

EMPLOYERS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS THAT RESUMED TRAINING UNDER COVID-19 LEVEL 3- LOCKDOWN

“Saving the academic year whilst saving lives”

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Researcher: Mahali Makhetha

Supervisor: Bulelwa Plaatjie

1. Introduction

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) says that COVID-19 is expected to be the new normal as global cases surge past 10 million in June. This means that employers and training providers will have to resume or continue work and training while adhering to the regulations and requirements brought about by this transformation. Massive transformations have been witnessed in workplaces with the most recent shutdowns of different sectors except for the essential services. But the larger question was whether employers and the skills development providers (SDPs) in the health and social development sector, were able to resume training under Covid-19 level 3 lockdown regulations. This was the main purpose of this survey.

2. Research Methodology

The research methodology used to collect the information for this survey involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, as the collection of secondary data used was qualitative methods and the collection of primary data used quantitative methods. The research design was cross-sectional, as data collected and recorded focused on the here and now. The type of research study is descriptive as it identified employers and SDPs that resumed training and described measures taken to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 in adherence to occupational health regulations.

With respect to the content of the survey, a survey questionnaire was designed to address the objectives that relate to:

- (a) establishing the number of employers and skills development providers that had resumed training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown.
- (b) establishing factors for the non-resumption of training by employers and skills development providers during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown.
- (c) determining the level of compliance to Covid-19 level 3 regulations by employers and skills development providers.

The survey questionnaire was sent from a platform called SurveyMonkey and emailed to employers and SDPs that entered into work-based learning programme agreements with unemployed learners during 2019-2020 financial year. The survey questionnaire was emailed

to approximately 1350 employers and 138 SDPs for primary data. The secondary database comprised of employers and SDPs that completed an institutional readiness planning template issued out by HWSETA. The purpose of this planning template was for employers and SDPs to confirm whether they were ready to resume training. This template was issued out prior the current survey and 168 employers, and 19 SDPs responded.

3. Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the objectives of the study as follows:

Objective 1: Establishing the number of employers and skills development providers that had resumed training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown.

The findings yielded by the survey and the institutional readiness plans show that **75% (290/388)** of employers had resumed training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown. While **82% (84/103)** of skills development providers had resume training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown. This therefore meant that **25% (97/388)** of employers and **18% (19/103)** of skills development providers did not resume training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown.

Overall, therefore **76% (374/491)** of all organisations (employers and SDPs combined) had resumed training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown, and **24% (116/491)** did not resume training. The table below presents the results as follows:

Table 1: Data on number of employers and SDPs that resumed training under level-3 lockdown

Size	Employers	SDPs	Total	
			No	Percentage
Resumed training during level 3	290	84	374	76%
Not resumed training during level 3	97	19	116	24%
Non-response	1	0	1	0%
Total	388	103	491	100%

Objective 2: Establishing contributing factors to the non-resumption of training by employers and skills development providers during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown.

The findings yielded by the study show the causal factors for the 24% of organisations that did not resume training during level 3 lockdown were both internal and external. The table below summarises these factors.

Table 2: Contributing factors to non-resumption of training

Percentage	Factors
External Factors	
6% (30/491)	employers (26) and skills development (4) providers were still trying to meet level-3 lockdown regulations so as to be able to accommodate both workers and students

Percentage	Factors
14,5% (71/491)	employers (56) and skills development (15) were not fully operational to accept both workers and students and therefore were not be ready to accept students back for training under level 3 lockdown
Internal Factors	
3% (15/491)	employers were waiting for skills development providers and lead employers to send students for workplace training

Objective 3: Determining the level of compliance to Level 3 Covid-19 regulations by employers and skills development providers

This objective was tested through the survey study only. The institutional readiness plan was not designed to answer to this objective of the study. This therefore means that the discussion of results focuses on the **220** employers and **84** skills development providers. Compliance to the level 3 Covid-19 regulations required employers and skills development providers to put measures in place to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 in workplaces and training institutions. The results yielded by the survey are summarized in the following table:

Table 3: Level of compliance to Covid-19 regulations for level-3

Areas of compliance to Covid-19 level 3 regulations	Level of Compliance
Communication about Covid-19 to employees and learners	100%
Areas covered by employer's cleaning and disinfection plans	75%
Topics covered by the risk assessment plans of employers and SDPs	70%
Administrative control measures put in place by employers and skills development providers to adhere to Covid-19 level 3 lockdown regulations	62%
Submission of OHS Policies and Risk Assessment Plans by very large organisations	60%
Questions covered in screening processes of employers and skills development providers	53%
Preventative measures put in place by employers and skills development providers against the spread of COVID-19	49%
Measures put in place by employers and skills development providers to deal with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19	33%

The level of compliance to Covid-19 level 3 regulations by all organisations therefore ranged from **33% to 100%**. The range between levels of compliance to Covid-19 regulations is therefore 67%. It can therefore be concluded that adherence to Covid-19 level 3 regulations was **67%**.

4. Conclusion

It is important to note that the results and conclusions drawn from the survey and institutional readiness plans can be generalised to the organisations that responded to these studies as they appear on appendix a, b, c, and d of the report. In order to know whether more employers

and SDPs had resumed training during Covid-19 level 3 lockdown the survey questionnaire would have to be issued to additional organisations.

This survey has indicated that the return to training for learners required by all employers and SDPs to put in place a vast number of compliance measures before and during training. The critical issue therefore is compliance to Covid-19 level 3 lockdown regulations in order to limit the transmission of Covid-19 in the workplace and training institutions. The survey has shown based on the employers and skills development providers that responded to the survey that there is a high level of compliance.

5. Recommendations

To ensure continued compliance, it is recommended that the level of transmission among learners funded by the HWSETA be closely monitored. The HWSETA can do this by requesting employers and skills development providers to submit reports of all Covid-19 cases affecting its learners and also submitting reports explaining the measures that have been taken to reduce further transmission of the virus, such as quarantine of infected learners, tracking of learners that had contact with the infected learners and their self-isolation and testing, decontamination of the workplace and training institution etc.

Also, employers and skills development providers that have not submitted the institutional readiness plan need to be encouraged to do so. A register should then be created of all employers and skills development providers who submitted the institutional readiness plan and dates for the resumption of training should be captured on that register. This will assist the HWSETA to track the number of employers and skills development providers that have resumed training. The institutional readiness plan should require information on the new date of completion based on the revised programmes. This will provide the HWSETA with insight on when 2020 academic year will be completed across programmes.