on what has happened in the previous year.

After the receipt of trainees' applications or list of names of candidates, which include the target numbers and the type of training from each department in the company, the Training Department holds meetings with all the Directors of the directorates to develop a plan and procedures for the detailed plan for implementation. This is a very lengthy and complicated process, given the fact that the LGEC has 15 Administrations, each headed by General Directors, and each Administration has a number of directorates, headed by Directors, as illustrated in Appendix 1 (Figure 1.1. The organisational structure chart of the LGEC). This large number of administrations slows down work within the company departments. These trainees' applications and lists are for internal use by the Training Department to sort out the type of training, the number of candidates for each training programme and courses as well as the timing for candidates to attend their perspective training programmes and courses, and the location of training

sites; be it on-the-job or off-the-job.

Upon completion, the Training Department submits the plan to the General Management of the Electricity Company, which will then be approved by the Managing Director, and then it will be forwarded to the Ministry of Industry and Energy for approval. Therefore, the plan should be ready for implementation. This is in line with the procedures adopted in Libya, as indicated in Chapter Three (Section 3.5), in which each ministry, agency or public company suggest their annual training plans in accordance with their requirements and suggesting the cost for implementing training programmes, and referring them to the local government to sanction and approve them, and subsequently implementing them. This procedure takes about five months. Nominations start in August each year and approval of the nominations are approved by the end of December. The implementation of the training plan starts at the beginning of the following year. One of the interviewed managers (M4) claims that "*this happens from the theoretical and administrative perspective, but in the actual implementation of these plans and programmes, there is a delay or cancellation of some programmes due to some of the difficulties facing the implementation process and this creates some problems for the Administration.*" This is an indication that the plan is not strictly adhered to when implemented; hence, some programmes are either ignored or even cancelled, an issue that negatively affects the candidates nominated for such programmes. One of the training objectives (Chapter Three, Section 3.7, Objective 9 stipulates that candidates for training courses have to attend the training courses. Accordingly, delaying or cancellation of some programmes may result in some candidates losing the opportunity of having the training they need; hence, they are denied the opportunities to update their knowledge and skills they need by way of attending the training programmes they have nominated for. This can be attributed to

the unavailability of instructors in certain specialisations, such as in some of the administrative training programmes, to implement training programmes in conformity with the company training plans; consequently such postponement and delay occurs.

The company's objectives (see Chapter Three, Section 3.7) are taken into account when preparing the plan in order to translate them into training programmes. The Administration of Training takes charge of the preparation of the plan and identifies the centres or venues where training sessions will take place, in addition to coordination with the training centres inside or outside the Company, such as universities or centres of higher education used by the Company to provide training in some disciplines to its employees when these programmes are internal in Libya. One interviewed manager (M1) argued that "*the Company cooperates with some of the Libyan universities and centres of excellence to implement some of the training programmes and courses that the Company cannot implement in its training centres*." It can be argued that delaying or cancellation of certain programmes, as indicated above, might have resulted in the training plans not having achieved all of the company objectives (noted in Chapter One, Section 1.8).

However, if these programmes are provided outside Libya, coordination will be arranged with the concerned overseas authorities or companies that provide training. This happens when any overseas company contracts with the General Electricity Company in the construction and building of new plants or in the introduction of new technology or equipment which require trained and qualified staff to operate and maintain them. Contracts with foreign authorities include terms related to the training of the staff who will use these new equipment or technologies.

Managers and engineers indicated that in discussions about improving the engineers' standards at work, training would also take place when new equipment is delivered, and

this training of engineers is either undertaken by their superiors or by the provider of the equipment. Superiors are trained through management training programmes. One of the Company's training objectives (Chapter Three, Section 3.7, Objective 9) clearly stipulates for the formulation of annual training programmes for the top management, that is, the Board of Directors (General Secretary of the Company/Administration Committee) (See Appendix 1, Figure 1.l), in the form of seminars to top senior management staff.

Almhdie and Nyambegera (2004) maintain that Libya has in recent years paid attention to administration reform and a number of management training and development institutions have been established. Table 1.1 (Appendix 1) shows that 147 managers have attended leadership training (Management Training) courses in 2007, and the target for such courses in 2009 was 250 managers. The managers argue that such a process must have a positive impact on the training strategy.

An interviewed manager (M5) indicates that "*after lifting the sanctions imposed by the UN on Libya, the company held a number of agreements for the development of its plants and the preparation and training of specialised personnel, and they resorted to Western companies that have the capacity and experience in the field of electricity to hold such agreements.*" It can be argued that training employees abroad was mainly for specialist employees (engineers, technicians) on using and operating new equipment and technologies. However, nominating employees to train abroad is for financial profit for the trainee, due to favouritism.

Another manager (M1) also indicates, with regard to external training, that "*the company held several agreements with a number of specialised international companies to undertake the task of training and developing its staff, among which are: the Electricity Authority in Ireland, the Electricity Authority in France, and the European*

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School for the Operation of Production Plants. In this case, the senior management of the company instructs the training department to include these programmes within the annual plan for the company."

When this issue relating to preparing the training plan was addressed to the trainees, they expressed some observations about the annual plans: Some programmes are included in the annual plan, but when the plan is implemented it is noticed that they are postponed to the following year or cancelled, causing concerns to the candidates about these programmes. One trainee engineer (P10-4) explains: "*There is lack of credibility of these programmes, because they are often postponed or cancelled after they are included in the annual plan*". This clearly demonstrates that interviewees were not fully satisfied with the way training programmes are implemented, and that they felt that the annual plan approved by the company's management is not adhered to.

The annual plan is usually of a specific form that is repeated each year and it does not evolve for the better, as reported by some interviewed engineers. For example, an interviewed engineer is quoted to say the following (P6-5): "*I have worked as an engineer for more than ten years in this company and have witnessed the annual training plans prepared by the company and was nominated to attend several programmes. I noticed that the annual plans prepared by the company are usually of a specific form that is repeated each year and it does not evolve for the better, which makes us (the trainees) feel that such plans are routine and lack any effectiveness.*" This is a defect in the preparation of the plan, and might be possible that this is an indication that the annual plans are the same every year which might possibly do not meet the aspirations of the employees. This is a problem, and as indicated by some interviewed engineers, it needs to be addressed by the company management.

5.2.2   Funds and Budget of Training

Attending training programmes and courses incurs the expenditure of large sums of funds, especially with regard to training employees abroad. Accordingly, adequate budget is needed to be allocated by the Company management which would cover all aspects of expenditure on employee training and development.

This section is concerned with the funds and budget of training allocated by the company to training and the expected results of training and the human resource development for company. After addressing this question to the interviewed individuals, it turned out that there is a clause in the general budget of the company related to training, which in effect is that when preparing the general budget of the company the administration proposes a training financial budget estimated for the delivery of training programmes in accordance with the plan developed by the Administration of training for training over the following year and then it is submitted to the General Administration of the company for discussion and approval, then it is submitted to the Ministry of Electricity for approval – as it is the case with in the preparation of the annual budget. This is in line with the procedure referred to in Chapter Three (Section 3.6). Brown (2002) indicates that for training requirements the organisation identifies a factor into the whole training budget forecasted for the organisation and installation, as well as its impacts on the amount of funds allocated by the top management.

However, it is not always the procedure because it is linked to the overall budget in the state, which affects accurate implementation. One manager (M8) claims that "*during the implementation of training programmes, some financial problems sometimes hinder the training process and thus affect the success of these courses*." This manager might have been pointing to inadequate funding for training; hence, training process is not

implemented in full, which might, according to this manager, have led to cancelling or postponing some of the training courses. According, the Company management might have asked for further funding to implement these courses. According to Vaughn (2005), it may be necessary to make a formal proposal at this stage, so as to obtain funding and approval to develop and present a training programme to close such a gap The approach adopted by the GLEC toward allocating the budget to training is that of incremental budgeting, in which much budget setting is made on the basis of what has taken place in the previous year, with certain adjustment for any changes in factors which are anticipated to have an effect on the impending budget period (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009). It worth mentioning that the Libyan accounting system has been based on the UK and the USA accounting systems, despite the explicit environmental differences between Libya, as an emerging economy, and the UK and the US, as developed countries (Shareia, 2010) (noted in Chapter Three, Section 3.7). Incremental budgeting (also referred to as discretionary budgets) are very common in local and central government, and also in other public bodies in the West (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009). This accounting system is, as indicated above, is implemented in the Libyan accounting system, which is used by the Libyan public sector organisations. The GLEG, the Company investigated in this study, is a public sector company.

Through the answers given by the training managers, it seems that there is an agreement that the provisions included in the budget are mostly formal stipulations; however, such provisions are not implemented as required. Amounts of money are deducted for this area, but they are not all spent when implementing the programmes. One of the interviewed managers (M3) stated that "*when the training budget is proposed, we should take into account our needs of the financial resources to complete the training plan. However, when approved, we see there is a difference in the proposed amount*

which affects the implementation of the plan." It can be argued that the budget proposed by the company has been slashed or training priorities have been changed. It seems the approach to training when allocating the budget is that training is perceived as a cost of now rather than an investment for the future. This is contrast to the literature which argues that training is perceived these days as "*an investment for the future rather than a cost of the present*" (Raj, 2007, p. 7.3). This approach would have a negative impact on training needs assessment.

As for the expected return of the cost of training, it was noted that there is no standard or specific criteria that show the benefit or the return of the training. The managers agreed that the two criteria include the observations of supervisors and also on the reports submitted by managers of departments on the benefit of training programmes. A manager (M5) claims that "*this aspect is not hugely taken into consideration, because the company might sometimes spend money on training, without waiting for any benefit and this causes a waste of money which must be invested in other aspects which have a return.*" This might be reference to the absence of any proper evaluation of training results to the company. Nonetheless, it can be argued that return on investment is not important given that the training programmes offered were not major programmes. Barron (1999, p. 204) maintains that the significant issue is to estimate return on investment "*for major programmes and initiatives—those that create a significant change.*"

Answers from the respondent engineers (the focus groups' participants) indicated that they do not have any participation in the training budget proposal because it is administrative work for managers of the departments in the company, but they have some notes. For example, a member of Focus Group No.P2-7 claims that "*the company management should take into account the observations of all employees, even through a*

questionnaire circulated to acknowledge their views, to help the management to conceptualise the budget in a suitable manner to avoid wasting money in a way that might not benefit the Company." This view is in agreement with the literature which indicates that one of the person analysis methods to determine individual's training needs is by surveys (Aamodt, 2010). Another interviewee in Focus Group No. P6-1 stated the following: "*I've been nominated during the past two years for a 6-weeks course to increase efficiency. The location of the course was far away from my home; therefore I had to stay in a place near that location. This resulted in raising the costs of accommodation for a number of the trainees in this course (about 120 trainees). I and my colleagues noted that the benefit of this course was insignificant compared to the money spent, indicating that there was no interest by the training officials to make a budget that takes into account the cost and the expected return of training.*"

Although the responsibility of the Training Department that gathers all the information about training needs from the different Administrations and their Directorates, Directors of the different directorates also need to identify their staff training needs in light of the available budget, given the fact that, as noted earlier, the company's approach to allocating the training budget is incremental budgeting, based on the previous year's budget (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009), as discussed earlier in this Section. This suggests that the company directors are not highly qualified to perform their training budgeting tasks efficiently.

Theme 2: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs.

5.2.3 Approaches and the Methods Adopted by the Company to Determine Training Needs Assessment

Through asking interviewed respondents this question, it became clear that the measures adopted by the Company in identifying the training needs for its staff are based on the

needs of each separate Administration. The General Electricity Company consists of fifteen General Administrations in its organisational structure (see Chapter Three, Section 3.6, Figure 3.4), and the Company's training administration undertakes all the training programmes; i.e., preparation and implementation of training plans, as well as the supervision and follow-up for these programmes. Each Administration determines its staff training needs in accordance to the rules, regulations and directives set by the company management; accordingly, the Administration of Training coordinates these needs and design and prepare training programmes in the light of the different training needs identified by the different departments. It is through this process that the three steps of organisational needs, task needs and person needs, identified in the literature (for example, see Noe, 2002; Landy and Conte, 2010; Mathis and Jackson, 2011) are identified. Brown (2002, p. 571) argues that identifying training needs for the organisation's workforce needs thorough analysis of "*mission objectives, personnel, production, raw materials, costs, and other factors.*" Training requirements the organisation identify factor into the whole training budget forecasted for the organisation and its installation, as well as it impacts the amount of funds allocated by the top management (Brown, 2002). Brown (p. 571) also indicates that carrying out a needs assessment is useful in identifying: "*Organizational goals and its effectiveness in achieving these goals. Gaps or discrepancies between employee skills and the skills required for effective job performance. Problems that may* not *be solved by training. Conditions under which training and development activity will occur.*"

Despite the fact that the literature usually reports only the more formal methods of needs assessment, human resource development practitioners utilise a wide range of formal and informal means of identifying training needs as part of their everyday practice (Tao et al., 2006). Depending on the method employed, the needs data

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obtained can be regarded as "*felt needs (what people say they need), expressed needs (expressed in action), normative needs (defined by experts), and comparative needs (group comparison)*" (Grant, 2002, quoted in Tao et al., 2006, p. 430). Among those, the "felt-needs "methodology, which usually asks employees to simply list or rank desired training courses, has regularly been employed to assess needs of large numbers of employees (Holton et al., 2000). Nonetheless, this approach is also largely criticised for not being capable of gauging true needs for the reason that employees generally do not know what the organisational objectives are and often report "wants" instead of "needs (Tao et al., 2006).

Organisational analysis concerns examining the company's goals, available resources, and the company environment in order to decide where training must be directed, as well as identifying training needs of the company's departments or subunits (Landy and Conte, 2010). Brown (2002) suggests that this type of analysis identifies the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) which workforce will need for the future, given that the organisations and workforce jobs evolve or change. In addition, it involves the assessment of manager, peer, and technological support for transfer of training. Organisational analysis also considers the environment of the organisation and its subunits, and to make sure that training follows the wider HR strategy that needs to follow the whole business strategy (Landy and Conte, 2010). A person needs analysis identifies the gaps between an individual's present capabilities and those identified as essential or required (Jackson et al., 2012). It is concerned with identifying individuals working for the company which must receive training and also with the type of instruction they need. Assessment of staff needs can be undertaken using a range of methods which identify weaknesses which training and development can focus on, such as by performance evaluation system or via a 360 degree feedback system which

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presents input for training and development activities (Landy and Conte, 2010). Individual [person] need analysis targets individual workers and how they perform in their jobs. In the event a worker's review shows deficiencies, training can be designed to help that worker meet the performance standard (Brown, 2002).

The first step undertaken by the company is to correspond with all of its departments before the end of each administrative year to ask for their training needs of their staff. Departments were required to specify the number of trainees, and the type of training required. The interviewee responses have identified three types of training: induction training, training for raising efficiency, and general training. Responses to these three types of training are provided in Appendix 4. Later on, these needs are sorted and classified to include them in the proposed training plan. One of the managers interviewed (M2) is quoted and gave this statement "*the first step we begin with in identifying the training needs is receiving nominations from the various company departments as these are the candidates who are in need for training or development.*" Prior to starting the process of plan preparation, a form prepared by the Company's Training Administration is sent to all of the Company administrations asking them to provide the Training Administration with the numbers of staff needing training as well as with the type of training required (See Appendix 3). Another Manager (M4) stated that "*because of the presence of such large number of administrations, and the responsibility for training is in the hands of a central administration for the preparation and implementation of training plans, supervision and programme follow-up, to identify training needs is through asking each administration of its needs of training since each administration knows what skills and knowledge required by its employees to develop further. Having identified the training needs at the departmental level, then the Company's training department, namely the Administration of Training, can proceed*

further in designing and planning training courses and programmes according to the departmental needs." Then, each of these departments, through their training sections, implement and supervise the training programmes inside each department in coordination with the Managing Director, because every programme should be approved by the Managing Director and then forwarded to the Training Department in The General Electricity Company. This procedure of each administration implementing and supervising training programmes might lead to duplicating some of the courses that can be administered by the Administration of Training and involving employees from different departments nominated to attend a particular type of training courses.

With reference to the approaches or the methods in which the company determines the training needs of its employees, M1 argues that "*it largely appears to depend on the **observations** of the supervisors and what they see through the daily supervision and **follow-up** and the **annual reports** in which they suggest the targeted trainees and the type of training. These suggestions are then presented to the Training Administration's Director, who submits these suggestions to his superior (the Secretary Assistant). Then the Secretary Assistant of the Administration forwards them to the Company's Assistant General Secretary for approval and submission to the company top management*". This process from the start to the finish is summed up and illustrated as in the Figure 5.2.

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Supervisor's Observation│
                    │        Through:          │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
        ┌───────────────────────┼───────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Daily Supervision │   │    Follow-up     │   │  Annual Reports  │
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
        └───────────────────────┼───────────────────────┘
                                │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │ Identification of trainees and type of │
              │         training required        │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
                                │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │           Referral to the        │
              │      Training Section Manager     │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
                                │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │           Referral to the        │
              │      Administration Manager       │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
                                │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │           Referral to the        │
              │   Managing Director for Approval  │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
                                │
              ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
              │    Submission to the Company's    │
              │  Training Department to Prepare    │
              │           Training plans          │
              └──────────────────────────────────┘
```
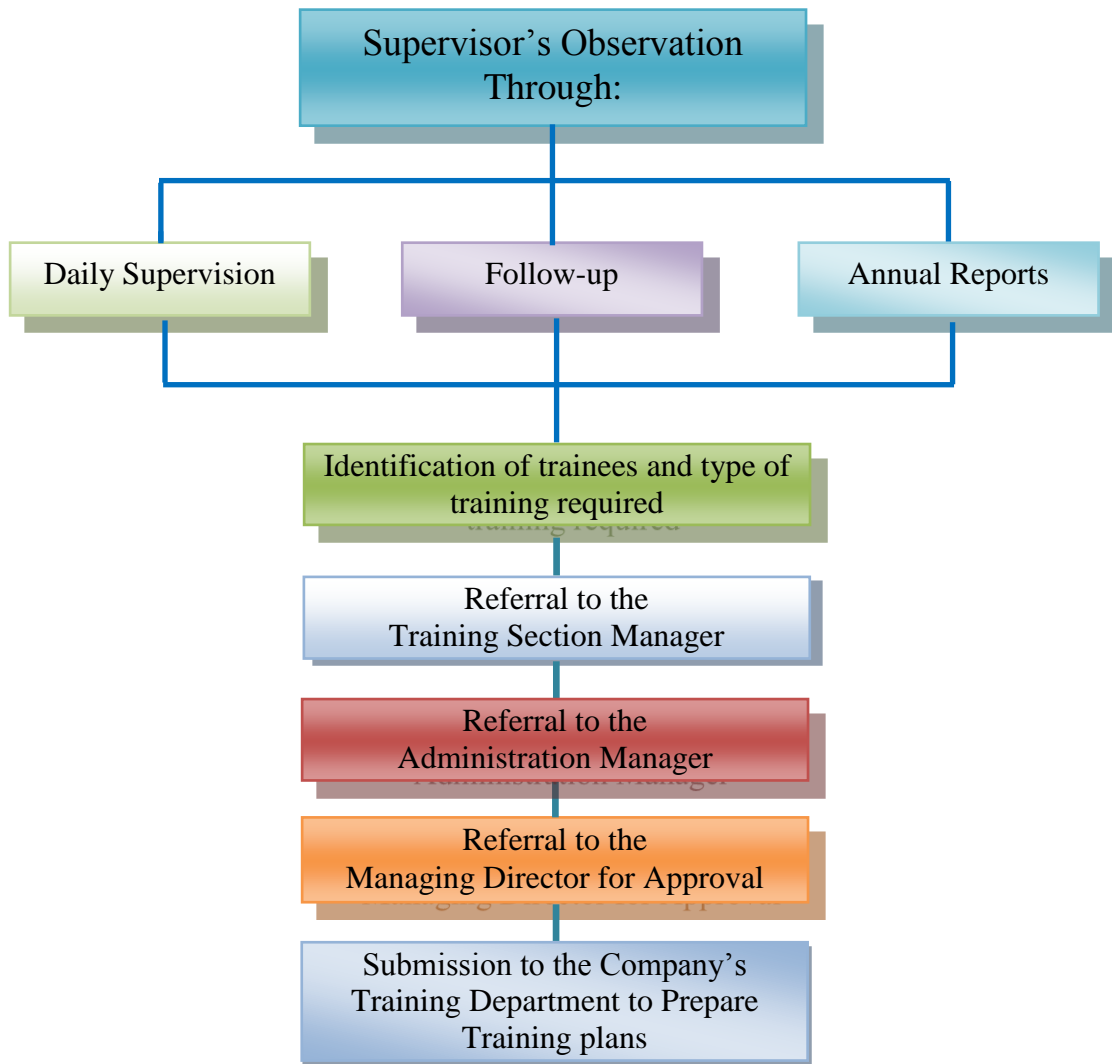
Figure 5.2.   Stages of identification of employees training needs.

Another manager (M7) maintains that "*the method of determining the training needs currently used is based on direct observations of the supervisors and it is the prevailing approach in the company*." Observation is reported to be one of the earliest methods for the determination of training needs, and can be carried out either formally or informally (Medina, 2006). Sims (2006) maintains that one way wherein staff training can be established is by directly observing employees in their actual or future work environment.   The literature also indicates that by means of proper observation, supervisory evaluation, and diagnostic assessment it can be determined whether performance is unacceptable and training is required (Ratnam and Srivastava, 2008).

However, Sisson (2003) criticised observation, maintaining that though it reduces work disruption, it may be perceived negatively by employees for being observed, and data collection is limited to work conditions only.

Most of the respondents' answers among the trainee engineers through the focus groups show that the measures are not clear to them. The nomination to these programmes takes place without their knowledge and they are unaware of the basis on which individuals are selected to join these programmes. They think it is some kind of routine procedures. An interviewee (P1-2) claims the following: "*we do not see any clear approach or procedures to identify the individuals who need training; it is mainly based on the observations and opinions of supervisors, which are not based on a clear assessment of the individuals who need training. This happens in the department I work in.*" This may imply that trainees are kept in the dark not aware of any kind of procedures is performed to involve them in training. While the managers indicate that observation is the approach or method used to identify training needs, the engineers interviewed did not perceive this as the method employed; rather, they argue that they are unaware of any method implemented by their managers or supervisors in this respect. It can be argued that they did not feel they had been under observation by their immediate supervisors. This can be attributed to the ambiguity of the training needs determination mechanism; given that when the researcher asked the administration responsible for training to give him any documents explaining the method or the mechanism the company adopts for the nomination of individuals for training, it became obvious that the administration do not have any documents explaining this clearly and precisely. This led to the confusion and the ambiguity in the process of identifying individuals who require training and also led to the intervention of other factors that have influences the nomination process, such as social relationships, which will be

addressed later. This also indicates that performance appraisal was neither adopted by the company managers as a mechanism for ITN to properly identify employees who need training or further training nor formal or informal feedback on the job was obtained. The literature refers to performance appraisal as one of the processes or methods to gather information required to identify training needs (Brown, 2002; see Chapter Two, Section 2.8.2.2).

Theme 3: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database).

5.2.4   Gathering Data and Information

The objective of this question is to identify the extent of the Company' attention to information, and also aims to identify the methods and approaches employed by the company in gathering data and information used in the assessment of employees' training needs.

Through interviews with respondents in this study, both managers and trained employees in the company, it seems that there is a discrepancy between these answers. When the researcher asked the managers about gathering data, variation in the responses was noted. An interviewed manager (M7) maintains that "*the only source for gathering data and information on the company's personnel is personal files of individual employees,*" adding that "*each employee has an employment file including documents from the date of appointment in the company and also contains the annual reports.*" This is in contrast to the findings in the literature which indicates that the purpose and objectives of the needs assessment should be clearly defined at the initiation of the process so as to substantiate that management will have the amount and kinds of information required to make effective decisions concerning workforce planning and staff development (Olivas, 2007).

Consequently, it is noted that the available data or information on employees is only related to administrative transactions, such as promotions, vacations, etc.

On the other hand, there is a professional file which includes the training courses received by the individual during his career and the tasks implemented by him/her. However, this does not exist in all departments and sections, according to one manager M4 who stated that, "*actually, there are clear differences between the departments in the company in terms of data; some departments having special files for each employee which have information about the professional career, progress, vocational courses attended, and the outcome of these courses, whereas other departments do not seem to be concerned with collecting such data.*" This means that each department has its own system and procedures for assessing their employees' training needs; hence, there is no comprehensive needs assessment for the whole company. This indicates that data are gathered following one of the four categories, introduced by Olivas (2007); that is, data specifying the employees needing training, rather than defining the need, data to provide the planning details for delivery of training; and data for defining training needs gathered for both immediate and long-range needs.

It is also noted through the answers of managers that they realise the importance of having a database containing all data and information pertaining to the career paths of their employees, given that this helps in the follow-up process for individual employees, as well as evaluating their performance. This leads finally to make the right decision, especially when they select the individuals who need to be trained.

All the interviewed managers agreed that the information available about their employees is not sufficient, and that the company should develop its systems in order to be able to provide accurate data in a timely manner so that decisions are sound. One interviewed manager M4 is quoted to say: "*We are now developing a new section*

affiliated to the training department designated to contain an integrated database for all individual employees in the company. Specialised foreign companies were contracted to build this system to include all data from all departments to facilitate the transfer of information."

On the other hand, the majority of the trainees agree that there are not any accurate data about the career paths of employees, except the profile that is usually interested in the administrative aspects pertaining to the careers of members of staff. The only way used by the company to collect information before any training programme is the distribution of a questionnaire that contains a set of questions for the purpose of gathering information for targeted training. Questionnaires have been used to identify training needs, given that they are a comparatively straightforward technique for asking for the kind on information necessary to identify training needs (McConnell, 2003). The company does not have an information system that can help perform administrative jobs and provides the information required by the employees. The procedure adopted by the company is that which does depends on a conventional system. This is confirmed by the majority of the company's managers which have been interviewed. This might be the reason why the manager in charge of training focus on the necessity of contracting specialised European companies in this field to establish an integrated information system that serves the company's objectives.

A member of Focus Group (No. P8-2) claims that "*there is not a database in the company and all they know are profiles of individuals which only include career information and some information describing the attendance of courses.*" Also, during the presence of this interviewee in the company, he observed that there was no attention paid to gathering data and information and there is no integrated system of information which impacts the validity and credibility of the decisions of the company. Bayoud

(1999) also indicated that the information the company uses in the process of determining training needs are not adequate and that the Company has no data base which can be used to obtain information about its workforce. This agrees with the responses provided by the staff members involved in the present study, which clearly indicate that the Company is not concerned with obtaining information about its employees and the absence of a comprehensive data base to help obtain information about the employees; instead, what is available are the annual reports and sometimes questionnaires. Brown (2002) indicates that this stage of gathering data to identify needs can be achieved by means of a set of nine procedures or methods, including surveys and/or questionnaires, interviews, performance appraisals, observations, tests, assessment centres, focus groups, document reviews, and advisory committees (see Table 2.3, Section 2.7).

5.2.5   Assessment of the Training Needs

Before one starts any training programme there should be an assessment that shows whether there is a need for training or not. This analysis should include the goals of the organisation, professions and employees in order for the process of identifying needs to be linked to the organisation's objectives, policies, knowledge and skills required to perform these tasks, and to identify the gap between current skills and skills required to perform those professions, and to assess the level of individual performance in terms of the assigned tasks as well (Landy and Conte, 2010).

To find out whether the company conducts any analysis of the training needs before implementing any training programme, the question was addressed to the interviewed managers and trainees, the following responses were obtained.

In response to this question, the managers interviewed explained that there is no strict analysis related to the individuals or professions and to assessing the level of

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performance for their tasks before making any decisions regarding the actual identification of the training need for the candidates to attend training courses. This was confirmed by the managers during the interviews; however, some managers said that there is no job description and on which they can depend on when creating new positions in the company or when they appoint new staff members.

One of the managers M1 explained that, "*in fact, there is no actual analysis of individuals or the jobs they perform; rather, each manager gives his observations about the employees under their supervision through their annual reports, although the regulations of the company set descriptions for each job and the qualifications required.*

It also became apparent through the answers of managers that the company has an organisational structure supporting the relationship between departments and divisions and determines the functions of each department and its relationship to other sections of the company, and also shows the functions of each job and the qualifications required to perform those tasks. A manager (M7) expressed his view, arguing that "*we have an organisational structure for the company as well as regulations that define the relationships between the various departments of the company.*"

A manager (M2) is quoted saying: "*I worked for more than five years in this company, and I did not hear about any programme concerned with the analysis of individuals or professions for the purpose of identifying the training needs of individuals. As mentioned earlier, the direct manager is the one who often identifies the training needs of employees, and nominating them through observation and daily follow-up.*"

Through managers' responses to the process of analysis and how it is conducted, it become apparent that some of them are not familiar with it and this means they are not qualified to carry out their duties as managers, they need to be qualified so that they can play their role as training managers and supervise the training programmes in the

company and perform their duties effectively. To this effect, the LGEC needs to train their managers, by attending management training programmes to qualify them to carry out their jobs effectively and efficiently.

Trainees agreed that there is no analysis and that they had not heard of the administration of such analysis to identify those actual training need, knowledge or skills that they lack to perform their jobs effectively. They also indicated that the only way followed by the company to identify people in need of training is that they are, in some cases, distributing a questionnaire to serve the purpose of acknowledging the need for training to be nominated for training courses to raise their efficiency. This method may not be useful as well because it depends on the credibility of individual employees when filling out the questionnaire, and this does not mean that there was no process of analysing the purpose of defining the real needs of employees in the company.

A member of Focus Group No. P5-3 states: "*As one of the engineers in the company and have attended training courses, when I was nominated for training courses, I was not subjected to the process of analysis to determine the extent of my need for training in the sense that you mention to me now; instead, it was based on observations or reports by my immediate manager and in some cases, a questionnaire was distributed to find out if there was a need of specific training or a shortage of some skills that relate to the performance of their work.*"

On the other hand, trainees agreed that there is no specific description of the functions and skills, abilities or qualifications that should be available in the employees occupying those professions. There are some employees performing jobs which are far from their specialisations; thus, causing them some problems and difficulties during the performance of these jobs.

A member of Focus Group No. P9-7 states that "*in some cases, we note some of the*

engineers performing jobs which are outside their specialisations; thus, causing them some problems and difficulties during the performance of their jobs because they are not qualified to perform them. The administration should define the tasks and qualifications required to perform these tasks." As regards the process of training needs assessment, it seems that this process is not paid attention to by the Administration of Training; rather, the managers responsible for training do not have adequate knowledge of the process of training needs assessment prior to starting any nomination for training. This indicates that commissioning managers with these tasks is shrouded with much incorrectness since this is not backed to any actual qualifications for performing these tasks. This requires the company to review these appointments by implementing a system that shows the qualifications, the competences and expertise required for the performance of these tasks.

From the responses obtained from the interviewees in this study, the following can be concluded: The process of identifying the training needs of individuals, professions and jobs is non-existent. This was confirmed by all the interviewees in this study (managers and engineers).

Managers responsible for training lack the administrative knowledge, as they did not keep pace with training methods to define the training needs for employees. Most managers were not qualified in terms of quality in the professional supervision and management of administrative programmes. van Eerde et al. (2008) also argue that while self-assessment of training needs implies the risk of not identifying the actual needs, it must be noted that the assessment by others does not ensure that actual needs are identified better. van Eerde et al. (2008, p. 65) refer to Chiu et al.'s (1999) conclusion of a review of the literature, which indicated that the 87% of the needs assessment is started by trainers, thus, may connote a supply-led approach to training

needs analysis. Other issues may also play a role in opting for a "*specific training programme, for example based on subsidies given by governments, the compliance with a particular qualification framework, or legislative requirement*" (van Eerde et al., 2008, p. 65). Such reasons may differ from the actual business needs of the employer.

Despite the existence of an organisational structure and list of departments to determine the functions of the company which describes the communication process between the company's departments and their relationship to each other, these regulations are not well adhered to.

Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training Needs.

The purpose of this theme is to explore the effect of some factors on the process of determining the training needs for individuals working in the General Electricity Company. Three factors have been identified as important and influential in the process of determining training needs, based mainly on the practices and traditions of the Libyan society. This theme is divided three topics, each topic covering one of the following factors:

- Social factors.

- Economic factors.

- Organisational and administrative factors.

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5.2.6   Social Factors

This question was addressed to the study respondents (managers and members of focus groups - engineers). The question was: what are the social factors that you think affect the process of determining the training needs of individual employees?

All respondents agreed that social factors affect the determination of the training needs

and all the aspects of the process. One manager M6 claims that "*Libya is a small Arab society that is composed of tribes, bound together by social relations, such as intermarriage, kinship and the Bedouin nature dominates it. Therefore, we find that these relationships may have influenced the various aspects of life in Libya, as a result of the interaction of individuals with each other outside the workplace and the relationships that bind them are reflected on the performance of individuals at work. We often see the impact of these relations, such as kinship and friendship on individuals in their work, which makes them use mediation and favouritism when performing their functions.*"

The former statement of the manager – as well as most of the rest of the interviewed managers – shows that social relationships such as kinship and friendship as well as mediation and favouritism impact the performance of those managers when they are identifying the training needs of individuals. Despite the fact that managers acknowledge the existence of such mediation and favouritism, in principle, they deny using them personally.

Favouritism has been reported to be practised in Libya. Agnaia (1996, p. 321) reported that his interviewees referred to favouritism as influencing the procedure of employees' selection for management training and development, because of society's attitudes that perceives favouritism as a social duty rather than unethical behaviour. Favouritism is also common place in Algeria (Branine, 2001), a neighbouring country of Libya. Branine (2001, p. 167) reports that there is a predisposition to train certain people rather than the others and use training as a reward for employees who might not need training, and that selection for training is seldom based on a training needs analysis or after a performance appraisal.

Favouritism has been referred to in the literature. Agere (2000) argues that training

programmes are at times become available but the problem lies in the selection of employees who have to undertake training, attributing this to favouritism, which as he puts it (p. 33) *"has crept into the selection process, resulting in the wrong people attending courses. Those who really need training are often left behind and poor performance at work continues and services are not delivered efficiently."*

The respondents and the literature (Agnaia, 1996; Branine, 2001) suggest that favouritism is deep down rooted in the selection for training in the company investigated as well as in other public sector organisations, and sees it as a kind of grave discrimination against employees who are really in need of training to develop themselves in favour of those who do not need training, especially training abroad. Responses of the interviewed managers point to this act of favouritism, whereby trainees are not selected on the basis of their training needs, but because they are not members of certain tribe, clan, or those who do not have any social or political connections. This will reflect unconstructively on the overall performance of the company and will lead to demotivating employees not selected for training and lowering morale of those employees discriminated against and give them the impression that they have been marginalised by their superiors and ultimately by the company they have been working for. Favouritism is one of the factors which can undermine accountability and hinder good performance (Blackburn, 2007). Blackburn (2007, p. 304) argue, in reference to favouritism that: "if performance is judged with unfair bias, employees will become de-motivated and hold management in contempt."

Despite the fact that some managers do not admit the effect of social relationships while assuming their jobs, these managers, in their capacity and in terms of their positions and administrative responsibilities, try to hide the effect of the social role. What the trainees' responses confirm is the existence of the impact of the social factor in the

process of determining training needs and their nomination for training courses.

However, the existence of these practices (mediation and favouritism) impacts the validity and honesty of procedures used for determining training needs for individuals, because they may favour someone at the expense of others in real need for training.

One member of Focus Group (No. P3-9) maintains that:

> *there is a process of favouritism in identifying training needs, as some individuals are nominated while they might not need the training, while others who need it are denied such nomination. This actually happens. I saw it myself. When the course has financial returns, or even other benefits, the standards that govern the candidacy process – such as seniority or priority – are ignored, then mediation and favouritism intervene with the process of nomination, as individuals who are nominated for training are those favoured by the manager or the official in charge of training.*"

Favouritism has been referred to in Chapter Three (Section 3.2), where culture, as indicated in that section, involves an intimately interconnected network of relationships which take time to establish and maintain, and as a system based on giving favours in return; '*wasta*" infuses all aspects of Libyan society and is mainly prominent in business settings. Al Suwaidi (2008, p. 22) argues that Arabs are inclined to exploit their networks in various aspects of life by means of what is referred to as *Wasta*, which he defines it as "*the literal translation of which is mediation.*" '*Wasta*' is said to develop mostly via family ties and social connections (Hutchings and Weir, 2006); and this crucial notion is greatly strong when it comes to decision making, given that it is employ to let people enter a school, college, organisation or to have a business deal; hence, it is claimed that '*Wasta*' is perceived as a force in every major decision, and that it achieved such power as it is deeply rooted in the Arab culture and history (Al Suwaidi, 2008). Weir (2003), however, reported that there had been several attempts to control and regulate traditional forms of networking, particularly '*Wasta*', by legal control but they failed given that such forms are tied to the Arab social structures.

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Another interviewee in Focus Group No. P4-5 indicates that "*it often happens, especially in external courses desired by all employees because of its financial and professional benefits for the trainee. Here, we find obvious favouritism when non-compliance with the terms of courses is done so that the officials can nominate their relatives or friends, or those whom they have common interests, or in order to satisfy or please their respective directors.*"

Through the responses of the managers, it is noted that despite their acknowledgement of social relations, they deny their impacts when determining the training needs of the staff working with them and those whom they supervise, when they nominate trainees for training courses On the other hand, all the respondents (the trainees) (focus groups) confirmed the influence of social factors on the decisions of managers in identifying the training needs of individuals working with them. A member of Focus Group No. 8 claims that "*surely there are some interventions from some managers to nominate members of their friends or their relatives, although there are some who really deserve such training more.*" It is not unusual that a manager denies practising favouritism; nobody will admit to it, for one reason or another, such as protecting themselves from criticism or even accountability for their improper actions, but the employees gave evidence to its practice, as they are the party most affected negatively by favouritism. Mitchell (2009, p. 82) maintains that in many Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries it is common to recruit relatives and undertake business with firms owned by one's family. In contrast to this argument, Mitchell indicates that the majority of Western companies "have conflict of interest and antinepotism policies and restrictions to prevent favouritism and to encourage objective decision-making. However, Mitchell refers to the majority of companies in the West; this implies that nepotism and favouritism are still practised in the West. For example, Folsom and Boulware (2004,

p. 328) maintain that nepotism can take place in public and private sectors, and that in the "*public sector officials may give preferential treatment to their relatives in employment-related decisions.*" In the private sector, "*members of MANAGEMENT may give preferential treatment to their relatives in hiring or promotion decisions*" (Folsom and Boulware, 2004, p. 328). These authors criticise nepotism, arguing that a manager involved in nepotism may be exposing his organisation to inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in business operation, given that, this manager "*is not basing business decision on criteria that would ensure that the organization's RESOURCES are maximised*" (Folsom and Boulware, 2004, p. 328).

5.2.7 Personal Economic Factors

The economic factors are mainly in the form of employee rewards, career development and financial gain as a result of training, especially training abroad. In this study, attempts were made to explore the impact of the economic factors on determining the training needs of individuals through interviews with managers in this study and the group of engineers (focus group). The study shows that the economic factors have an effect regarding the financial value obtained by the trainee in the form of granted rewards.

One of the managers M1 states the following: "*We know the importance of the financial factor in encouraging individuals to perform certain tasks as it is a large motivation to accomplish tasks or perform work. We are aware of the impact of this factor, and that the individuals compete to perform tasks to get such financial returns. This creates competition with regard to joining the training courses. We, as managers and responsible for training, always indicate that there should not be any favouritism for some individuals at the expense of others, only to take advantage of the financial benefits of training.*" This claim may indicate that managers are critical of favouritism

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and similar practices such as '*Wasta*', but such reference to these terms by these managers is that they perceive such practices as endemic to their culture and that they are impossible to be influenced by any form of 'modernisation' (Weir, 2006); given that many Arabs and Muslims equate 'modernisation' with 'westernisation' which they resist.

One of the managers (M2) refers to favouritism when he indicated that "*on a number of occasions nomination of candidates to training programmes, especially training abroad, takes place to benefit these candidates from the financial gains given that the candidate is paid in foreign currencies and benefits from the differences in exchange rates for foreign currencies in the Libya,*" adding that this is dominated by favouritism and social relationships. Favouritism is claimed to benefit only people who are well-connected and victimises against all others (Loewe et al., 2007).

On the other hand, it is noticed that some of the trainees try to join training courses which have a financial return – external courses in particular. At the same time it is noted that those avoiding courses with no financial return or rewards, and attempt various means to be exempted from such courses despite their professional benefits that help raise their efficiency. This shows the importance of the personal economic factor and its impact on determining those who need training. This action by this group of prospective trainees can be linked to issues raised earlier (Section 5.2.1. Types of Training Plans Adopted by the Company when Implementing its Training Programmes) in relation to the training plan is not strictly adhered to when implemented which leads to some programmes either being ignored or even cancelled, which, as indicated in Section 5.2.1) is an issue that negatively affects the candidates nominated for such programmes, given that some trainees do not want to participate in courses with no financial return or rewards, though they professionally benefit from attending internal

courses in terms of raising their efficiency and increasing their knowledge and skills. This might be a factor in that training plans do not always work as they should as well as an indication that the plan is not strictly adhered to when implemented; hence, some programmes are either ignored or even cancelled, an issue that negatively affects the candidates nominated for such programmes. One of the training objectives (Chapter Three, Section 3.7, Objective 9 stipulates that candidates for training courses have to attend the training courses. Accordingly, delaying or cancellation of some programmes indicates that not all candidates have attended the training programmes they have nominated for. This is a further factor in training plans do not always achieve their goals and objectives. This non-attendance might have an impact on next year plan in which some programmes, especially those not attended by trainees, might not be included. Non-attendance in such internal or local training programmes by some trainees also deny them the benefits of increasing their knowledge and advancing their skills and also boosting their performance.

An interviewee manager M3 argues, saying: "*when we call for any course – especially external courses – or ask for nominations for individuals who need training or need to raise their efficiency in some fields, we see a huge desire to join such courses, although some individuals do not need such training only because these courses involve financial returns to the trainees, such as rewards and other advantages that benefit the trainee. When a training form or a short questionnaire is used to determine the need of the trainee to join such courses, it is found out that the financial factor affects the desire to attend the course and therefore affect the determination of the training needs.*" Agere (2000, p. 34) describes such huge desire to join overseas training courses, arguing that short courses offered abroad are often over-subscribed, even for low-level managers.

Trainees assert that they are affected by financial factors, as they wish to join courses

yielding more financial benefits. A member of Focus Group No. P7-2 claims that "*in some training courses when they distribute a questionnaire to staff to determine their need for training or if they lack some skills to attend some courses – especially external courses in which the financial returns is granted, these individuals provide information to show that they need to attend training until these courses not for the professional benefit but for the purpose of benefiting from the financial returns, while they avoid attending the courses in which they know that there is no the financial returns*." A member of Focus Group No.P2-5 asserts that "*some of the trainees when they hear about these courses – with financial benefits –they try to win their respective directors to be nominated for these courses*." Agnaia (1996, p. 321) reported similar tendency among employees, maintaining that some employees tend to try and persuade their company to send them on training courses for reasons that have no relevance to their training needs, such as to obtain a training allowance given that some courses are a pre-determined part of promotion, or simply to escape the demands of their normal work.

It turns out that the personal financial factor plays an important and influential role in the process of identifying training needs, as the individuals' wishes to attend courses and to upgrade their skills are often affected by this factor. When there are financial returns, it is noted that they demand attending the courses by various ways, even if at the expense of the real needs of other individuals. It is also noted how the targeted individuals get round the process to show their need for training and linking them to the financial whenever they can.

5.2.8   Organisational and Administrative Factors

In this study, the interviewed individuals (managers and trainees) were asked about the impact of the organisational and administrative factors on the process of identifying training needs. This issue of identifying training needs has been discussed in some

details in Theme 2 (Section 5.2.3. Approaches and the Methods Adopted by the Company to Determine Training Needs Assessment). One of the managers (M8) claims that "*indeed, there are no accurate regulations or protocols that frame the process of identifying the training needs in the company. It is above all power is granted to the manager to identify individuals who need training. According to these powers, managers determine the individuals who will be nominated for training.*" Consequently, it can be argued that there are no clear regulations and procedures to be followed to identify the training needs. There is no accurate job description for workers in the company; in addition, the legal regulations that determine the relationships between individuals within the work are not applied. This causes a breach of these regulations by the managers, such as taking into account the priority or seniority in the nomination for training. A member of Focus Group No. P10-2 states the following: "*we do not see an application of the training regulations. The managers overlook them when identifying the training needs, which negatively affect the process of training and the individuals in turn. Thus, negative consequences result and affect the trainees and the company in general.*"

A member of Focus Group No.P7-3 maintains that most managers whom he "*dealt with do not apply the legal and administrative procedures governing the selection of individuals for training. For example, I have dealt with some of the managers and witnessed their method of nomination of members for a training course. I noticed there are no special files for workers that include data on training programmes and courses they attended previously, or on the problems they face in their work or performance reports indicating their level of professionalism and performance of their tasks.*" This agrees with Bayoud's (1999) study, which indicated that the Company neither had job descriptions nor the required qualifications to occupy those jobs.

Although this study had been carried out more than a decade ago the Company appear not to have paid attention to this issue and change could not be detected since that publication. This seems to negatively affecting the Company's training programmes, especially when it determined its training needs and nominating employees to attend training courses.

Accordingly, it is understood that the administrative and regulatory procedures in the General Electricity Company have an influence on the process of identifying the training needs of the employees. Through the statements of the respondents who have participated in this study, it can be concluded that there is little commitment to rules and regulations, especially those organising the process of training in the company.

To sum up, all interviewed trainees confirm that the regulations and rules governing the process of training are not applied by managers, rather, they are overlooked for various reasons, including favouritism that have been addressed in the previous theme, and this is evident from all the interviews which were conducted with the trainees. Most managers despite the reluctance of some of them confirm that there is a general lack of commitment to rules, regulations and rules governing the process of training in the company. However, at the same time, they did not admit explicitly that they overlook these rules and regulations standardising the training process. Within the company's administrative and organisational framework it is noted that there is an organisational framework that specifies the authority and duties; nonetheless, when implemented in reality one can find that regulations, systems and procedures that stipulate for such authority and duties are not adhered to.

Theme 5: Training Decisions

5.2.9   Making Decisions Related to Training

To answer this question of how training decisions are made, in other words, who are responsible for the decision to set training requirements, or whether there is some participation by trainees in these decisions, this question was addressed to managers and trainees in this study. The following can be concluded:

When managers were asked this question, most of them indicated that training decisions were made by managers and supervisors, whereas the participation of trainees or individuals employed in determining the need for training was insignificant.   The supervisor's role is to observe his employees and report his nomination of candidates to his manager to take the decision for their training. The managers identify the training needs, according to one interviewee manager M6 who indicated that "*about 90 % of the decisions relating to the nomination of staff for training courses is in the hands of managers and about 10% participation by employees concerning training decisions and this is the predominant procedure in the company.*"

Accordingly, it can be argued that the managers are responsible for making training to a very large extent and the participation of employees, if any, is limited usually to the general courses (computer courses and language courses) as in these courses a questionnaire is usually distributed to determine the desire of employees to attend courses or not.

Another manager M3 indicated that: "*in some cases, some individuals are involved in determining the type of training, however, this does not take place in all departments; it depends on the style of management in training decision-making and the extent of belief in the contribution of individuals to training decision-making, as well as no specific regulations or a particular model adopted by the company to illustrate the policy of*

senior management regarding the participation in decision-making."

An interviewee manager M1 states that "*external courses are highly desirable and because of the benefits pertaining to them, the intervention of managers is significant, a clear pretext that these courses are important and for fear of biased line managers and supervisors in the nomination process for these courses so you must establish control over them according to their point of view.*" This might point to the importance of the economic factor, as discussed in Section 5.6.

Some of the training courses decisions are not based on any clear goal or policy of the company, as some courses are formulated without any prior research; therefore, they are not useful and this type of courses is usually proposed by the senior management which do not often have knowledge of the development of training plans, but implementing a general policy of the company. The LGEC in all its annual reports only cite its vision, mission, and values. However, no mention is made to its regulations, policies, goals and practices. The LGEC Vision, Mission and Values are presented in Appendix 5. Another interviewee manager M2 argues that "*there are some courses proposed by senior management without coordination with the Training Department which is responsible for training in the company, causing confusion in the case of the implementation of training plans as a result of a lack of coordination between senior management and training management*''. It would appear that the process of decision-making is associated with the administration more than the participation of the employees targeted for training. The process of employees' participation in making training decision is trivial, due to some managers who believe that the process of nomination is under their jurisdiction, since there is no link between the managers and their subordinates

A member of Focus Group No. P3-1 claimed that managers and supervisors are

responsible for decisions-making concerning training and the nomination for the courses: "*we, as trainees do not participate in the decision to determine our need for training; the supervisor is the one who submits his proposal to the administration and the type of training and targeted training is based on his observations; however, in the general courses, which include language or computer courses, some employees believe that they need them.*" This response confirms the managers' view concerning the nomination of candidates by their supervisors and managers, as indicated earlier.

This Theme can be summed up in the following points:

1   Training decisions in the company are not based on data for information to help training decision-making process properly considered because the company has no integrated system of data and information; also there is no interest and realisation of the importance of information in training decision-making.

2   The analysis of training needs before any training programme is almost non-existent; the company does not have any process of analysis of the individuals or professions that can be relied upon in training decision-making.

3   Training decisions that determine the training needs of the company's employees involve the participation of very few individuals because managers take control over such process and nominate individuals who need training.

Theme 6: Significance of Training Needs Determination

This theme aims to identify the significance of determining the training needs of the company employees. Several questions in this theme have been addressed to the interviewees to find out the measures undertaken by the company to identify the effectiveness of determining the training needs adopted by the company when nominating their employees to attend training courses. It aims at exploring whether

there is link between the objectives of the company (The LGEC objectives are listed in Chapter Three, Section 3.7) and these training courses, and whether training has helped to solve some of the problems faced by individual employees in the company, such as the shortages of knowledge or skills. This theme has been divided into several sub-questions addressed to the managers and trainees, including the following:

5.2.10 Methods for Exploring Extent of the Effectiveness of Determining Training Needs

When this question was addressed to the interviewee managers, it shows that the methods or procedures adopted by the company to identify the effectiveness of determining the training needs is represented in the examinations conducted at the end of each course to determine the trainees' level reached after attending the course, as well as the observations of the trainers who oversee the training courses and assess the extent of the benefit obtained by the trainees through the reports submitted at the end of each course.

A manager M5 claims that "*the method used to assess the effectiveness of courses, or training programmes is based on the questionnaire delivered at the end of each course and the examinations conducted for the trainees, as well as the observations and reports of the trainers and managers supervising the courses.*" This manager adds that training managers make tours and attend some training courses to evaluate these courses and to know about the conduct of the training process. Some managers see that there is no real assessment of the effectiveness of determining training needs, which should be based on clear criteria which show that the process of nomination for training courses is based on real needs; such as the shortages of knowledge or skills required to perform the employees' duties as opposed to what is currently applied by the company which is not based on any clear criteria.

The responses of managers to this question can be summed up as follows:

- There are no specific criteria or standards to be used to find out the effectiveness of determining the training needs of the employees. This was commonly agreed upon by all managers.

- The tool used by the company to determine the effectiveness of the courses is to distribute questionnaires to trainees at the end of each course, as well as the observations and reports submitted by supervisors and managers of these courses, which show the extent of improvement or progress of the trainees.

- The absence of any analysis or test before any course to demonstrate the viability and usefulness of the course.

The responses of the trainees suggest that almost all of them agreed with the managers that the only measure that was followed in determining the effectiveness of determining the training needs is the distribution of questionnaires held at the end of each course, as well as the examinations conducted at the end of each training programme to test the progress level and development accomplished by the course.

A member of Focus Group No. P5-6 maintains that "*there is an examination at the end of each course for each trainee to explore the level of progress scored due to attending the course*." This, in his view, "does not mean that the employee needs that course because some of the trainees nominated for these courses might not need them. Anyway, trainees have been nominated and therefore the nomination and selection process was originally incorrect; thus affecting the efficiency.''

Most of the respondent trainees confirmed that the process of measuring the effectiveness of these courses is the responsibility of the directors of departments and training department in the company because their duty is to establish the mechanism

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and the criteria to determine the method that ensures the effectiveness of determining the training needs for individual employees during nomination and also to ensure the application of these criteria to achieve the efficiency of any training programme. This may be a reference to questionnaires measuring the reaction of trainees, which are a kind of a self-report measure. Two of the training evaluation models, such as Kirkpatrick's model, and Hamblin Evaluation Framework include reaction in addition to other criteria. Reaction level in these two models measures how participants in a training course react to it (van Erde et al., 2008). Reaction Criteria are operationalised by employing self-report measure, and represent trainees' affective and attitudinal responses to the training programme (Arthur et al., 2003). Techniques used at this level consist of questionnaires, interviews, group discussion, individual interview or asking trainees to compile a report can be used (Reid and Barrington, 1997). Reid and Barrington (1997), however, warn that care should be taken in relation to the timing of such techniques, and indicated that trainees may put forward wrong ideas when asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of the programme. Likewise, trainees may not be in a position to know immediately whether what they have learned will be useful; hence, it may be regarded necessary to wait for some time before obtaining informed opinion (Reid and Barrington, 1997).

A member of the Focus Group No. P5-1 argues that:

> "*managers responsible for training are concerned with developing the method to find out the effectiveness of determining the training needs as they are responsible for developing plans and programmes pertaining to training, and thus they are supposed to have the experience and knowledge needed by virtue of their work in these positions, in contrast to the trainees who have other tasks to perform.*"

It can be concluded that trainees confirmed the absence of criteria to measure the effectiveness of determining the training needs, and they agree with most managers

concerning this issue:

- They confirm that some courses are given to individuals who do not need them which indicate a lack of effectiveness in determining the training needs of employees.

- Trainees believe that the only method used to determine the effectiveness of training programmes is the questionnaire and tests that take place at the end of each training course, and are considered ineffective in identifying the training needs. It is evident from the interviewees' responses in this study that there are no procedures or method to identify the effectiveness of the training programmes. This is attributable to the Company's approach not to depend on a programme for analysing its training needs before starting any training programme. This has been noted in the interviewees' responses in the previous theme; this is negatively reflected on the effectiveness of the training programme.

In Section 5.2.2, and in this Section, as indicated above, engineers referred to using a questionnaire to acknowledge their views and to help the management conceptualising the budget in a suitable manner to avoid wasting money in a way that might not benefit the Company, and to determine the effectiveness of training programmes. One of the common approaches to establish training needs is to design and hand out a survey which asks the workforce about the knowledge and skill they deem must be included in future training (Kroehnert, 2000, cited by Aamodt, 2010, p. 196). The literature also indicates that one of the training and development needs methods is that undertaken as the individual level (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2003). Surveys are argued to offer many advantages, such as eliminating problems of performance rating errors; employees know their strengths and weaknesses better than others; hence, to determine what the

workforce need is to ask them; and training needs can be established using surveys even when the organisation has not beforehand made an attempt to design an effective performance appraisal system or proper job descriptions (Aamodt, 2010). Nonetheless, surveys can be disadvantageous in that employees might not be honest and the company might be unable to pay for the training proposed by their employees (Aamodt, 2010). The most common method of survey is a questionnaire which asks the employees to list the areas where they want to have further or future training (Aamodt, 2010). In fact, employing surveys and/or questionnaires involves the development of a list of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) needed to carry out specific jobs efficiently and asking the workforce to check the KSAs where they think training is required (Sims, 2002, p. 172). Literature relating to knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAa) is reviewed and analysed in Chapter Two (Section2.5).

Some departments interview or distribute questionnaires (form to explore who needs training) to workers to identify the need for training or suggest the type of training that they need. But this is not in all departments of the company. An interviewed engineer Focus Group No. P7-7 maintains that "*in the department he works for, employees fill a questionnaire at the end of each year which defines the type of training, and who needs training, and offers suggestions pertaining to the training process, but this does not happen in all the courses as far as he knows*.

5.2.11 The Link between the Company's Goals and Objectives and Training Programmes

The question that have been addressed to the interviewee managers to explore whether there was a link between the company's goals and objectives, on the one hand, and the training programmes, on the other hand. In other words, are the company's objectives

and goals are taken into consideration when developing training programmes or are they overlooked?

The answer to this question indicates that training or departmental managers or both managers do not take the company's objectives and goals into their account when developing training programmes and identifying the individuals who need training and increasing efficiency. Brown (2002) also indicates that carrying out a needs assessment is useful in identifying organisational goals and needs assessment success in accomplishing such goals. Brown indicates needs assessment is also useful in identifying the gaps or discrepancies between employee skills and the skills required for successful job performance. Swist (2001) maintains that the literature shows that training programmes are often stipulated as the drug of choice to problem situations in organizations, adding that the training needs assessment is often ignored as the first step in the performance improvement process. Swist (2001) also adds that the assessment is part of a planning process which concentrates on identifying and resolving performance problems. Van Eerde et al. (2008) argue that it is reasonable to think that training affects performance but it may not be the case in every circumstance, and discuss the reason for training not generating the desired effects

One manager M1 maintains that "*when a training programme is developed in the plan, the company's goals and objectives are not taken into consideration as required because it depends sometimes on the orientation of the managers in senior management. Training programmes may not be the result of the company's objectives; thus, impact the effectiveness of training programmes because it is based on the wishes of certain managers without taking into account the goals of the company.*"

However, when the company have clear goals, such as the expansion of some plants or building new power stations, it is noted that in this case that training programmes

developed on this basis are proposed. Also, the numbers and qualifications required and the rehabilitation of the employees who need to be qualified for the completion of those tasks

This is because the goals are clear and thus achieved, but some goals are not clear therefore they are overlooked or implemented in an incorrect manner. One manager M2 reiterates that "*the link between the company's objectives and the training programmes depend on the clarity of these objectives and the possibility of translating them into programmes and training plans to bring about a clear benefit for the company and achieve its objectives effectively. However, there are training programmes which are not linked to the company's objectives; thus, impacting the effectiveness of these programmes.*" Bayoud (1999) argued that the Company's objectives are general in nature and not adequately specified; consequently, they are rather difficult to measure.

Some managers believe that there is a link between all the training programmes and the goals and objectives of the company. Training plans and programmes are developed to implement these goals. Another manager (M2), in his capacity as a training manager at the Central Training Administration, said that "*when we proceed in the preparation of a training programme and in order for this programme to be effective, we examine the goals that the company wish to achieve and translate them into plans and training programmes.*" Brown (2002) also argues that training relates to developing employees' knowledge and skills that increasingly help them achieve the organisational mission. Landy and Conte (2010, p. 317) maintain that effective training programmes can increase knowledge, for example, in relation to safety procedure, and can as well "*develop employees' skills, which in turn can be applied on the job.*"De Bono (2008, p. 149) identifies the specific objectives of training as to: "*Develop the competence of employees and improve their performance; Help people grow within the organization;*

Reduce the learning time for employees starting new jobs and ensure that they become fully competent as quickly as possible." It can be argued that developing employees' competencies and improving their performance can be achieved through increasing their knowledge and skills in the field of their work, which subsequently help them to get promoted within their organisation.

It is noted through the interviews with the targeted participants in this study that the company's administrative leadership are not completely and adequately concerned with elucidating the company objectives and explaining them to the employees, as well as the means through which such objectives can be achieved, so as all can have an insight of such objectives and the means of achieving them. This is a key process that contributes to achieving the company objectives and also all parties should participate to formulating the objectives to be convinced of them and responsible to achieve them; simply put, employees are empowered (Price, 2007). Such employee empowerment was not noticed to be the case in the company investigated. Rather, all decisions are made at the top, to be executed by lower tiers of management, such as line managers and supervisors, and the employees.

5.2.12. Contribution of Training to Solving Some Problems

The purpose of asking this question is to explore the extent to which training is used as a remedy to resolve some problems that encounter the company employees while performing their work.

The answers to this question illustrated that the managers believe that some problems which face employees are a result of the lack of knowledge or skill necessary to fulfil their duties. The supervisors submit reports to the administration to explain the cause of such problems and propose solutions to resolve these problems as well, in addition to suggesting the type of training required for these cases.

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A manager M1 explained that "*in important tasks, especially those related to operations and maintenance, and those which require skills and knowledge to accomplish, the supervisors, when finding out problems in the performance of these tasks due to a lack of skill or knowledge, they usually report these cases to their departments to solve these difficulties and problems and propose the rehabilitation of these employees through training programmes so that they can perform their work well.*"

There are also emergency courses which are implemented when there is new hardware or equipment different from the old ones. Then, it is proposed to implement courses for employees who will work on such advanced equipment.

One of the interviewed manager M7 explained this, as follows: "*we have problems when introducing new equipment to the company's employees, because these employees find it difficult to use them, which then causes problems in operation, forcing supervisors to seek solutions to these difficulties through the nomination of such personnel for training as a remedy for these problems to increase the effectiveness of their performance by raising their efficiency.*"

Responses to this question were different. They confirmed that when someone faces any problem during the performance of work, he resorts to his direct supervisor explaining the problems and propose the solutions he deems appropriate. The Direct supervisor examine the need for training and rehabilitation to solve this problem, then such cases are included in the training programmes designed to raise their competence and qualify them to perform these tasks.

A member of Focus Group No. P4-9 is quoted to state the following: "*as for the department I work in, the direct supervisor and through his notes and daily follow-ups of employees, he finds out if there are difficulties or some problems facing employees for various reason; he records these problems, and classifies them if they are related to*

a lack of knowledge or skills, then proposes courses to address these shortcomings."

Some of the trainees believe that managers are not interested in using training as a remedy for some of the problems faced by the employees while performing their duties, particularly those related to the shortages of skills or knowledge; rather, they turn to other methods to deal with these problems by moving employees to other sites, although there might be a chance for training.

A member of Focus Group No P6-4 also referred to this point, arguing that "*some managers are not interested in using training as a solution to some of the problems facing supervised employees, when they notice that there are shortcomings in the performance of individuals, the first thing they do is to submit reports to higher management asking to dismiss their employees for their inability to carry out their work without determining the reasons. This, in my opinion, is due to the managers' inability to diagnose problems and propose solutions.*"

From these responses, the following can be concluded:

- Training is used as a remedy for some of the problems facing employees while performing their duties; this is what was agreed upon by almost all managers and trainees.

- Some of the trainees believe that the managers are not interested in using training as a solution for some problems or difficulties faced by employees; rather, they turn to using other methods.

The literature argues that not all of the organisational problems can be fixed by training (Mathis and Jackson, 2010). It is important to identify the causes prior to suggesting solutions for these problems. This requires the expertise and the cooperation of all parties; the managers and the trainees. There are problems relating to the inadequacy in performance; but training does not resolve this problem. This leads to the necessity of paying attention to the leadership that lead the company in order to perform its role

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successfully.

5.3   Summary

This chapter analysed and interpreted the study findings as presented by the managers (responses to semi-structured interviews) and trained engineers (responses to focus group interviews). The study findings were analysed across six themes.

The findings indicated that the company's training and development needs are reviewed annually in order to prepare the annual training plan. The findings also showed that the prepared plan is submitted to the Ministry concerned for endorsement, and then, training courses and programmes are implemented. Training plans were also found to have failed meeting the Company's objectives. Annual training plans are said to be often of a specific form repeated each year, though, not evolved for the better,

There is a budget allocated to training included in the Company's annual budget. The approach to the training budget is incremental budgeting (discretionary budgeting), being based on what happed in the previous year, along with some adjustments for and changes anticipated. The proposed training budget is often reduced by the concerned Ministry. Employees are not empowered to participate in training budget proposal.

As regards the methods used in needs assessment, the findings revealed the use of three methods: observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

There was a claim that the benefit from some of the training courses was insignificant. It was also found that the identification of employee training needs was based on the need of each of the fifteen administrations, and that the Administration of Training is the responsible body for preparing, implementing, supervising and following-up training programmes. Three types of training have been identified: induction training, training for raising efficiency, and general training.

Managers are said to have identified employee training needs through observation. It

seemed that the sources of gathering data and information include either employees' personal files, or employees' professional files, rather than having a database system. There is an indication that the Company was in the process of establishing a new section to prepare an integrated database for all employees, and some of the specialised overseas companies have been contracted for this purpose. The study findings also revealed that there is no real analysis of individual or of the jobs they perform.

Training decisions were made by the management and supervisors without involving the employees in this process. Employees are only involved, though to some extent, concerning general courses (computer courses and language courses).

Distribution of a questionnaire is the method employed to assess the effectiveness of training courses and programmes. Observation is also used as well as reports written by supervisors and managers about the training courses.

The findings also indicated that managers did not take into their consideration the Company's objectives when developing training programmes and identifying employees' training needs.

Some problems facing employees were attributed to the lack of knowledge and skills required to perform their jobs. Supervisors are said to report these problems to the Administration of Training and explain the cause of such problems and suggest solution to remedy the situation as well as indicating the types of training needed for these cases.

A set of three factors has been identified to be important in determining training needs: social, personal economic, and organisational and administrative factors. Social factors, such as kinship, friendship, mediation, favouritism, and '*wasta*', were found to have an impact on determining training needs in all aspects of the process. Much have been written about favouritism, 'Wasta' and other social factors that affect determining training needs [for example, discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.2); Section 5.2.1 (Types of Training Plans Adopted by the Company when Implementing its Training

Programmes); Section 5.2.6 (Social Factors); Section 5.2.7 (Personal Economic Factors); and Section 5.2.8 (Organisational and Administrative Factors). The economic factors, mainly represented by employee rewards, career development, and financial gain due to training seemed to have an impact on determining training needs, especially training abroad. The study findings also pointed to the inaccurate regulations or protocols framing the process of indentifying training needs, and that powers are granted to the managers, who themselves need training. Accurate job descriptions are also lacking. Findings further revealed that there is only some commitment to the rules and regulations, specifically those organising the Company's process of training.

Chapter Six

Discussion of Research Findings and Conclusions

6.1   Introduction

This study was undertaken to investigate the training needs assessment (TNA) aspect of HRD in a Libyan context. The aim was to "*identify the training needs assessment (TNA) procedures used in a Libyan context and to introduce a theoretical framework of TNA within the Libyan context based on the relevant literature, particularly western literature, and the outcomes of the present empirical research*." The objectives of the study were to: "*Explore Training and development perspectives and the range of models of training needs assessment (TNA) used in HRD practices*"; "*Assess, through a single company investigative study of a Libyan public utility company, the engagement of managers and staff in the TNA processes and decision making*"; "*Identify the factors that impact the training needs assessment*"; and *"Develop a decision making model of training needs assessment within the Libyan context drawing from western and Arabic literature and the outcomes of the empirical research.*"

The differences between 'training needs assessment' and 'training needs analysis' have been addressed in Chapter One (Section 1.3. Training Needs Assessment' and 'Training Needs Analysis) and in Chapter Two (Section 2.2. Training Needs Assessment). The discussion in Section 2.2 clearly demonstrates the controversy of applying both terms as synonymous with each other, as highlighted by a number of authors, including Werner and DiSimone (2011), Drummond (2008) and Landy and Conte (2010), and distinguishing 'training needs assessment' from 'training needs analysis', as indicated by a number of authors including, Mathis and Jackson (2011), Rothwell et al. (2012) and Rothwell and Kazanas (2011). Mathis and Jackson (2011) argue that the initial step

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in training needs assessment is to analyse what training needs might be required, and training needs analysis is reported as a key first stage in the systematic training cycle, according to Bowman and Wilson (2008) (see Chapter Two, Section 2.2). This is a reference to training needs analysis being the initial step of training needs assessment. The literature cited in Chapter Two (Section 2.9) (Erasmus et al., 2006; van Eerde et al., 2008; Du Plessis et al., 2010) indicates that assessment of training needs is the initial step in planning a training programme and can be associated with the organisational success. It was argued in Chapter Two (Section 2.9) that this is the Western approach to training needs assessment, which is not the case in the Libyan context, as the study findings revealed, and discussed in Chapter Five and this chapter. It was also argued that organisations in Libya might not perceive undertaking training needs assessment as a priority (Abdulrahim, 2011) (Abdulrahim, 2011; rather, such assessment is undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the superior's observations of his/her employees. It is further indicated in Section 2.9 that there exist certain factors which intervene in this process, such as favouritism, 'Wasta', and social relationships. It was also indicated that within the Libyan context large organisations are not systematic in assessing their employees' training needs (Abdulrahim, 2011). In this study, whenever the abbreviation TNA is used, it means 'training needs assessment' but not 'training needs analysis'. This differentiation between the two terms is vital in the Libyan context, given that proper 'training needs assessment' process has not been applied in the utility company investigated; due to other factors which influence training and development of employees, such as 'Wasta', favouritism, and nepotism, which have been common features in the Libyan context, as was revealed in Chapter Two (Section 2.9. Discussion of the Literature Review), Chapter Three (Section 3.2. Libya: A General Country Profile, and Section 3.8. General Discussion) and Chapter Five (Section 5.2.6. Social Factors).

The significance of the present study has been identified in the introductory chapter (Chapter One, Section 1.6). It is argued that, in the context of the Libyan needs for training, the importance of the study lies in its contribution to training within the public utility sector, given that there is currently insufficient information about training needs assessment, and that there is a wide gap in the information and research on training and training needs in the majority of industrial sectors. The present study is also important since it has been undertaken during the deposed regime and it is a basis for further studies in few years' time, given that the new government seems to be geared towards establishing a smaller government structure and a larger private sector. It seems highly likely that the new government will privatise public owned organisations. Privatisation, on a smaller scale, had been undertaken by the old regime. Libya started privatisation of small public organisations in 1987; nonetheless, the success of this privatisation was limited, given that most of the privatised organisations suffered from performance decline (Alafi and de Bruijn, 2010). It is also argued that due to this gap and the importance of training within key utility sector organisations, the idea of undertaking a study of a company's processes for establishing training needs and undertaking training needs assessment is deemed important; given that undertaking such assessment will identify the gaps or deficiencies in areas where training is needed to improve employees' knowledge and skills.

As indicated in Chapter One (Section 1.6. Significance of the study), the study is also important in that it is the first of its kind undertaken involving a large public utility company in relation to investigating training process and training needs assessment; a well all as in terms of introducing a framework for determining the efficiency of training needs within the context of the Libyan General Electricity Company. This framework is based on cultural and economic situations in a Libyan context, and also on economic differences between Western and Arabic interpretation of training needs

assessment. This framework is the original contribution of this study to knowledge, as will be discussed in some detail in Section 6.11.1 Most of the Western business research has investigated training processes and training needs assessment; hence, it is not new in Western terms. Accordingly, the present study, carried out in a Libyan context, is an important new contribution to knowledge and research.

The study involves both management (Managers of Training Departments) and trained employees (engineers). However, this study neither involved the Company senior and general managers nor did it involve any of the Ministry officials. This is essential in that views expressed by the management and those expressed by the employees are obtained and can be analysed to see how management and employees differ or agree about issues relating to training and training needs assessment. The managers participating in the study (semi-structured interview participants) are directly responsible for training and development of the company employees and are the personnel who are in charge of assessing training needs as well as planning and designing training programmes, and the engineers (involved in focus groups) who are the employees who have attended training programmes and courses. Accordingly, managers responsible for training can provide information and data about training needs assessment practices, as well as providing answers to issues relating to employee training and development, from the perspectives of the management; nonetheless, these managers are neither party to senior management nor officials of the Ministry of Industry and Energy to provide all information required. Trained engineers (focus group members) can also provide information and data about training needs assessment, from their own perspectives, as they have been through some assessment practices prior to their nomination for training and attending training programmes and courses. Furthermore, the literature (Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1) indicates that it is vital to

involve both managers and employees in the assessment process (Grobler et al., 2006; Cummings and Worley, 2009; Du Plessis et al., 2010; Werner and DiSimone, 2011).

Furthermore, the analysis and interpretation of the study findings should add to our understanding of international HRD (Chapter Two, Section 2.4) and national HRD policies in non-western countries, such as the Middle Eastern countries (See Chapter Two, Section 2.7). The findings of the present study will also represent a base for further studies after the old regime (the study was undertaken under the old regime control of all production and utility sectors of economy) (Chapter Three, Section 3.1), as well as representing a part of the theoretical contribution to the Framework of practice (Section 6.11.1, Figure 6.1).

The study is founded on the assumptions that the LGEC managers of training departments (who are responsible for training in the company) are in a position to comment on staff training and development, and training needs assessment of their organisation. This helped identify the flaws in the system. Trained employees are also in a good position to comment about their training, the extent of their involvement in identifying their training needs and also in the whole process of training needs assessment, if any, due to the importance of such involvement; given that a feeling of participating in needs assessment process improves employee motivation to undertake training and development. (Grobler et al., 2006) (Section 2.2.1) and their reactions to the training courses they have previously attended would make them aware of any shortcomings in such training; hence their involvement in any further needs assessment would better identify their actual training needs, given that they know whether or not they have benefited from such training when going back to their work places. Trainees' identification of the flaws or shortcomings in their previous training points to the gaps in their knowledge and skills and helps managers to consider such flaws when further

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assess their employees' training needs.

An overview of the organisation investigated (the LGEC and the Company's Training Department) was outlined in Chapter One (Section 1.10).

In the following sections, a general discussion of the research methodology and research methods (Chapter Four) used to generate primary data is provided, and finally, a general discussion of the key research findings (Chapter Five) is presented.

6.2   Review of the Study Objectives

The research aim (Chapter One, Section 1.5) was to be achieved through four objectives.

Objective One:

To: "***Explore training and development perspectives and the range of models of training needs assessment (TNA) used in HRD practices****.*"

To achieve this objective a critical review and analysis of the literature relating to training (Chapter One, Section 1.2), training needs assessment (TNA) (Chapter One, Section 1.3, and Chapter Two, Section 2.1; Section 2.2 (introducing, analysing and discussing training needs assessment in general); and sub-sections 2.2.1 (who undertakes training needs assessment); 2.2.2 (reasons for conducting a training needs assessment); 2.2.3 (methods of training needs assessment); 2.2.4 (selection of assessment methodology); and 2.2.5 (training needs assessment models), human resource development (HRD) (Section 2.3), international HRD (IHRD) (Section 2.4), training and development (Section 2.5), training and development in the Middle East (Section 2.6) and organisational culture (Chapter Two, Section 2.6) was carried out and documented in Chapter Two. The literature review provided a better insight of the documented views and perceptions of TNA, and related topics. The literature

concerning a general profile of Libya with special reference to education and training (Sections 3.1 and 3.2), Libyan culture (Section 3.2) education in Libya (Section 3.3; secondary education, Sub-section, 3.3.1; and training at the secondary education level, Sub-section 3.3.2), Higher Education (Section 3.4) vocational education and training (VET) in Libya (Section 3.5), and training and development sector in Libya (Section 3.6), was also reviewed and documented in Chapter Three. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company (Section 3.7) and a general discussion of Chapter Three findings (Section 3.8) were also provided in Chapter Three. An overview of The Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC) (Section 1.9) was also provided in Chapter One. The Libyan culture is reviewed and discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.2). The findings documented in Chapter One and Chapter Two are perceived as a critical contribution towards meeting Objective One. A discussion of the issues raised in Chapter Two in Section 2.9 is also a critical contribution towards achieving this objective.

Objective Two:

To: *"Assess, through a single company investigative study of a Libyan public utility company, the engagement of managers and staff in the TNA processes and decision making."*

This objective was achieved by analysing the research findings presented in Chapter Five (Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings). Responses to semi-structured interview items by the eight managers responsible for training in the LGEC, and responses to the focus group interviews by engineers working for the LGEC were analysed and discussed in the light of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and also in Chapter Three concerning training at the LGEC. Furthermore, a general discussion of the issues analysed and discussed throughout the five chapters is provided in this chapter [Section 6.4, Establishment of training Framework (Theme 1); Section 6.5,

Methods/Procedures of Determining Employee Training Needs (Theme 2); Section 6.6, Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database) (Theme 3); Section 6.7, Factors Affecting the Process of Determining Training Needs (Theme 4) (6.7.1, Social Factors; 6.7.2, Personal Economic Factors; and 6.7.3, Organisational and Administrative Factors), Section 6.8, Decision Making (Theme 5), and Section 6.9, Measures Employed to Explore the Extent of the Efficacy of Determining Training Needs Assessment (Theme 6). The literature (for example, Grobler et al., 2006; Cummings and Worley, 2009; Werner and DeSimone, 2011; Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1) highlighted the importance of management involvement and employee involvement in the process of training needs assessment. Grobler et al. (2006, p. 309) argue that management involvement in needs assessment is important given that managers in general have accurate information concerning their employees' performance and managers are "*in an improve position to assess the need for training in the work groups.*" Werner and DiSimone (2011) also refer to management involvement in training needs assessment, maintaining that immediate managers play a specifically important role in person analysis (the third step in training needs assessment; the other two steps include organisational analysis, and task analysis. Managers are not only in a position to observe their employees; rather, it is also their task to do so (Werner and DeSimone, 2011). As regards the involvement of employees in needs assessment, Grobler et al. (2006) also maintains, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.2.1. Who Undertakes Training Needs Assessment) that such an involvement is vital, given that a feeling of participating in needs assessment process improves employee motivation to undertake training and development. Employee involvement attempts to enhance employees' participation into decisions which have an effect on organisation performance and employee interests (Glew et al., 1995; Cummings and Worley, 2009). Employee involvement can be portrayed across four main components which promote

employee involvement; namely, power, information, knowledge and skills, and rewards (Lawler III, 1986; cited in Cummings and Worley, 2009, p. 352). Management systems in Libya, and also throughout the Middle East, as indicated in Chapter Two n(Section 2.7) emphasise sensitivity to local cultural customs and constrained participation in deceision making, and the importance of Islamic values, Islamic work ethics and Islamic doctrine on the management of human resources in Islamic countries (Ali, 1992, 2004; Tayeb, 1997). Management systems, therefore, do not allow or lean toward involving subordinates in any decision-making processes. It is management's prerogative that does not allow employee involvement at work; employees are the subordinates and their role even that of the lower tiers of management; is to implement decisions made at the higher managerial level.

Objective Three:

To: *"Identify the factors that impact the training needs assessment."*

This objective was also achieved through the analysis and discussion of the participants' responses documented in Chapter Five and discussed further in this chapter. The study findings identified three factors which have an impact on training needs assessment concerning the LGEC: social factors, including kinship and friendship, mediation, 'Wasta' and favouritism (Chapter Five, Sub-section 5.2.6, and Chapter Six, Sub-section 6.7.1); personal economic factors, such as nomination for external training courses, especially those attended abroad, mainly due to the financial return trainees would obtain (Chapter Five, Sub-section 5.2.7, and Chapter Six, Sub-section 6.7.2; and organisational and administrative factors, such as the absence of accurate regulations or protocols relating to the process of identifying the training needs, according to the managers interviewed, or, as focus group members reference to the regulations and rules governing the process of training which are not applied by managers; rather, they are

overlooked for various reasons, including favouritism (Chapter Five, Sub-section 5.2.8, and Chapter Six, Sub-section 6.7.3).

Objective Four:

To: ***"Develop a decision making model of training needs assessment within the Libyan context drawing from western and Arabic literature and the outcomes of the empirical research."***

This objective was achieved by developing a framework for determining the effectiveness of training needs, which consists initially of five steps (Chapter Three, Section 3.8, Figure 3.4) which is redesigned (Section 6.11.1, Figure 6.1) at the end of this chapter to include issues identified in Chapter Five and discussed in this chapter. The proposed framework is based on various TNA models introduced by Western authors, including Olivas's (2007) model (using training needs analysis as his underlying conceptual viewpoint), Vaughn's (2005) model (using training needs analysis as his underlying conceptual viewpoint); McGhee and Thayer's (1961) Model (using training needs assessment as his underlying conceptual viewpoint) and Barbazette's (2006) three phase process (using training needs assessment as his underlying conceptual viewpoint). For example, the first step of Olivas's (2007) model (Determine the Purpose and Objective of the Needs Assessment, Chapter Two, Section 2.2.4) was useful to be included in the proposed framework (Step 1, Establishment of Training framework [Training plan for company (organisation analysis) and employees (person/individual analysis) (Chapter Six, Figure 6.1). Organisation analysis and person/individual analysis are, as discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1, two of McGhee and Thayer's (1961) three-level model (the third level is task/job analysis).

The second step of Olivas's (2007) model (Identify the Kinds of Information Needed) (Chapter Two, Section 2.2.4) and the fourth step of Olivas' model (Gather Data) are also similar to the third stage of the proposed framework [Compilation and Analysis of

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Information (Database)] (Chapter Six, Figure 6.1). The first phase of Barbazette's (2006) three phase process (Gather Information, Chapter Two, Section 2.2.4) is also useful to incorporate in the third stage of proposed framework. It seems that both Oliva (2007) and Vaughn (2005) used the term 'training needs analysis' instead of 'training needs assessment' and might have used the former as synonymous with the latter.

Issues relating to making training decision in the proposed framework can be argued to be based on the sixth step of Oliva's model (Set Training Priorities) in the sense that making training decision is somewhat similar to setting training priorities; that is, making decisions concerning which areas or which flaw or deficiency need to be addressed first and concerned staff are planned to be trained before others.

The last step of the proposed framework (Extent of the Efficiency of Training Needs Determination) is included in the framework to show how efficient was training needs determination in a Libyan context. This step addressed two major areas: how efficient is this determination in problem solving and how the training needs determination is linked with Training Programme objectives.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the proposed framework has some common features with other Western-based models, such as it consists of several steps; one step leading to the next step. However, it should be highlighted here that the proposed framework, though drawing on Western-based model, is introduced in a Libyan context in Chapter Three (Section 3.8) and redesigned later in this chapter, taking into consideration the Libyan culture and traditions, and other factors characteristics of the Libyan ways of kinship, friendship and social relationships and practices, as described in Chapter Three and elsewhere throughout the present study. The proposed framework also includes the impact of factors which are not found in the Western models, that is, Factors Affecting the Determination of Training Needs: Social Factors, Individual Economic Factors, and

Organisational and Administrative Factors). These factors are introduced in the framework to deal with different factors unique to the Libyan Context, as well as to the Arab and Middle Eastern contexts.

6.3   Research Methodology

The key research philosophies, research approaches, research strategies, research methods and methodologies, issues relating to data collection and population and sampling procedures employed in the present study to measure the effectiveness of human resource development and training of staff at the Libyan General Electricity Company are identified in Chapter Four (Research Methodology).

Research paradigms have been introduced and discussed briefly in Chapter Four: positivism, Section 4.2.1; interpretivism, Section 4.2.2; which are argued to be the sources of epistemological assumptions, and objectivism/subjectivism, Section 4.2.4, which are argued to be the sources of ontological assumptions. Due to the qualitative nature of the present study, it can be argued that the research is embedded in an interpretivism paradigm (epistemological assumptions) and in the subjectivism paradigm (ontological assumption).

A number of research approaches have also been discussed briefly in Chapter Four: Research Methodology), including: induction and deduction (Section 4.3.1); exploratory research (Section 4.3.2); qualitative approach (Section 4.3.3), quantitative approach (Section 4.3.4), explanatory research (Section 4.3.5); and descriptive research (Section 4.3.6). The approach of the present study is qualitative, using semi-structured interviews with managers and focus group interviewees (trained engineers). Based on this approach, it can be argued that the present study is also embedded in the inductive approach, given that this approach has been adopted to generate qualitative data relating to the single company investigative study approach, due to the flexibility it offers, a

small sample is needed for collecting data. The approach of the present study during the initial stages was to undertake mixed method technique, employing both qualitative methods and quantitative methods. However, after consultation and discussion with the study supervisors, it was decided that only a qualitative research approach was to be implemented, using semi-structured interviews with training managers and interviews with focus groups which consisted of engineers who have already attended training courses and programmes. The only quantitative data used in Chapter One and Chapter Three, as well as in Appendix 1 were statistics either reported by other authors and statistics published by the LGEC. The small sample of the study respondents (managers and engineers) was appropriate to the present study; for example, it provides rich data from discussing with them the various issues raised in the interview questions, and also the need for people's perceptions for the created framework. In addition, the researcher was able to obtain company documentations which were used as statistical information and other documents about Libya as a way of triangulating the study findings.

As regards to research strategy, a single company investigative study strategy was adopted in the present study, given that they are associated with qualitative research (Chapter Four, Section 4.4), in order to generate data so that Objective 2 of the present study (Through a single company investigative study of a Libyan public utility company the engagement of managers and staff in the TNA processes and decision making is assessed) (Chapter One, Section 1.5) can be achieved. The LGEC was used as a single company investigative study strategy due to time constraints which did not allow involving more utility companies, and choosing one utility company helped to be better undertake the study than involving more companies.

There are two groups of sampling procedures; probability sampling, and non-probability sampling. As regards the managers involved in the study, directors of administrations

and heads of departments responsible for training were selected. This means that only those directly involved in implementing training programmes were involved in the study. In terms of selecting engineers for the focus groups, a simple random sampling procedure (probability sampling) was adopted to establish ten focus groups at the different stations; each group consisted of twelve participants.

Secondary data relevant to the study were collected from the relevant literature and also publications about the country and about the company investigated. Primary data were obtained using semi-structured interviews (with managers) and focus group interviews (with trained engineers). Primary data were analysed and discussed across six themes, as will be discussed in the following sections. Furthermore, there are documents published by the LGEC about training programmes and courses and the number of employees participating in these programmes and courses. These documents, presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.6 and Section 3.7), Appendix I (LGEC Organisational Structure and Further Information and Statistics Relating to Training Courses Implemented by the LGEC) and Appendix 4 (Types of Training Programmes Provided by the LGEC, only show the type of training programmes and courses offered by the company and also the number of employees who participated in these programmes and courses; though, they neither refer to any practices or procedures concerning why they were provided nor how participants' training needs assessment was undertaken and identified.

The study findings analysed in Chapter Five (the six themes) are further discussed in the following six sections (Section 6.4 to Section 6.9). These themes are as follows:

Theme 1: Establishment of training framework
Theme 2: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs.
Theme 3: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database).
Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training needs.

Theme 5: Training Decisions.

Theme 6: Significance of Training Needs Determination.

6.4   Establishment of Training Framework (Theme 1)

In this theme, responses of training managers (semi-structured interviews) and trained engineers (focus group members) relating to two issues: the types of training plans adopted by the company when implementing its training programmes (Section 5.2.1), that is, how a training plan is prepared, and who is responsible for preparing such a plan are analysed and discussed. Responses of the managers and engineers in relation to the funds and budget of training are analysed in Section 5.2.2 are discussed.

As regards the training plans adopted by the LGEC, the company prepares and implements an annual training plan, an indication that the company's training and development needs are reviewed annually to prepare the annual training plans, as reported in Chapter Five (Section 5.2.1). The preparation of annual plans is the responsibility of the Training Department. The responses by the managers clearly indicate that the preparation and the implementation of the annual training plan is a long process going through different levels of management to be approved and implemented. Even after such a long procedures, the plan is not totally adhered to and some of the training programmes are either delayed or cancelled, an action that would seem negatively affect the candidates nominated for these programmes.

The study indicated that the Company's objectives [previously set by the General Popular Committee (the local government) (Chapter Three, Section 3.6); replaced at present by the Ministry of Industry and Energy] have been taken into consideration at the time when the training plan is prepared with the aim of translating such objectives into training programmes. The Training Department has formulated a set of objectives in relation to training and drawing training policies and plans for the company's

workforce; determining the levels of skills in all professions and jobs within the company and take into consideration job descriptions and requirements; develop training systems, procedures and methods relating to raising the company's workforce efficiency; and formulate annual training programmes for the top management in the form of seminars to top senior management staff (Chapter Three, Section 3.7). One of the reasons for conducting training needs assessment is to "link improved job performance with the organization's goals and bottom line" (Swist, 2001, p. 1). The study findings also indicated that the Training Department is responsible for preparing the plan in co-ordination with the Company's administrations and departments, and identifying the centres or venues where training courses take place as well as coordinating with the training centres inside or outside the Company. In the context of Western research, training is the responsibility of the Human Resource Department, given that HRD is one of the HRM functions. However, the responsibility of line managers concerning training and employee development in Western organisations has increased in recent years in more than 40% of cases and around one third of cases in transition countries (Kopač and Trbank, 2006). Other people who might be responsible for HRD include top management, whose main responsibilities to initiate the environment where development is rewarded but not punished, as well as making their organisation objectives and competence needs known to their employees; and, development professionals who undertake some responsibility for developments, tough their influence is likely to be indirect (University of Cambridge, 2001, p. 35). As regards other Arab research in this area, there is much similarity with the Libyan context in relation to top management and other management levels, including line managers, given the highly centralised and bureaucratic structure of organisations. This is reference to the centralised tall structure of the Company (see Appendix 1), in which a single department prepares the training plan; the other departments only send their

training needs to the Training Department and play no role in preparing the training plan or training programmes.

The interviewed engineers thought that the training plans are not effective and do not evolve for the better and that the annual plans are the same each year and do not meet the expectations of the employees. The annual training plan is a routine procedure undertaken each year, and according to the focus group members the annual plan is usually of a specific form that is repeated each year and it does not evolve for the better (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.1).

The managers interviewed indicated that there is an annual training budget allocated for undertaking training throughout the year, which appears to be based on what has happened in the previous year; hence, it can be argued that the Company adopts an incremental budgeting (discretionary budgets) approach, which as defined in Chapter Three (Section 3.7. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company), the most widespread type of budgeting in local and central government, as well as in other public bodies (McLaney and Atrill, 2008; Atrill and Mclaney, 2009; Mayers, 2004). It is also indicated in Section 3.7 that Libyan accounting system has been based on the UK and the USA accounting systems, despite the explicit environmental differences between Libya, as an emerging economy, and the UK and the US, as developed countries (Shareia, 2010). Drury (2008), Dutta (2009), Hansen et al. (2009) and McLaney and Atrill (2009) have identified three types of training budgets; incremental budgeting, often adopted for 'discretionary' budgets, such as, research and development and staff training, traditionally based on what happened the year before, with certain adjustment for any changes in factors which are anticipated to have an effect on the impending budget period, and zero-base budgeting (ZBB),. a "budget process that presumes a starting level of zero for all expenses, but not on other points such as previous year's outcome. The third approach to training budget is the 'rolling

budget' (continuous budgeting) that is continuously updated by adding a further period, for instance, a month or a quarter and deducting the earliest period. It is necessary to look at budget since it is important for training needs assessment processes, given that training is a costly process and requires the expenditure of large sums of money that should be allocated to training and also in the organisation's general budget. Assessing employees training needs helps to identify the gap(s) in employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes; hence, further training is needed. This requires expenditure on new training programmes and courses; and funds requirements have to be budgeted in advance. Accordingly, it is relevant to know about the kind of budgeting allocated to training and undertaken by the LGEC.

The Company employees do not participate in suggesting training budget; the budget is suggested and planned by the management, as dictated by the Ministry. The incremental budgeting (discretionary budgets) approach might have some impact on what training decisions can be made, given that the budget was dictated by the then General Popular Committee (the local government), when the study was undertaken, which have been abolished and decisions are made at present by the central government (The Ministry of Industry and Energy). This will have its impact of the decision making framework suggested at the end of this chapter, Section 6.11.1.

6.5   Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs (Theme 2)

In this theme, responses of training managers (semi-structured interviews) and trained engineers (focus group members) relating to the approaches and the methods adopted by the company to determine training needs assessment (analysed in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.3) are discussed.

As regards to the approaches and the methods adopted by the LGEC to determine training needs, the study findings indicate that the measures adopted by the LGEC in

identifying its employees' training needs are based on the needs of each of the fifteen departments. The interviewed managers maintained that each department determines its employees' training needs in keeping with the rules, regulations and directives set by the LGEC Management (see Section 5.2.3), and then the Training Department designs and prepares training programmes in the light of the different training needs identified by the different departments, and that through this process that the three steps of training needs assessment, namely organisational needs, task needs and person needs, are identified. The managers' response to this issue agree with the Western literature in this area (for example, Noe, 2002; Landy and Conte, 2010; Mathis and Jackson, 2011). Person training needs and task training needs are determined by each department of the LGEC. Employee training needs are identified by the departmental manager, supervisors and team leaders, in connection with the tasks performed within each department as well as future tasks to be performed in the future. Such person and task needs identifications are in conformity with the LGEC organisational current and future needs. Appendix 4 shows that the LGEC offer some types of training; including, induction courses ('orientation' or 'socialisation' courses) for newly recruited ; as well as to incumbent employees, such as those promoted to new job within the company, and also training incumbent employees on new technologies introduced by the organisation or new sophisticated equipment acquired by the organisation; courses for increasing efficiency of the company current employees who need to increase their competence to perform their functions; and general courses (English Language courses, computer courses, etc., as explained in Appendix 4. Nonetheless, social factors, such as favouritism, nepotism and 'Wasta', play a role and intervene considerably in this process. Such intervention might lead to selecting employees who do not need training to participate in training courses, or selecting employees for training in training courses and programmes which do not relate to these employees' jobs. The study findings

relating to the approach or the method in which the LGEC determines its employee's training represents a series of steps, starting with the Supervisor's observations of his employees (through daily supervision, follow-up their performance and annual reports), as well as the tasks that need further intervention to train some employees on undertaking these tasks. Identifying the employees who need training and the tasks where trained employees to undertake them are not available by all departments and administration identifies the organisational needs of training. The supervisor identifies trainees and the type of training they need, then he refers his findings to the Training Section Manager, who in turn refers it to Administration Manager. The Administration Manager then refers the training needs to the Managing Director for approval, followed by submission of the findings to the Training Department to prepare the training plan. This is a lengthy procedure which demonstrates the highly bureaucratic, hierarchical and centralised structure of the LGEC, as discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.9. This procedure takes four months to complete, between August and December of each year and implementation of the training plan starts early in the following year, as indicated in Section 5.2.1. This procedure seems to take place from a theoretical and administrative perspective, according to one of the managers responsible for training in the LGEC; actual implementation of these plans and programmes is delayed or some programmes are cancelled due to some of the difficulties facing the implementation process. The LGEC has been characterised as tall and mechanistic organisation with vertical specialisation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.9.

The findings in this area also indicated that employees have no say in the process of nomination as well as being unaware of the basis on which trainees are selected for the training programmes; thinking of this procedure as a sort routine procedure. Employees' non-contribution or non-participation in the nomination process has been

referred to in Libyan organisations almost two decades ago (Agnaia, 1996) and it appears that this is the norm in these organisations, as revealed in the case of the LGEC, as discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.2.1. Who Undertakes Training Needs Assessment), which may also points to the absence of representative participation (Brown, 2002), in which employees are represented by a small group of workers who really participate (Odendaal, 2009).

6.6   Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database) (Theme 3)

In this theme, responses of training managers (semi-structured interviews) and trained engineers (focus group members) relating to gathering data and information (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.4) and assessment of the training needs (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5) are discussed.

In order to assess the outcomes of training as well as to assess the type of training required in the future, needs have to be analysed by employing the methods of gathering needs assessment data (Sims, 2006).

As regards gathering data and information about employees' training needs, a mixed bag of responses was obtained. While some managers referred to the employees' personal files as the source for obtaining information about the employees, despite the fact that the available data or information on employees in these files relate to administrative transactions (promotions, vacations, etc.), others referred to the professional files (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.4), which include all information about the training courses attended by the employees during their career and the tasks implemented by them, though such files are not found in all departments. It appears that professional files are not kept by all of the LGEC departments, which indicates that the various departments are not coordinating their information concerning employees' training activities which might have negative implications for the training department to

identify various departmental training needs. This view is supported by the managers interviewed who indicated that the information available about their employees is not sufficient, and one manager stated that a new section affiliated to the Training Department is to be established, designated to contain an integrated database for all of the company employees. Engineers, on the other hand, referred to using a questionnaire, distributed to the employees for the purpose of gathering information about the employees' need for training. The literature (for example, Gilley and Eggland, 1989; Sims, 2006; Botha and Coetzee, 2007; Aamodt, 2013) indicates the questionnaire is one of the methods used in human resource development. It can be argued, based on the study findings, that other needs assessment methods reported in the literature (for example, Botha and Ceotzee, 2007; Aamodt, 2013, Sims, 2006; Tao et al., 2006, Gilley and Eggland, 1989; Chapter Two, Section 2.2.3) have not been reported by the managers and engineers.

As regards analysing training needs, the study findings indicated that there is neither strict analysis in relation to the employees or professions, nor to assessing the level of performance for their tasks prior to making any decisions regarding the actual identification of the training needs of the candidates to attend training courses. It can be argued that none of the performance analysis models have been adopted, given that performance analysis identifies areas of needs within the organisation (see Burner, 2010; Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1).

6.7   Factors Affecting the Process of Determining Training Needs (Theme 4)

As indicated in Chapter Five (Theme 4: Factors Affecting the Determination of Training Needs), the purpose of this theme is to explore the effect of some factors on the process of determining the training needs for individuals working in the LGEC. Three factors have been identified as important and influential in the process of

determining training needs, based mainly on the practices and traditions of the Libyan society, and include social factors (Section 5.2.6); personal economic factors (Section 5.2.7), and organisational and administrative factors (Section 5.2.8).

6.7.1   Social Factors

The study findings indicated that social relationships (kinship and friendship, mediation and favouritism) have an impact on the performance of managers participating in the study with regard to identifying the training needs of individuals. While admitting the existence of mediation and favouritism, they distanced themselves and deny adopting them personally. Nonetheless, employees (engineers participating in the focus groups) referred to its existence and practice. The literature (Agnaia, 1996; Weir, 2003; Hutchings and Weir, 2006; Al Suwaidi, 2008) reports the practice of favouritism in Libya. Reference to practising favouritism has been given earlier in Chapter Five (Section 5.6.2) as well as in the Libyan literature on training and development (Agnaia, 1996). The down side of favouritism is that it undermines accountability and impedes performance, as well as leading to de-motivating employees who are not selected for training (Blackburn, 2007). Showing favouritism is argued to be one of the issues that quickly destroy employees' trust by "*demotivating behaviour on the part of a manager*" (University of Cambridge, 2001, p. 204). The literature (Lawler III and Ledford (1981; cited in Cummings and Worley, 2009; Griffin and Moorehead, 2012; Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1) argues that employee involvement can develop employee motivation, particularly when they meet important individual needs and that employee intervention can increase employees' competences; hence, helping them better. The literature also shows that employee involvement in decision making at appropriate levels influence turnover decisions (Guthrie, 2001; Wilson et al., 1990; Lutchman, 2011; Lutchman et al., 2012).

6.7.2 Personal Economic Factors

As regards the economic factor, the study findings indicated that many employees want to be nominated for external training courses, especially those attended abroad, mainly due to the financial return they would obtain. Libyan employees sent to train abroad are paid good financial allowances, mainly in Sterling Pounds, Euros or Dollars, on top of their salaries in Libyan companies. These are hard currencies and have a high rate of exchange in Libyan currency (Dinar). Those trained abroad returning to Libya exchange such hard currency for large sums of Libyan Dinars, given the weak Libyan Dinar compared to these hard currencies, especially when not exchanged at Libyan banks. This situation is not the same for British nationals or other Western employees trained abroad. Hence, it can be said that for Libyan nationals training abroad means financial incentives rather than a motivator, as possibly the case for western trainees who perceive training abroad as a booster for their performance.

An interesting point was raised in Section 5.2.7 which indicates that Arabs and Muslims equate 'modernisation' with 'westernisation'. Such a link between 'modernisation' and 'westernisation' is said to have emerged in the Middle East, first in Turkey in the 1920s, when Turkey was established under Kamal Ataturk.

As a secular country, embarking on a programmes of "*deliberate 'modernisation, which sought to take Turkey into modernity*" (Jones, 2010, p. 130). That programme stipulated for much reform, such as "*ending gender segregation, adopting the Latin alphabet, prohibiting traditional dress and encouraging western style clothes, banning religious symbols from state institution*" (Ahmad, 1993). Jones (2010) maintains that this programme equated modernism with westernisation and secularism, which took a short period of time (within a decade), and was opposed by fundamentalist Muslims. Another example is that of Iran, when after World War Two the Shah of Iran embarked on a

programme of modernisation and westernisation, such as, ending gender segregation, banning the veil, giving women the vote, promoting education, and limiting the power of religion, mainly Islam (Daniel, 2001). Like in Turkey, Islamic fundamentalism opposed this programme and culminated in deposing the Shah in 1979, and establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran governed by the Clergy, led by Khomeini, and at present by Khaminie. In the Arab World, the Egyptian President, Jamal Abdul-Nasser promoted a deliberate programme of modernisation and westernisation (Cleveland, 2004). Abdul-Nasser perceived westernisation as synonymous with progress and economic development. Abdul-Nasser was opposed by groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

6.7.3 Organisational and Administrative Factors

In terms of the organisational and administrative factors, the managers admitted to the absence of accurate regulations or protocols which relate to the process of identifying the training needs, whereas the focus group members indicated that the regulations and rules governing the process of training are not applied by managers; instead, they are ignored for various reasons, including favouritism, kinship, tribal links, family relationships and social relationships. The triangle of Islam, tribe and family, is argued to play an important role in virtually all aspects including HRM (Al-Hamadi and Budhwar, 2006) (Chapter Three, Section 3.2. Libya: A General Country Profile). The Libyan society is built around these three principles of Islam, tribe and family. In a Libyan context, possibly in other Arab countries, such rules and regulations are not in the public domain, and only senior management are aware of their presence and contents. In this context, public sector organisations operate in secrecy and in isolation of outside community. It is hoped that under the new regime these organisations become more transparent and open to society, given that most of them will be privatised or operate under joint public-private ownership.

6.8   Making Decisions Related to Training (Theme 5)

Responses as to who is responsible for the decision to set training requirements, or whether trainees participate in one way or another in making such decisions, analysed in Chapter Five, Section 5.2.9, are discussed in this section.

In terms of who is responsible for making decisions to set training requirements, managers interviews indicated that such decisions were made by managers and supervisors.   Employee participation or involvement in these decisions or in determining their training needs can be said to be trivial. In fact, one of the managers interviewed argued that employees are involved in some cases, such as involvement in some general courses concerning training decisions and this is the predominant procedure in the company. However, the engineers (members of the focus groups) indicated that they are not involved in any decisions concerning their training. These responses clearly point to the absence of employee involvement in deciding what and which training they need to have. Literature relating to employee involvement or participation in determining employee's training needs is reviewed and discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1 (Who Undertakes Training Needs Assessment) and this chapter, Section 6.2 (Review of the Study Objectives, Objective Two).

6.9   Measures Employed to Explore the Extent of the Efficacy of Determining Training Needs

With regard to methods used to explore the extent of the efficacy of determining training needs, the managers reported different methods.   While some of them maintained that the method used is tests at the end of the course, others reported observation as the method adopted.   Some mangers referred to a questionnaire, or visiting trainees and attending some courses as the methods adopted. Some managers even stated that there is no real assessment of the efficacy of determining training needs,

or the procedures are not effective because they do not determine the exact needs of training, or the viability of these courses. It can be argued that there are no precisely laid down procedures for the managers to follow in order to explore the extent of the effectiveness of determining training needs. Training Department, as indicated in Chapter Three (Section 3.7. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company) has set up some objectives), is concerned with implementing the policies and plans endorsed by the company's top management to develop and train the company's workforce; nonetheless, this department has not reported such policies and plans; and to achieve its tasks, the Department undertakes certain measures relating to training and developing the Company workforce (LGEC, 2009). As for the trained engineers, they agreed with the managers in that the methods adopted include using a questionnaire, and holding tests at the end of the training programme.

The study findings (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.1. Types of Training Plans Adopted by the Company when Implementing its Training Programmes) showed that managers do not consider the company's objectives and goals when they develop training programmes and identify the individuals who need training and increasing efficiency, though some of the managers referred to the link between the company's goals and objectives and the training programmes. This might seem that not all of the managers are aware of this issue. Delaying or cancellation of certain programmes (Chapter Five, Section 5.2.1) seems to indicate that the training plans have failed to meet the company objectives; such objectives are addressed in Chapter Three, Section 3.7). The literature (Chapter Three, Section 3.7. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company) showed the importance of linking training programmes to the organisation objectives (Parry, 2000; Albrecht, 2006).

The findings also indicated that training is used to resolve some of the problems facing employees while performing their duties. However, the engineers (focus group members) argued that the managers are not interested in using training to resolve some problems or difficulties facing them; instead, engineers said that managers resort to using other methods to deal with problems by transferring employees to other sites, although there might be a chance for training. Acting as such means shifting the problem from one site to another, given that managers in Libyan public organisation cannot lay off their employees; the only alternative they have is to transfer the under-performing or problem employees to another job within the organisation, an action that blocks training these employees to achieve better performance and higher productivity.

6.10   Limitations of the Research

The study has been carried out in Libya involving one of the key public sector organisations, the LGEC. All studies have their limitations, which, as Thomas et al. (2011, p. 60) argue, are potential constraints or influences which either cannot be controlled or are due to the restrictions imposed by the researcher. The present study is not an exception to experiencing such limitations. One of the limitations is that the present study would have been more all-inclusive with comprehensive findings had the researcher included more than one electricity company in Libya, and also to have combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches, rather than involving a single organisation (the LGEC) and using only qualitative approach.

Engineers were the only employees who have been involved in the study. The study would have been more comprehensive that the study would have involved other groups of employees, for example, administrative staff. Nonetheless, due to time, effort and cost constraints, only trained engineers were selected to participate in the study. The researcher wanted to involve more engineers in his focus groups; however, some of the

selected engineers declined to participate either for being on duty at the time when their focus groups were interviewed, or withdrew from participating in the study.

Another limitation is that of using qualitative research approach to generate data and information relating to the present study. Despite the advantages of qualitative research, it has its limitations. Dantzker and Hunter (2012) argue that there are certain complaints about qualitative research, such as it takes very long to complete, and there might be problems concerning reliability given that replication may prove rather difficult and validity issue might surface from the inability to quantify the data. Authors, such as Cresswell (2008), Given (2008), and Maxfield and Babbie (2012), indicate that that qualitative research needs clearer goals and cannot be statistically analysed. Qualitative research is also criticised as not being scientific (Cresswell, 2008; Given, 2008).

A further limitation is that this study involved a single public utility company, the LGEC, which might not be typical of companies employing proper HRD practices. Organisations in Libya seem to not employing proper HRD practices, and data suggest that the Libyan context shows a relatively unsophisticated approach, a more scientific, mechanistic approach to training in general and training needs assessment in particular; hence, the chances of findings such an organisation are limited.

6.11   Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to the conceptual knowledge in this area in the field of international human resource development. Its consideration of the mainly Western, often private sector based research into how organisations establish their employees' requirements for learning, training and development is used to compare with research from Arab countries and finally drawing from the empirical data a view is formed of what models and processes form the basis of a public utility sector's practices in a

Libyan based centrally planned economy and relatively young, growing educational base but tribally based culture. In this system, there is a substantial state involvement in economic decision-making (International Monetary Fund, 2000). This Libyan centralised planned economy can be described as a 'command economy' in which the public sector dominates and controls production and the private sector is almost absent, or substantially weak that it does not play an important role in the country's economy. Command economy (planned economy) "*is an economic system in which government controls all or most of the factors of production decision*" (Paul, 2010, p. 16). In the case of the present study, the LGEC is a public sector organisation; hence, it is subjected to the state control in terms of organisation, budgeting, planning, and other issues; in which the Ministry of Industry and Energy intervenes in the LGEC's work. This in turn negatively affects training needs assessment, training decisions, training planning and other training and development processes and procedures. However, the change in the regime might bring about the privatisation of the public sector organisations, which may see the end of the state and ministerial intervention.

The study also contributes to our understanding of how TNA decisions are made in a Libyan public sector context as against how TNA decisions are made in a Western context. It highlights the presence of deep-rooted social problems, in the form of favouritism, kinship, social relationships and 'Wasta', which seems to have a negative impact on training needs assessment and nomination of employees for training, especially in terms of training abroad in which the selected employee will benefit financially while this employee does not need training on that training course.

The study's most important contribution to our understanding is that it adds to our conceptual and theoretical knowledge in the area of training needs assessment within the Libyan context due to the gap in our understanding in this area, by proposing a

conceptual framework for determining the efficacy of training needs determination, as illustrated in this section. The majority of studies concerning training needs in Libyan organisations have dealt with management training needs and have been undertaken a decade or two decades ago (Agnaia, 1990, 1996; Ghemi et al., 1984; Maihub, 1992).

6.11.1 A Framework for Identifying Training Needs Assessment within the Libyan Context

A framework for identifying of training needs assessment was presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.8, Figure 3.4). It consisted of five steps (stages). As indicated in Chapter Three, the first framework is based on the Western literature models (mainly on Olivas's, 2007 model and Vaughn's, 2005, model). However, based on the findings of this study, analysed and discussed in Chapter Five and in this chapter, it was found that there are certain factors which affect the whole process of the determination of training needs, and nomination of trainees, including social factors, personal economic factors, and organisational factors. Accordingly, these three factors are included in the proposed framework as factors affecting the five steps (stages) of the original framework, indicated in Figure 3.4. The reason for adopting this framework in its new form is that it consists of the key elements of relevance to the present study. The proposed framework can be applied by the LGEC to facilitate identifying the procedures of determining its employee's training needs.

This framework will provide the organisation within the Libyan context with a potential opportunity to improve the Company's procedures for the selection and nomination of employees to attend formal training courses. This framework might also help avoiding 'Wasta' and 'favouritism', two social factors which affect training and development of the company workforce, while selecting employees for training programmes, and helps the management to adopt a 'softer' approach to HRD, and to involve employees'

indirect participation in training decision making. The framework is designed and formulated having in mind the social, personal economic, and organisational factors, that have their influence in the Libyan society at large, as well as in public sector companies, whereby officials of the Ministry of Industry and Energy Ministry officials and the Company senior management intervene, directly or indirectly, in the process and procedures of training needs assessment, employee training and development, and nomination of candidate employees for attending training programmes and courses. In other words, these processes and procedures are undertaken in a highly centralised and command economy system, in which decisions are made at the highest levels, leaving the implementation of decisions to the lower tiers of management, who have become executor of decisions made at the top, instead of empowering them with making their own decisions without the intervention of top management. This framework has been designed in the context of ministerial and senior management context, in which these officials intervene in the form of 'Wasta', favouritism, social relationships, and nepotism. However, there is the tendency under the new regime to liberalise the economy in Libya, and many companies in the oil sector, including the LGEC, will be privatised, if not already been privatised. Such privatisation might lead to the company's autonomy and in an environment free from ministry's intervention and many of the tasks used to be undertaken, or intervened with, by some ministry officials and company senior management.

The proposed framework in its new design, also consists of five steps (stages), which are all affected by social, personal; economic and organisational factors, as illustrated in Figure 6.1. These stages are explained in some details below.

Stage One: Establishment of Training Framework (Training Plans for Company and Employees, Budget, Goals and Objectives of Training, Type of Training, Priority of undertaking TN Assessment by management)

This stage represents the step of establishing training framework, such as setting the training plan, procedures and approaches used by the company in preparing and implementing training plans, allocating financial resources for training, recommending training plans and their aims and objectives, including raising employee proficiency or qualifying or induction of new employees. In other words, establishing a framework for training, and setting the aim of such training; for example, preparing the annual plan of training. This framework is to be set by the managers of Training Department in liaising with the Company's senior management and also in coordination with the Company's Departments. It is indicated earlier in this chapter that large Libyan organisations might not perceive undertaking training needs assessment as a priority assessment is undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on the superior's observations of his/her employees. The first stage of the proposed framework in Chapter Three (Figure 3.4) is amended to include prioritisation of undertaking training needs assessment by the company management and to perceive it as one of the initial stages in establishing the framework.
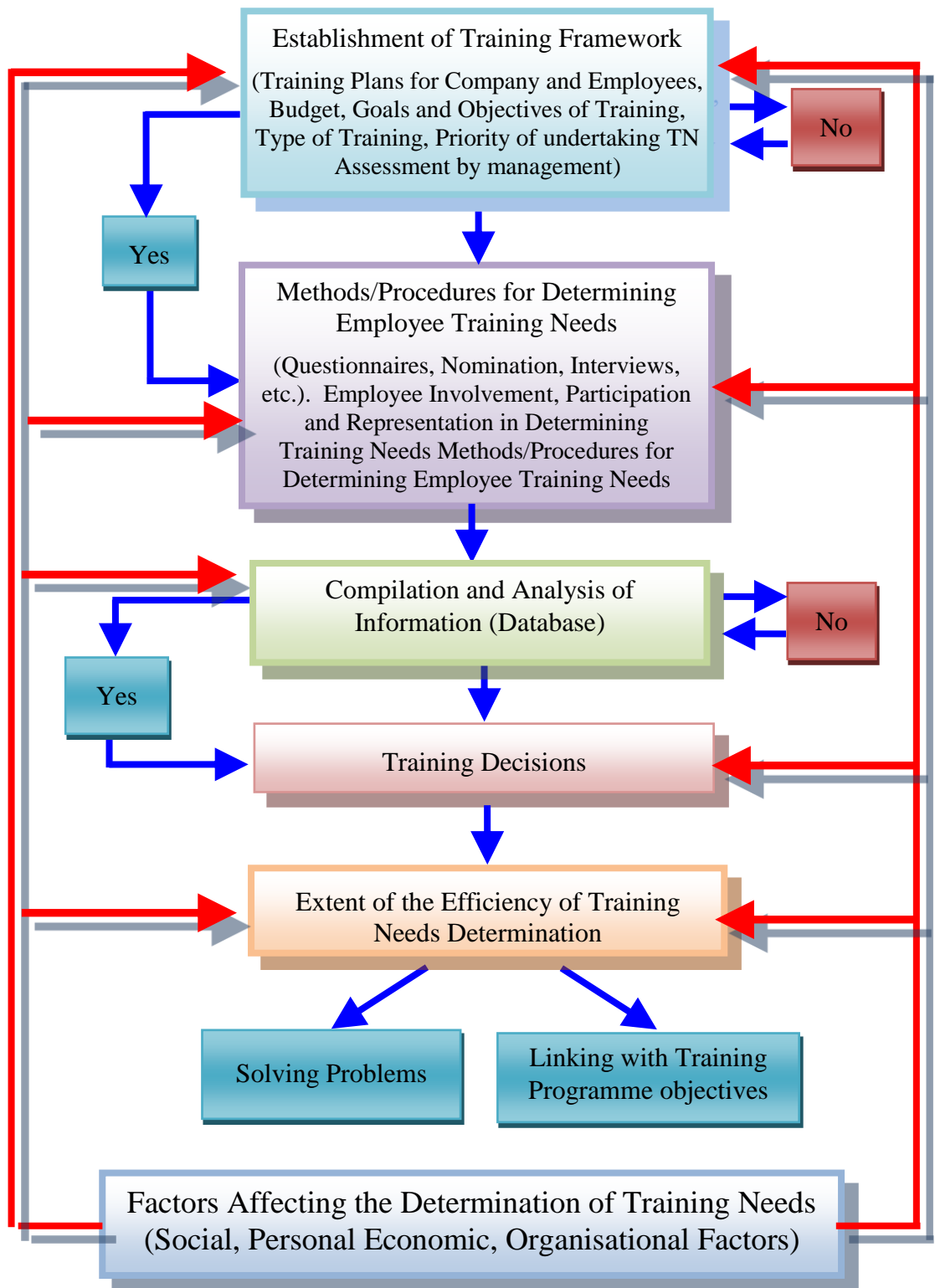
Figure 6.1. A framework for determining the efficiency of training needs determination.
(Proposed by the researcher, based on the findings throughout the present study).

In the event that such training framework has been undertaken [Yes], then Stage Two is implemented. If such a framework does not exist [No], then the company has to establish this framework before moving to the second stage. Given the centralised planning by the concerned ministries, the plan is to be set by the Company in accordance with the ministerial guidelines and directives, rather than the ministry influencing or intervening in this process. A training plan is important given that it transfers the training needs and timetables against the company needs at individual employee, tasks and organisational levels, and since the needs of a company and its employees continuously change, the company's needs and subsequent training plan are subject to continual change (Stephenson and Penn, 2005). It is hoped that under the new regime and the subsequent privatisation of the public sector organisations, the influence of the ministries will be minimised, if not at all wavered. However, social factors referred to above are deeply-rooted in the Libyan society, and eliminating them is something that is not feasible in the foreseeable future. For an employee, a training plan is a list of his/her training needs, arranged by the date when they are to be convened (Stephenson and Penn, 2005). The training plans should also indicate the type of training, be it on-the-job or off-the-job training, or both.

Stage Two: Methods/Procedures for Determining Employee Training Needs (Questionnaires, Nomination, Interviews, Observation, etc.) (Employee Involvement, Participation and Representation in Determining Training Needs)

This stage represents the steps through which methods and procedures adopted by the company in determining employees who need training are identified. It also identifies the procedures and steps undertaken when nominating employees for training, as well as whether there is a specific system through which employees are nominated for training. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two (Section 2.2.3) clearly points to a number of procedures and methods for determining employees' training needs. Such methods

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include questionnaires (surveys), observation, interviews, performance appraisal data, skill and knowledge tests, and critical incidents (Botha and Coetzee, 2007 and Aamodt, 2013), and tests, group problem analyses, records and report studies, and job analysis and performance reviews (Gilley and Eggland, 1989). In a Libyan context, it can be argued that some of the methods above can be employed, including questionnaires, observations, annual personal reports, and performance reviews. These methods provide personal information about the candidates and do not put them in a face-to-face encounters with their superiors; given the fact that Libyan people, like many Arab people, do not prefer face-to-face interviews, as they might be reluctant to express their views openly. Face-to-face interviews means the lack of anonymity in the Libyan cultural context, as is also true for any other Arab cultural context, and represents in this context an issue, especially at workplace. In this context, Arab people refrain from engaging in face-to-face interviews; given that such interviews might be influenced by the interviewee, in the case of the present study is the manager or the superior of the interviewed employee. Interviewees might not express their views completely; being unable to disagree with something related to their superior, because of fear of any future ramification or consequences. It is also at this stage that the Company Management can involve employees, in one way or another, most probably through indirect involvement, to participate in determining their training needs. This might be rather impossible or not at all feasible in the near future, but it is hoped that this might be realised in the future, especially if the company is privatised and freed from direct state and ministerial control. Furthermore, the Management needs to encourage employee representation, at least indirectly by involving employees' representative to take part in preparing training plan. In other words, the training plan in terms of this framework differs from the already existing plans empowering lower management tiers, such as line managers, departmental managers, training department to make training decisions and involving

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employees, in terms of their participation and indirect representation.

Stage Three: Compilation and Analysis of Information (Database)

This stage indicates whether the company has a database system for compiling and analysing data and information that helps it identify employees who need training; hence, the decision for nominations to training courses is based on administrative and technical information through which these employees are identified and nominated for training courses, rather than on mangers' and supervisors' opinions. If such a database system is available [Yes], then Stage three is implemented. If such system does not exist [No], then the company has to establish this system before moving to Stage Four.

Stage Four: Training Decisions

This stage concerns making training decisions; that is, how training decisions relating to the nomination of individual employees to attend training courses, and the extent of employees' participation in training decisions, nomination for training courses), or whether the training decision is made by the managers and supervisors, without any participation by the trainees themselves. Here, there should be instituted some kind of employees' participation in decision making process.

Stage Five: Extent of the Efficacy of Training Needs Determination

This final stage is undertaken in order to identify the extent of the Efficacy of training needs determination by means of certain procedures, such as sitting a written test, filling in questionnaires, and supervisors' reports. It is also implemented to know whether or not there is a link between training courses and the objectives of training programmes, and whether or not training programmes have achieved their objectives. This is realised through nomination of employees who actually need training. The LGEC management and all staff members concerned with planning training programmes need to invest time

and effort in setting up training objectives, due to the apparent benefits of this investment according to the relevant literature (Buckley and Caple, 2009) (See Chapter Three, Section 3.7. Training Department at the Libyan General Electricity Company). This stage will also identify whether or not training courses have resulted in resolving certain problems; in other words, whether or not training has been effective in resolving some of the difficulties encountered by the company. To sum up, this stage identifies whether the process of employee training needs determination is effective by means of its assessment and identifying the extent of its applicability.

Factors Affecting the Determination of Training Needs

The proposed framework (Figure 6.1) clearly shows that the five stages, addressed above, are influenced by three factors which have their impact, in the Libyan cultural context, in relation to determining training needs, affecting nomination decisions, including social factors, such as favouritism and 'Wasta', and personal economic factors, such as the extent of financial benefits from the training courses irrespective of actual need for training. There are also organisational factors, including rules and regulations that organise the process of nomination, and whether or not they are implemented, as well as the intervention by officials of the Ministry of Industry and Energy, and also by senior management. Involving employees and encouraging their participation and representation in setting up training plans helps nominating the right employee for the right training programme and at least helps minimise intervention in nomination process through 'Wasta' and other inappropriate procedures of nominating employees for training programmes. This also helps carrying out regulations and rules appropriately. Managers interviewed often referred to the existence and practice of favouritism in the selection of employees for training; though they deny its existence

(see Chapter Five, Sections 5.2.1, 5.2.6, and 5.2.7). The proposed framework might hopefully evade such negative aspects of nomination; though this might take some time to eradicate such negative social practices.

Some of the elements in Stewart's (2003) model of HRD (Chapter Two, Section 2.3. Human Resource Development, Figure 2.4) link to the LGEC's training needs assessment, including training and learning of employees to expand their knowledge and obtain further skills relating to their job, as well as increasing their competence in performing their tasks. However, and as indicated above, there are other factors that intervene in training at the LGEC, such as favouritism. Favouritism leads to selecting employees who do not need training, or nominating them to attend courses not related to their jobs, which do not help such candidates to improve their performance at work. Culture is another important issue in this regard, given the impact of the organisational as well as national culture on training and development of employees within a Libyan context. (Chapter Two, Section 2.4). Wedman (2010) argues that a number of factors have direct impact needs assessment and improvement endeavour. He maintains that one of the success factors which have direct impact on performance is organisational culture, indicating that organisational culture has a paramount impact on performance, and has to be taken into consideration when collecting and explaining needs assessment data, as well as planning and implementing performance improvement intervention.

6.12   Main Conclusions

Based on the study findings, analysed and discussed in Chapter Five, the following can be concluded:

The study reveals the procedures adopted by the LGEC in relation to training needs assessment are ambiguous and not precise as well as they are not based on established principles; the majority of nomination for training depends on the managers' and

supervisors' views.

Favouritism, 'Wasta', and social relations seem to play a major role in nominating candidate to attend training course, especially training courses and programmes abroad. The participation of employees and trainees in training decisions concerning the identification of employees' training needs is only negligible, given that training decisions and nominations are taken by managers and supervisors. Despite the fact that the general impact of representative participation on employed workforce appears to be minimal (Cotton, 1993; Odendaal, 2009), it is non-existent in the Libyan context. Hence, it can be argued that this absence of representative participation can be regarded as one of the Libyan HRD components and can be perceived as one of the differing social factors from the Western HRD theory. This is highlighted in the proposed framework, as indicated above in Figure 6.1

There is only one procedure adopted by the company to evaluate the extent of the benefit from courses, that is, reliance on written tests and questionnaires distributed at the end of each course.

There is a difference in opinion which might point to the centralised, bureaucratic nature of the investigated company, in relation to decision-making concerning all aspects of the company tasks and work which are made by the top management, whereas junior managers and employees have no say in these decisions; their role is to implement such decisions. It also points to a breakdown or lack of communication between the management and the employees. Furthermore, as maintained earlier, it indicates that trainees are not aware of any mechanisms that led to their nomination and selection for training programmes. Agnaia (1996, p. 321), in his study concerning management training development (MTD) indicated that "*training decisions were usually made by managers without any discussion or other communication with the individual employee*

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who was to be trained." This can still be applied to the present study, which seems to point to management's opposition to involving employees possibly due to manager's prerogative that managers think of such employee involvement as unnecessary intervention in their duties, position and status.

While some managers indicated that the nomination process is carried out in conformity with specific and administrative procedures in order to prove their keenness and integrity in performing their jobs, some others admitted that the procedures for determining training needs do not meet the trainees' training needs and that such procedures need to be developed; which agree with the trainees' (focus group participants) views.

6.13   Implications of the Research

The success of training programmes and courses provided by the LGEC requires appropriate analysis and assessment of employees' training needs and also appropriate evaluation of previous training programmes and courses to identify the extent of their success in promoting and updating employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Accordingly, the following is asserted:

- LGEC management is to support its employee training, with the main focus is on in job specific skills and to provide authentic accessibility to training to all employees who actually need training in the absence of favouritism and 'Wasta'.

- Timing and adequate duration of training programmes offered is an important factor in leading to successful training outcomes.

- The training plan has to include methods to determine existing skill levels, identify training gaps and training methods, and training should be provided to all occupations.

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- LGEC management should make available all documents relating to training and development to all employees so that they can read them and be aware of the training opportunities offered by the company.

- The company needs to pay attention to the Training Department and staffing them with the qualified human resources to manage them due to the importance of training and qualifications in any organisation.

- The company's different departments need to focus their attention on the importance of determining training needs prior to starting any training programme.

- In order to ensure appropriate planning of training activities, attention should be paid to preparing training plans and all parties in the company need to participate in preparing the plan, and such plans must prepared in accordance with the companies aims, objectives and policies.

- To secure actual determination of training needs, it is imperative to pay attention to the process of training needs assessment for all elements: individuals, professions and organisation. It is recommended that this analysis is undertaken by qualified experts in this field.

- It is necessary to establish an information and data base which should include all the necessary information and data that can facilitate training decision making appropriately given the significance of this information in making sound decisions.

- Paying attention to financial and non-financial training incentives to encourage individuals to be concerned with training and such incentives should be linked to the individual performance after attending any training programme or course also linked to any positive change in the individual's performance.

- Allocating comprehensible and specific budgets to training and an annual timetable should be planned to spend the budget of the company's training programmes. The

return from this budget should be taken into consideration through actual assessment illustrating the return from the expenditure on training programmes.

- Focusing on contesting all aspects of favouritism and mediation which affect the process of nominating individuals to training through making the supervisors and managers aware of the necessity to avoid these aspects and that the process of nomination must be linked to the employees' actual training needs.

- It is necessary to formulate procedures and regulations for the process of nomination and descriptions of all jobs and professions, and the requirements of those occupying these jobs and professions.

- Establishing an unambiguous mechanism and description of the procedures through which training decisions are made, and also ensuring that all parties in the training process participate, as well as making training decisions is not only in the hands of managers and supervisors.

- It is imperative to formulate definite objectives for the training programmes that are capable of measurement and evaluation to make sure of the effectiveness of training needs.

- The company's policies and objective must be obvious and when formulating a training plan this plan should take into consideration the achievement of the company's policies and objectives.

- The researcher believes that in the case of LECG, more than one technique needs to be employed to provide trained employees with the required skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them implement what they learned from their training after returning to their jobs, given that all of the techniques described above are off-the-job training methods.

- The LGEC is changing in the light of the market deregulation in Libya, and new equipment are expected to be purchased; hence, standards and procedures are expected and the need for new skills will occur. With regard to changes in the workforce pool, organisations must plan for adjustment as workforce pool changes (Brown, 2002). In relation to the LGEC, such changes are anticipated in terms of employing new native staff and women participation in the job market in new, non-traditional job; for example, in engineering and technical disciplines. Laws and regulations may dictate training needs (Brown, 2002) and in the case of the LGEC, deregulation laws and the subsequent changes in the company's standards and procedures, new training needs will arise.

- It is believed that the LGEC should perform training needs assessment thoroughly in order to identify their employees' training needs that are in line with the company's goals, objectives, available resources, and environment. Failing to do so, training will be waste of time and money, and will not contribute to developing the company employees to perform their tasks in a better way.

- LGEC needs to set out its organisational, departmental, units and individual employees in line with its mission and training needs regulations and rules. Brown (2002), however, indicates that there are four stages of how to conduct a needs analysis, including the following: gathering data to identify needs, determining what needs can be met by training and development, proposing solutions, and identifying the next step.

- It is also recommended that further research is to be carried out involving both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and involving more employees, both those who have received training and those who have not. Training programme and course contents are also to be analysed and critically discussed to

reveal the effectiveness of training in promoting employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Finally, the framework described above is recommended to be applied by the LGEC management in order to measure the extent of the efficacy of determining training needs of the Company's employees.

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Appendix 1.

LGEC Organisational Structure and Further Information and Statistics Relating to Training Courses Implemented by the LGEC

Figure 1.1.   The organisational structure chart of the LGEC
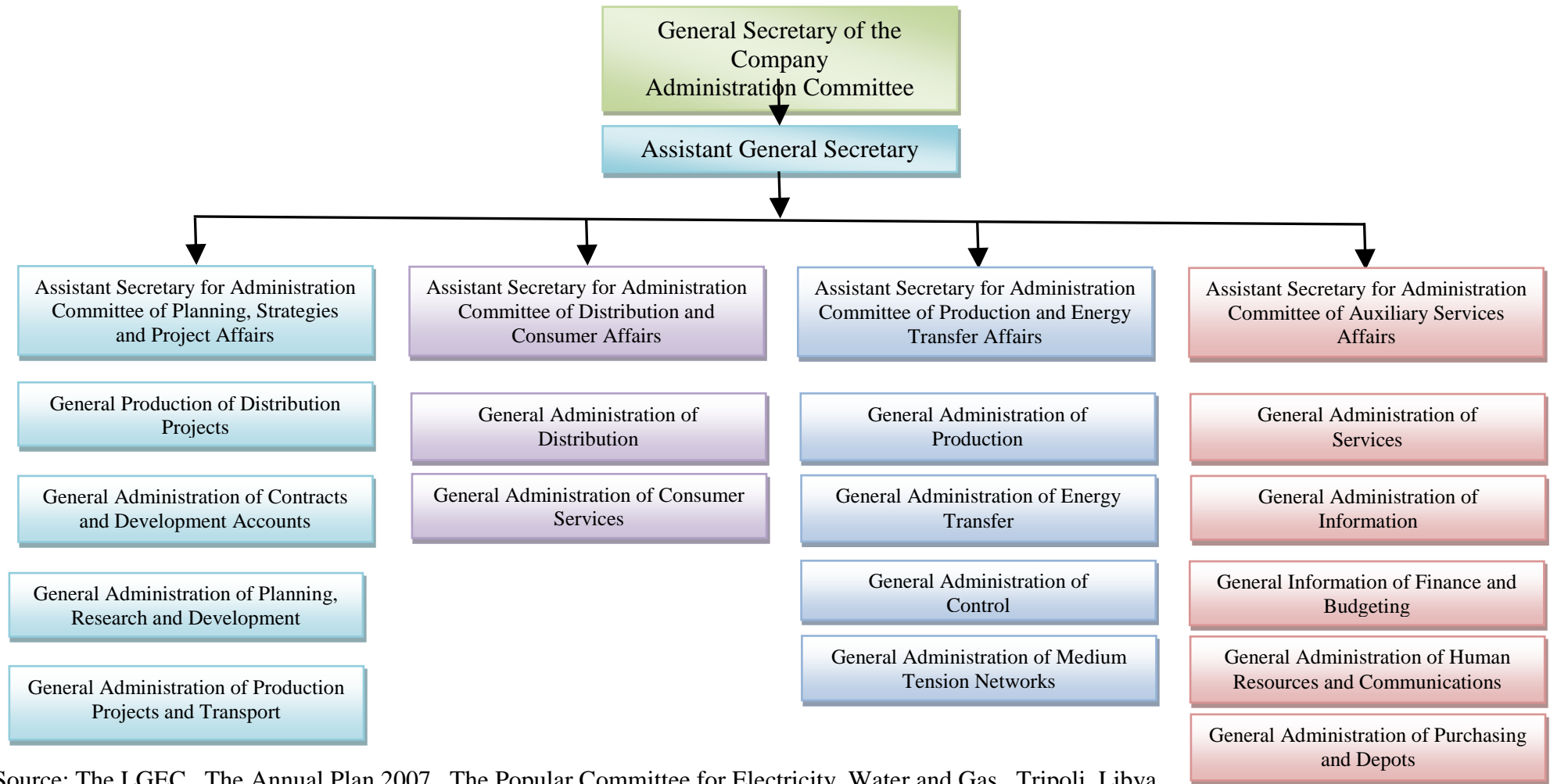
Source: The LGEC. The Annual Plan 2007. The Popular Committee for Electricity, Water and Gas. Tripoli, Libya.

Table 1.1. Number of employees, according to profession, by the end of 2009

	Number of Employees	Percentage of Total
Engineers	6,425	17.4
Technicians	18,599	50.3
Accountants	3,842	10.4
Administrators	4,509	12.2
Auxiliary Employees	3,637	9.8
Total	37,012	100.0

Source: LGEC Annual Report 2010, p. 34. Percentages calculated by the researcher.

Table 1.2. A summary of training courses implemented during October 2008

Type of Course	Targeted Personnel					Total
	Engineers	Technicians	Engineers+ Technicians	IT	Various Groups	
Raising efficiency courses implemented within the company's training centres	123	256	53	185	-	617
Raising efficiency courses implemented outside the company's training centres	28	-	-	52	71	151
Initiation courses (new recruitments) implemented within the company's training centres	163	32	-	-	-	195
Initiation courses (new recruitments) implemented outside the company's training centres	280	-	-	-	-	280
Courses in English Language	-	-	-	-	343	343
Courses implemented by international corporations and companies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Courses implemented outside Libya (Projects)	20	-	-	-	-	20
On-Site training	18	-	-	-	-	18
Grand Total	**632**	**288**	**53**	**237**	**414**	**1,624**

Source: Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC), General Administration of Human Resources 2008/10.

Table 1.3. Summary of Training Plan

Place	Type of Training	Implemented in 2007	Targeted for 2009
Internal	Preparation	1,126	2,158
	Raising internal efficiency	5,325	6,065
	English Language	1,352	979
	Using Computers	1,694	1,660
	Operating development systems	632	1,860
	Management training	147	250
Abroad	Project training abroad	243	295
	Raising efficiency abroad (Specialised Courses)	-	68
	Raising Efficiency abroad	13	365
Grand Total		**10,532**	**13,700**

Source: Libyan General Electricity Company (LGEC), General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2009.

Table 1.4.   Number of trainees and programmes implemented during 2004

Training Area	No. of Trainees		Total
	Local	External	
English Language	1,888	2	1,890
Information Technology	924	41	965
Specialised (Production, Transport, Distribution)	2,814	292	3,106
Administration and Finance	411	12	423
Total	**6,037**	**347**	**6,384**

(Source: LGEC Annual Report 2004, p. 24).

Table 1.5.   Number of Trainees, type of training and training areas in 2007

Training Area	No. of Trainees		Total
	Local	External	
Induction and Preparation Courses	1,173	-	1,173
Raising Efficiency in the Technical Field	5,741	256	5,997
Raising Efficiency in the Administrative Field	232	-	232
Raising Efficiency in the Financial Field	46	-	46
Raising Efficiency in the Information Technology Field	2,468	-	2,468
Raising Efficiency in the Language Field	1,349	-	1,349
Total	**11,009**	**256**	**11,265**

(Source: LGEC Annual Report, 2007, p. 17).

Table 1.6.   A Summary of Engineers' Raising Competency Training Courses implemented inside the Company, 2008.

	Course Title	No. of Participants	Place of Implementation	Date of Implementation	Duration	Administration Benefited
1	Operators of Gas Sub-Stations	4	Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi Station Training Centre	11/10/2008	14 Weeks	General Administration of Production
2	Pump Maintenance	2	Al-Khums Station Training Centre	11/10/2008	2 Weeks	General Administration of Production
3	Station Chemistry	5	Al-Khums Station Training Centre	11/10/2008	2 Weeks	General Administration of Production
4	Operators of Gas Stations Units	6	Al-Khums Station Training Centre	11/10/2008	52 Weeks	General Administration of Production
5	Maintenance and Testing of Distribution Cables	11	Surman Training Centre	11/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
6	Maintenance of Power Lines	9	Maslata Training Centre	11/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
7	Tension Management Guide	12	Maslata Training Centre	11/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
8	Geographic Information System (GIS)	10	Headquarter of Benghazi Plain Distribution	11/10/2008	3 Weeks	General Administration of Distribution

Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008.

Table 1.6. (continued)

	Course Title	No. of Participants	Place of Implementation	Date of Implementation	Duration	Administration Benefited
9	Guide for Inspection and Maintenance of Distribution Networks	13	Mislata Training Centre	18/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
10	Test Equipment Type OMICRON	7	Al-Sabri Training Centre	19/10/2008	3 Weeks	General Administration of Medium Voltage Networks
11	Management of Operation Divisions	11	Al-Sabri Training Centre	19/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
12	Preparation and Analysis of Stoppage Reports	12	Al-Sabri Training Centre	19/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
13	Authorisations	9	Mislata Training Centre	20/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Power Transfer
14	Preparation and Analysis of Stoppage Reports	12	Mislata Training Centre	25/10/2008	1 Week	General Administration of Distribution
Total		**123**				

Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008.

Table 1.7.   A Summary of Training Courses of Raising Competency in English Language Implemented Inside the Company

	Course Title	No. of Participants	Place of Implementation	Date of Implementation	Duration	Administration Benefited
1	Elementary	36	Abu Issa Bell	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
2	Pre-Intermediate	13	Abu Issa Bell	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
3	Intermediate	12	Al-Wusta Bell	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
4	Intermediate	23	Al-Sabri Training Centre	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
5	Pre-Intermediate	15	Darna Training Centre	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	Various Administrations
6	Pre-Intermediate	11	Tubruq Training Centre	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
7	Elementary	16	Darna Training Centre	11/10/2008	10 Weeks	
8	Elementary	16	Al-Khums Electricity Station	19/10/2008	10 Weeks	
9	Pre-Intermediate	10	Al-Khums Electricity Station	19/10/2008	10 Weeks	
Total		**152**				

Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008.

Table 1.8   A summary of raising competence training courses (**Auxiliary Equipment**) implemented by international agencies and organizations inside the Company

Number of Participants	Place of Implementation	Date of Implementation	Implementing Agency	Duration	Administration Benefited
18	Bi'ar Al-Ista Milad	25/10/2008	Cobra Enabensa Company	One week per group	General Administration of Power Transfer + Control

Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008.

Table 1.9.   A summary of raising competence training courses implemented outside the Company

Course Title	Number of Participants	Place of Implementation	Date of Implementation	Duration	Administration Benefited
Geographic Information System (GIS)	11	Higher Institute of Computer Technology	12/10/2008	3 Weeks	Various Company Administrations
Database Systems (Automatic Control)	17	Higher Institute of Computer Technology	26/12/2008	9 Weeks	General Administration of Production
Total	28				

Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008.

Appendix 2
Definitions of human resource development found in the literature

Harbison and Myers (1964)	HRD is the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills, and the capacities of all the people in a society. In economic and terms, it could be described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In political terms, human resource development prepares people for adult participation in political processes, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, the development of human resources helps people to lead fuller and richer lives, less bound by tradition. In short, the processes of human resource development unlock the door to modernisation
Nadler (1970)	HRD is a series of organised activities conducted within a specific time and designed to produce behavioural change.
Craig (1976)	HRD focuses on the central goal of developing human potential in every aspect of life-long learning.
Chalofsky and Lincoln (1983)	The discipline of HRD is the study of how individuals and groups in Lincoln (1983) organisations change through learning.
Smith (1988)	HRD consists of programmes and activities, direct and indirect, instructional and/or individual that possibly affect the development of the individual and the productivity and profit of the organisation.
Gilley and Eggland (1989)	HRD is organised learning activities arranged within an organisation to improve performance and/or personal growth for the purpose of improving the job, the individual and/or the organisation.
McLagan (1989)	HRD is the integrated use of training and development, career development and organisational development to improve individual and organisational effectiveness.
Bergenhenegouwen (1990)	HRD can be described as training members of an organisation in such a way that they have the knowledge and skills needed within the context of the (changing) objectives of the organisation.
Garavan (1991)	HRD is the strategic management of training, development and management/professional education intervention, so as to achieve the objectives of the organisation while at the same time ensuring that the full utilisation of the knowledge in detail and skills of the individual employees.

Chalofsky (1992)	HRD is the study and practice of increasing the learning capacity of individuals, groups, collectives and organisations through the development and application of learning-based interventions of the purpose of optimising human and organisational growth and effectiveness.
ITD (1992)	HRD is the process whereby people develop their full potential in life and work.
Megginson et al. (1993)	HRD is an integrated and holistic approach to changing work-related behaviour using a range of learning techniques.
Horwitz et al. (1996)	HRD is concerned with the processes whereby the citizens of a nation acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to perform both specific occupational tasks and other social, cultural, intellectual and political roles in a society.
Stead and Lee (1996)	HRD is a holistic societal process of learning drawing upon a range of disciplines.
Stewart and McGoldrick (1996)	HRD encompasses activities and processes, which are intended to have impact on organisational and individual learning. It assumes that organisations can be constructively conceived of as learning entities and that the learning processes of both organisations and individuals are capable of influence and direction through deliberate and planned interventions.
Watkins and Marsick (1997)	HRD is the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long-term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group and organisational levels. As such, it includes – but is not limited to – training, career development and organisational development.
Armstrong (1999)	HRD is concerned with the provision of learning, development and training opportunities in order to improve individual, team and organisational performance. It is essentially a business-led approach to developing people with a strategic framework.
Gourlay (2000)	HRD focuses on theory and practice related to training, development and learning within organisations, both for individual and in the context of business strategy and organisational competence formation.
McCracken and Wallace (2000)	HRD is the creation of a learning culture, within which a range of training, development and learning strategies both respond to corporate strategy and also help to shape and influence it.

McLean and McLean (2001)	HRD is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organisational community, nation, or ultimately, the whole of humanity.
Nyhan (2002)	HRD refers to educational training and development activities related to working life. It relates to development and learning activities for those who are at work and have completed their basic professional or vocational education and training.
ESC Toulouse (2002)	HRD encompasses adult learning at the workplace, training and (2002) development, organisational development and change, organisational learning, knowledge management, management development, coaching, performance improvement, competence development and strategic human resource development. Instead of being a sub-discipline of HRD, HRD is becoming a 'multi-disciplinary' or 'trans-disciplinary' field in its own right.
Vince (2003)	HRD should be conceptualised as an approach that supports the impact that people can have on organising. The focus of HRD is on action, on developing the capacity to act, on generating credibility through action and on influencing and working with others in situations loaded with emotion and politics. The HRD function should be about discovering how an organisation has managed to become set in its ways, how to organise opportunities for change that can challenge a tendency to resist change and how to imagine and deliver processes that can underpin organisational development and transformation.
Slotte et al. (2004)	HRD covers functions related primarily to training, career development, organisational development and research and development in addition to other organisational HR functions where these are intended to foster learning capacity at all levels of the organisation, to integrate learning culture into its overall business strategy and to promote the organisation's efforts to achieve high quality performance.

Source: Adopted by McGuire (2011, pp. 4-5) from Weinberger (1998).

Appendix 3.

Semi-Structured Interview

The researcher first introduced himself to the interviewees and explained the purpose of the interview.

The purpose of this interview is to identify the method, procedure and procedures adopted by the company concerning the determination of its training needs. We confirm that the purpose of this interview is to gather data and information for academic research purposes and would not be used for any other purposes. The confidentiality and credibility of this interview shall be maintained. What we aspire to is that you would cooperate with us to undertake this interview and answering its questions. We also hope that you will give us your consent to tape record the interview so as to guarantee that none of the information will be lost, and also to save time. Interviewees agreed and offered their consent to tape record the interview.

Q.1   I would like you to explain the procedures and methods adopted when the company determines its needs of training?

A.1   What is adopted by the company's Training Administration is that the company prepares an annual training plan. For example, we have currently started to prepare the 2010 Annual Plan. The procedure adopted is to ask the company's different administrations, 13 in total, to provide us with the training needs of each department, that is, the number of personnel who need training and also the type of the training required. Training needs determination is undertaken by the administration, which is responsible for this. After receiving these lists from all administrations, the training Administration organise them and prepare the courses needed and the executive plans suitable for these courses. Then, they are referred to the General Director to sanction and implement them.

Q.2   Does this apply to all courses?

A.2   What I mentioned above concerns raising company's staff competency courses, especially when a new technology is introduced or when some stations are expanded.

Q.3   What about induction courses?

A.3   Induction courses are courses offered to new staff for whom courses are held when they are recruited by the company.

Q.4   Does this mean that your role concerns supervision and preparation for courses?

A.4   Yes, it is so at present, but in the future we strive to determine needs by the Training

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Administration after completing a database system which the company is developing now, through which it is possible to obtain information about the candidates for training courses and identify the extent of their need for training.

Q.5. Are there any investigations for individuals, professions or organisation prior to determining training needs?

A.5. We do not undertake such measure and there is no precise description or identification of the professions within the company to identify the skills required to perform tasks and the organisation's needs, or the individual needs and knowledge required.

Q.6 Do you think the problem rests here?

A.6 Yes, I think so, so that identification is accomplished according to scientific, tried and known theories.

Q.7 In you capacity as the Director of Directorate of the Planning and Performance Evaluation, how do you formulate training plans?

A.7 The plan, as I mentioned earlier, depends on the Directorates' needs of training in terms of the specialisation and the number required, whether they are raising competency courses or induction courses.

Q.8 I mean, what are the procedures that should be taken into consideration when formulating training plans?

A.8 When the list of the nominated personnel for training we formulate the training programmes in an annual plan distributed throughout the year with regards to preparing the content, quality and dates of the courses.

Q.9 Do you have in mind the cost and returns of the plans when formulating them?

A.9 There is no such thinking, some of the courses I believe we spend much on them without any return. This is attributed, in my own opinion, to determining and nominating trainees who do not need training.

Q.10. Is there a budget allocated to training, and it is recommended?

A.10 There is no such measure adopted by the Training Administration, rather the top management is responsible for preparing the budget.

Q.11 Is there is clause in the company's budget relating to training?

A.11 There is, but not precisely given that it is there but not implemented accurately.

Q.12 Are plans divided on a monthly basis?

A12. Yes, but there are some contingency training that takes places during the year in accordance with the directives from the top management.

Q.13. Does a trainee contribute to the training decision when need is determined?

A.13. No, in fact sometimes the trainee only knows of the training or nomination a short time before training. However, trainees sometimes ask for a training course, but I do not know for sure whether they need such courses or ask for them for matters not relating to their training needs.

Q.14. Is there any fixed system or a defined mechanism for nominating trainees?

A.14 The mechanism of training depends on the administration asking to train its staff; it is the body responsible for nominating individuals and this nomination comes through immediate superior and his observations, and the individual who needs training is consequently identifies. Some social factors may intervene in the nomination process.

Q.15 Does the General Director of the company or any director in the top management directorates intervene in the process of nominating individuals for training?

A.15 This intervention is likely to happen, according to top management future vision.

Q.16 But for such a vision, training directorate should know about when designing the plan?

A.16 Yes, it must. Furthermore, the company's goals and their future plans should be clear so that they can be implemented.

Q.17 What is the method or procedure for the collection of information about the company's personnel?

A.17 Through the company's system; however, this system does not contain all the information concerning training, and in most cases it depends on the individual's personal file. A new system is currently under development so as to become more comprehensive and contains precisely all information, and this will contribute to identify the training portfolio of each individual and the extent of his need of training.

Q.18   From your own perspective, are there any factors that influence the determination of

needs at the company, for example, social, cultural or economic factors?

A.18   I think that the issue of awareness in important for individuals whereby employees should

provide all information correctly and transparently to help identify the extent of their training

needs. Providing wrong information breeds inaccurate results, and this is what is reflected on the

process of determining needs. Accordingly, the individual's culture, economic status and also

social factor are important factors in determining needs since that the process of determination is

affected by these factors. There is also issue of favouritism by some managers when there is a

financial benefit from the training course.

Q.19   Are some nominations regarded as a reward for some individuals?

A.19   This happens sometimes, but in some cases, the reverse happens, whereby the manager

nominates individuals not for training but to get rid of them or their presence is not desired, and

this happens usually in internal training.

Q.20   How do you perceive the current procedures adopted by the Company? Are they

effective?

A.20   As a manager concerned with training in this company I find current procedures as

lacking efficacy and costly to the company. A number of trainees are nominated without

considering or analysing the extent of their needs of courses, and without paying attention to the

efficacy of these courses. They are only considered from a quantitative perspective.

Q.21   Do you mean that training programmes do not serve the company's objectives an aims?

A.21   Yes, I do mean that before those targeted for training might not be in need of training and

we might ignore those who need training. Hence, there should be a linkage between the

company's objectives and training programmes according to actual needs.

Q.22   How the efficacy of the company's training programmes is measured?

A.22   There is no measure; this depends on observation only, and this is not adequate.

Q.23   Is training used as a solution for some problems that might suddenly emerge at the

company?

A. 23   this happens only slightly.

Q.24   do you perceive training in important for developing the company and achieving its

objectives?

A.24.   certainly yes, when it is undertaken in accordance with the modern scientific method

adopted in determining needs.

Q.25   Is there any effective evaluation of the benefits of training programmes undertaken by the company?

A.24   No, there is not, and this is an important aspect ignored by the company.

Focus Group Interview

Six employees participated in this focus group interviews. They are referred to as P1 to P6 (P stands for participant, in order to conceal their identity in line with the ethical approach of the study. The researcher will be referred to as I (Interviewer).

I.   For a start, I would like to clarify the aim of this interview, as it is used as a method for collecting data and information about the Electricity company, in which you represent a sample of engineers working for the company and have received training courses and have work experience at this company for at least five years. I would also like to confirm that the information collected will only be used for the purposes of academic research and not for any other purposes. It will be dealt with confidentially without mentioning names, and will only be used numbers. What most interests me is providing accurate information. Accordingly, I shall distribute the numbers from right to left (1, 2… 6). When answering, please mention your number to identify the participant when the interview is transcripted. I hope you agree to have the interview taped, do you agree?

I.   Agreement is unanimous, and I shall start asking the questions and each of you has the freedom to answer and gives his view whenever he wants to do so given that we shall communicate as a group for each issue or question asked.

I.   The first question: I want you to mention the procedures adopted in determining training needs when the company undertakes a training programme, in other words, what is the method or the mechanism adopted?

P.3   The company formulate a training plan annually which involves raising the competencies of employees and also initiation courses for new recruits by the company.

I.   What I want to know is to identify the procedures assumed by the company in your role as engineers working for the company and have attended training courses in the past.

P.5   As trainees, we did not participate in the selection process; administrations undertake nomination process.

I.   As an engineer, do you participate in your nomination process according to your needs of training?

P.5   No, we do not participate.

P.1   Nomination for raising competency courses is done by the immediate superior (manager).

I.   How does he know about your training needs?

P.1   Through observation, given you he is close to you and also from the annual reports.

P.2   As for general courses, such as computer and language courses, the individual might ask for them and the manager approves them when he perceives this as necessary.

P.2   In confirm this, whereby the immediate superior is responsible for nominating trainee, and this is what happens in the company.

I.   Do the company or administration undertakes an analysis of individuals and professions before attempting the nomination for training.

P.6   A questionnaire is sometimes designed to identify the levels of engineers and the skills and knowledge they need.

P.3   This rarely happens.

I.   What are the needs you deem important and should be considered when determining training needs?

P.4   I think there should be a questionnaire before starting any course to identify those who need training, and that training programmes should be for those who need training not like what is happening now in some administrations in which the process of nomination for courses which is not aimed at those needing training. Those means high cost without any return.

Q.7   What is your opinion of the method adopted at present in identifying individuals who need training?

P.5   The method currently adopted does not identify the individual needing training; there are some individuals who try to be nominated for these courses to be away from work and do not need this course.

P.2   Consequently, the immediate superior in the closest to the employee and knows the extent of his need of training through his work.

P.3   In fact, when a questionnaire is distributed to identify the extent of individual's need of training, it depends on the individual himself and the extent of his credibility in filling in the questionnaire, as well as on the extent of his credibility in providing the information about himself.

Q.8   Are there any clear and detailed annual plans for training at the company?

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P.2   Yes, there are annual plans.

Q.9   How do you know of them?

P.4   This is a regular matter and known to all the company personnel that there is an annual plan.

P1.   The company's Training Administration is responsible for the implementation the programmes of training plans.

P.3   There is a fault in the plans in that they are formulated in the same way and have never been developed.

Q.10   To what extent you think that those who have been nominated for courses and attending them have benefited from them?

P.1   I cannot see this, but we think that every trainee should benefit and this happens but varying extents depending on the individuals.

P.4   In spite of this, there are training courses that have benefited nominees and the company.

P.6.   Individuals are sometimes not nominated in their field of specialisation which makes it difficult to benefit from the course; hence, wasting time and money.

P.5   The manager may sometimes reward some individual to attend a course because of a job he has performed or because of the trainee's desire to attend the course.

Q.11   In your opinion, is this a reward or favouritism?

P.5   No, it is a reward.

Q.12   Do some managers respond to individuals' requests to attend courses?

P.4   This sometimes happens.

P.2   There should be a description for each job as well as the specifications requires for performing this profession so as to identify the extent of the trainee's need and the occupier of this profession for training and raining his competency.

Q13.   Is this non-existent in the company?

P.2   It is not existent.

Q14   Do you all agree with this?

P.5   Yes, as we know there is none. Unanimously agree.

Q15   Do general directors intervene in nomination for courses?

P.3   It happens. Some trainees have been nominated by the top management.

P.2   This happens as a sort of favouritism by some directors, or due to social influences, and

sometimes for trainee's financial benefit from the course.

Q16 How information and data are gathered about the company employees, that is, what are the procedures and methods?

P.6 The personal file is the only place in which information and data are found about the employee.

Q17 I mean, how information is gathered about individuals, their performance and the level of their skills?

P.4 There is no system or method for this purpose, but depends on the manager's observations, some questionnaires formulated for this purpose and the annual reports.

P.5 As I have heard that there is a preparation for installing an information system in the company which contains all information and data.

Q18 How is the efficacy of the courses held at the company measured?

P.3 At the end of the course there is an examination and a questionnaire, as well as the reports written by course supervisors.

Q19. Does the trainee participate in the evaluation process?

P.1 Yes, through the questionnaire at the end of the course.

Q20 How do you perceive training and its importance for the achieving of the company's objectives?

P.2 Very important; especially when a new technology or a new project is introduced.

P.6 Important; provided that it is implemented in accordance with the needs and to achieve the company's and the individual's objectives.

Q21 Is training used sometimes as a solution for some of problems emerging at work?

P.2 Yes, it happens, especially when improving some of the company's instruments and stations, as well as the need for a well-trained manpower to deal with these problems.

Q22 What would you say about training at the conclusion of this interview?

P.1 We notice that training in the company is concerned with the quantity rather than quality whereby courses are held without identifying those who need them.

P.3 Training in the company does not enjoy the attention up to the required standard.

Q23 Do you agree with this, and do you having anything to add?

P.4 Yes.

P.2 Yes, we should pay attention to training.

P.1   The fault in the company is that we do not pay much attention to training administration.

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

Group	Name	Experience	Academic Qualifications	Work Place
P.1	1	6 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station
P.2	2	8 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station
P.3	3	8 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station
P.4	4	7 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station
P.5	5	9 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station
P.6	6	12 years	Assistant Electrician	West Tripoli Station

Appendix 4
Types of Training Programmes Provided by the LGEC

When this question was addressed to the interviewed individuals, it appeared that there are some

types of training courses provided by the company which have been divided into the following:

Induction Courses: The courses that prepare new personnel appointed by the company and who

begin to work for the first time after passing the acceptance tests carried out by the company

prior to their appointment. This type of course aims to introduce the company's system to the

new personnel who will work at the company, then instruct them with aspects pertaining to the

function(s) they will perform, in addition to enabling the company to recognise and identify the

operational capabilities of these individuals to perform these tasks. Induction courses, also

referred to as 'orientation' or 'socialisation', are offered to the majority of newly recruited

employees, given that they are willing to know more concerning their job and the company

employing them (Grobler et al., 2006). These courses are designed as preparatory training

programmes to help new recruits to be acquainted with the company and the way it operates

(Sunderland and Canwell, 2008). Grobler et al. (2006) maintain that there are a number of

objectives of induction, concluding that the main objective is to integrate new recruits in the

company immediately with the intention that they can be successful employees as soon as

possible. Social learning may cause its major contribution through non-classroom learning

(Laird et al., 2003; Swanson and Holton, 2009) and one sphere is in new employee development

whereby socialisation processes make up the key part of new employee development (Holton

and Russell, 1999; Korte, 2007, Swanson and Holton, 2009). The literature (Laird et al., 2003, p.

137; Swanson and Holton, 2009, p. 201) refers to socialisation as: "*the process by which*

organizations pass on the culture of the organization to new employees and teach them how to be

effective in the organization." It is also described as an informal process which takes place by

means of social interactions between new recruits and organisational members.

Induction courses are important not only to new employees but also to incumbent employees, such as those promoted to new job within the company, and also training incumbent employees on new technologies introduced by the organisation or new sophisticated equipment acquired by the organisation. This agrees with Swezy and Pearlstein (2001) who argue that training for new opportunities is basically the same for new and incumbent employees. Grobler et al. (2006) indicate that not only new employee will benefit from induction training, but also transferred/promoted employees and all existing employees. As for employees transferred or promoted inside the company must receive induction training, particularly if the transfer or promotion requires a major change of environment, and that existing employees need a reinduction course regularly, especially when major changes in the company policies or structures have occurred (Grobler et al., 2006). Doherty and Horne (2002) also argue that induction is pertinent to current employees transferred to a new job within the organisation.

Data reported in Chapter Three (Section 3.6, Table 3.12) indicate that two types of induction courses provided by the LGEC to its employees during 2008: inductive courses implemented within the company's training centres for 163 engineers and 32 technicians; and induction courses implemented outside the company's training centres for 280 newly recruited engineers.

Courses for Increasing Efficiency: The courses undertaken by the company to increase the efficiency of its current staff that needs to increase their competence to perform their functions. These courses are based on two factors:

- Shortage of skills, knowledge or ability of some individuals to perform their functions, which requires increasing the competencies and skills, so that they can accomplish their work effectively. The training department receives lists of candidates for these courses

from all the departments of the company when it proceeds in the preparation of the annual training plan, as indicated in Section 5.5.1.

- The introduction of a new technique or new equipment in the company which requires new knowledge or new skills to use them correctly. The company then provides courses to qualify its working staff and those who had previous experience in this area to use such new equipment or new technology. The concerned department nominates the individuals who show the necessary competence and experience to accommodate this technology, and then the department supervises and follows them up. One of the interviewed managers indicated that M8 "*when new and more advanced equipment that those already owned by the Company, the Company holds training courses for its employees working in the same field who have the experience and expertise in the same field and the same specialisation.*"

Data presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.6, Table 3.12) also show that two types of increasing efficiency courses were provided: those implemented within the company's training centres, targeting 123 engineers, 256 technicians, 53 engineers and technicians, and 185 IT staff; and those implemented outside the company's training centres, targeting 28 engineers, 52 IT staff, and 71 from various groups of employees.

General courses: These are general courses undertaken by the company to increase the competence and basic skills for all employees with respect to the performance of their functions. These courses are called general because they are not related to a particular department; it is concerned with all staff to equip them with modern techniques, communication technologies and computer use, which are required by workers, especially the administrative staff in the company. The general courses also include English language courses, which aim to teach staff basic

language knowledge to use in communication, as well as to understand the international terms in a language used universally. Training in English Language is imperative given that the manuals and directions of using equipment and new technologies are written in English, and the users need to be conversant with English to understand these manuals and direction and also to communicate with the supplier in this medium. Data presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.6, Table 3.12) indicate that courses in English Language were provided to 343 of various groups of employees. After lifting the sanctions and establishing relationships with the Western countries, Libya started paying attention to training and qualification to benefit from the expertise of developed countries in this field and in using modern technology. Libya has focused in its policy of the development of human resources in all fields of specialisation. This has been noticed through the increased numbers of students sent abroad to pursue their study, as well as in qualifying employees in all sectors to proceed with global developments. This has been noticed in the LGEC, whereby the company, through the interviews held with its training managers, are interested in using new technologies and their desire to obtain such new technologies. This stems from the company's policies and its approach to raise their employees' efficiency. This is also noticed from the presence of three types of training programmes, as mentioned earlier.

Appendix 5

The LGEC's Vision, Mission and Values

The Company vision is as follows:

> "*It is envisaged that the General Electricity Company to become the best electricity power provider in the Middle East and North Africa through supporting the national economy and offering distinguished services, as well as creating a model work environment.*"

The company mission is to:

> "*participate in supporting and ensuring the continuity of the economic and social wheel by providing electricty power in conformity with the quality standards, reliability, safety and security to all groups of consumers in the Jamahiriyah, and also being committed to investment in developing the human resources in order to achieve the best service.*"

The Company values are as follows:

- *Consumer satisfaction.*
- *Protecting the environment*
- *Distinction in performance.*
- *Working in the spirit of a single team.*
- *Safeguarding the principle of mutual confidence among the employees within the Company.*

(Source: LGEC. General Administration of Human Resources. Training Plan 2008, p. 2).

Moreover, the company provides courses to qualify the individual workers who were made redundant by some departments to benefit from their experience in other departments. This step is taken by the company for the purpose of retaining its human resources, and taking advantage of them to contribute to reduce the rate of unemployment in the country. One manager indicated that M3 "*the Company has a plan to benefit from its workforce and to second them to other sites instead of discharging then so as to retain its human resources and contributed to reduce unemployment in the country as a whole*."