

# An Investigation of the Awareness and Exposure of Young Transport and Logistics Professionals to Continuous Professional Development in Namibia

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## ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the awareness and exposure of the young professionals in the Transport and Logistics to Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The young professionals are students who are studying the Transport and Logistics professional qualification at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT). This investigation is shaped by the school of thought that CPD should become integrated into the learning curriculum, before professional degrees are obtained and should be progressed after successful professional attainment. The purpose of this paper is to identify the key motivational factors why professionals need continuous improvement, and to understand exactly why a single qualification without further development no longer suffices. This paper further investigates whether CPD should be implemented in workplaces and made compulsory.

Quantitative research will provide for more comprehensive findings, CILT students that have registered at the Namibian-German Centre for Logistics (NGCL) were chosen for this research. The sample size of 129 students studying part time at CILT were given questionnaires to complete. The results show that the majority of the young professionals at CILT were familiar with what CPD is. The investigation revealed that the students are aware that they are participating in CPD in one way or another. This study however shows that the students confuse professional bodies with universities, law and physical training institutions. The study shows that the intrinsic motivation for participation in CPD will propel Namibia forward as the students positively associate continuous learning with increasing skilled work force, reduce poverty and enhance innovative thought. Overall our research found a solid basis for the promotion and extension of a CPD culture and its principles in Namibian company HR departments, and the paper includes recommendations for in-company best practice in this respect.

**Keywords:** Young professionals, Continuing Professional Development, Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, Namibia-German Centre for Logistics

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Continuing or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a relatively new concept that opens up new educational opportunities for many people. Furthermore, CPD lays a new playing field for professionalism in the workplace. It is increasingly unacceptable for professional staff to rest on their laurels, with an attitude of complacency with regard to life-long learning.

In the world of ever growing usage of the new computer and high technologies, there is need to be proactive with regards to the on-going development of professionalism in particular industry, as it does not allow for complacency. This research paper therefore, seeks to investigate the extent to which CPD has become part and parcel of logistics and transport professionals' education and training for the future.

This research is particularly relevant to the economy of Namibia, and indeed the wider SADC region because 'logistics' is regarded as of major importance to the growth of the economy of the region. The Government of Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP 4) has identified Logistics as one of the four key economic priority areas – together with agriculture, manufacturing and tourism (The Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN), 2015) This appreciation of logistics makes it unique within such national development plans regionally. In order for the NDP 4 to be realised therefore, the training and re-training of logistics, procurement, supply chain and transport staff is of importance.

The Polytechnic of Namibia is currently delivering the first locally educated Bachelors of Logistics and Masters of Logistics. However, the vast majority of these students have little or no experience in the industry (Madejski, et.al, 2014). In this paper, we substantiate the positive attitude of young professionals toward CPD and that they may serve beyond companies' expectations and competitive edge, thus this will give companies opportunities to adopt CPD as part of its best practice as well. Many of the Namibian students are unaware of professional bodies within Namibia and the membership benefits that come with such professional bodies. Increased exposure to CPD initiatives strengthens the link between stakeholders and professionals in environments where these two groups can positively complement each other. The contents of this paper will be of relevance to individuals with an interest in CPD, educational stakeholders, CPD association members, CPD educationalists in the region and school based communities.

### ***1.1 Research objectives***

#### ***a) Primary objectives***

To investigate the views of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) students on the understanding and knowledge related to this professional body.

### **b) Secondary objectives**

In order to achieve the primary objectives above, the following secondary objectives will be explored:

- To determine the general understanding of the Continuous Professional Development
- To determine the CILT students awareness of Continuous Professional Development
- To explore the literary debate on professional bodies with specific inference to CILT students offered at Namibia German Centre for Logistics - NGCL.

### **1.2 Research question**

This study will explore the following research questions:

- What is students' understanding of CPD?
- What are the potential benefits of CPD to the economy?
- How the CILT students came to be aware of professional bodies such as CILT?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Concept of CPD**

The Literature positively associates CPD with lifelong learning. There is also a consensus among various disciplines that CPD is vital in both educational and corporate environments. Aspiring professionals are aware of how the professional development of their lecturers, mentors and tutors complement their own desire to adopt a culture of continuous learning within their own professional settings in future. Sue (2006), share the same sentiments, as she states that "Probably nothing within a school has more impact on students in terms of skills' development, self-confidence or classroom behaviour, than the personal and professional development of their teachers".

The (CIPS) Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply is dedicated to a system that allows their members to participate in activities which contribute towards their CPD development. This gives members the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning throughout their working life. Companies and educational institutions in Namibia that would like to increase CPD orientation may face challenges related to the fear or lack of confidence in learning and lack of funds to pursue further development amongst others (Sue 2006). Humphreys, McIvor and McAleer (1998), stated that "The skills and competence required by professionals in the past are not the same as those required today". Thus, to structure development; learning activities must fall into many



categories including skills, knowledge and personal development as exemplified in the table below:

| Category                    | What It Means   | Examples of Activities   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Knowledge</b>            | Improving your theoretical and practical knowledge of procurement | Formal training and tuition, reading books and journals, online research, eLearning. |
| <b>Skill</b>                | Improving your ability to do your job as a professional           | Attendance at short courses and training events, on the job development, shadowing   |
| <b>Personal Development</b> | Improving non-procurement related knowledge and skills            | Giving presentations, coaching, and voluntary work.                                  |

Retrieved from: [http://cips.org/Documents/CPD\\_Hours/CIPS\\_CPD\\_Guide\\_V1\\_FINAL.pdf](http://cips.org/Documents/CPD_Hours/CIPS_CPD_Guide_V1_FINAL.pdf)

## **2.2 Paradoxes of CPD**

Scales (2011) discussed three points of interest that clarify the nature of CPD.

### **c) Compulsion or voluntarism**

Making CPD compulsory will gain compliance, but in order to realize the full benefits of CPD, what is really needed is commitment (Anonymous User, 2000). It all comes back to what motivates people. For the purpose of this paper, a distinction is made between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation to commit to CPD would be “for a salary increment” for instance as opposed to intrinsic motivation that includes anything from a desire for lifelong learning to an improvement of existing skills. (Business simulation n.d) The distinction made between these two concepts is about the motivation from within and the motivation resulting external factors. We appreciate that outcome of intrinsic motivation are usually long term, while extrinsic motivational factors last quite a short time. Intrinsic motivation is most likely to yield more voluntary commitment.

### **d) Employer or Individual Responsibility**

There is a strong link between CPD and lifelong learning. That is why some may say that CPD is the responsibility of the individual. Paddaniels (2014) states that the “primary responsibility for this learning lies with us as individuals, not our employers or organisations.” In Namibia, there is no legal requirement for employers to provide CPD related learning in the Transport and Logistics companies. If there were legal requirements, it would be a shared responsibility between employer and the individual.

### **e) Teaching or Learning**

Supply management responsibilities teach us that in order to remain competent, firms must improve their internal processes to remain competitive. Internal processes may be improved by the introduction of new systems. It is very unlikely that all members in

a firm will benefit from the introduction of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system at the exact same time. Some may take longer to get the hang of things while other staff members easily adapt to technological change. Situations such as these are what drive continuous learning.

### **2.3     *The Ethics of Transport Professionals***

According to Laudon and Laudon (2014), “Ethics refers to the principles of right and wrong that individuals, acting as free moral agents, use to make choices to guide their behaviours.” Moral principles come from life experiences. Ethical or unethical behaviour may be linked to childhood development carried through to adulthood. According to Catterall (2015), disruptive upbringing may impair moral judgement and will continue to have an effect on the experiences of professionals as they carry forward in life, and have an adverse effect on their decision making abilities. A concern raised by Catterall (2015) is whether an inherently dishonest person can be put right by higher education alone? Catterall further stated that ‘a number of studies have concluded that the level of education held by the individual does not influence principled reasoning’. It is an individual’s cognitive moral reasoning level that is a significant factor affecting the ability of advisers to exercise judgment in the resolution of ethical dilemmas and to act ethically.” Catterall recommends compulsory training on ethics and ethical decision making to be implemented in all continuing professional development programmes.

### **2.4     *Ethics in the information Age***

As published in the Supply Management, ‘Information that is available over the internet will continue to alter the balance of power between buyers and sellers’ (Monczka, Handfield, Guinipero and Patterson, 2009). The availability of information in this manner at low costs raises new ethical issues for individuals and the societies “because they create opportunities for intense social change, and thus threaten existing distributions of power, money, rights, and obligations.” (Laudon and Laudon 2014).

### **2.5     *Ethics in Procurement***

Media coverage of the public procurement system of Namibia has been viewed in a negative light and articles reflect mismanagement in the system. The experience is that tender processes appear to be transparent in the beginning, but transparency fades as the process shifts from advertisement to award. The procurement processes are “characterized by conflict of interest, delays, favouritism, abuse of office and corruption” (Hamutenya 2014)

Bringing procurement process to order requires an adherence to professional codes of conduct, which will allow public servants to have an attitude of fairness, integrity, transparency and equal treatment toward tender processes. Various authors have

shared the same sentiments that adhering to codes of conduct is more a personal thing than any development or further level education. According to Ayoti as stated by Hamutenya (2014), lack of a strong procurement profession and inadequate training of staff has led to the failure in applying good practices in procurement, creating inefficiencies and high costs in the procurement process.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 *Research Design***

The research was quantitative, which explored the awareness and exposure of the young professionals (in this case the students who are studying Transport and Logistics at the Namibian German Centre of Logistics) to Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This research puts emphasis on the quantitative approach. Within the context of qualitative approach, a non-experimental research design was used for the research. Consent was given to hand out questionnaires. We waited while students filled out questionnaires in one of their lecture rooms. Any questions were answered and the questionnaires were collected. The procedure was one with minimal risks attached to participants, and the probability of harm or discomfort will not be greater than any ordinarily encountered in daily life.

#### **3.2 *Sample Participants***

The sample population selected consists of 129 students to whom the questionnaires were distributed, we also interviewed 15 students telephonically. The students who are studying the CILT Diploma course on part-time at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport were chosen as the study participants. This selection took into account students undergoing CPD orientation. The students comprised both genders, and various races.

#### **3.3 *Research Instrument and administration***

This study employed the use of questionnaires to investigate the views of CILT students on the know-how related to the professional bodies. The questionnaires were handed out after seeking consent from the training body at the Namibian German Centre for Logistics (NGCL). In cases where the participants were unable to respond to questionnaires, those questionnaires were not considered for analysis. All the completed questionnaires were used for analysis. The questionnaires and their contents were attached as an appendix.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The primary information collected by means of questionnaires was presented in graphs using Microsoft Excel. The descriptive statistical methods used to analyse outcomes were graphs and percentages.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals. We did not expose research participant's identity, as no name of the respondent was required. Apart from that permission was obtained from the NGCL management, and the individual class lecturers before any questionnaires were handed out to students.

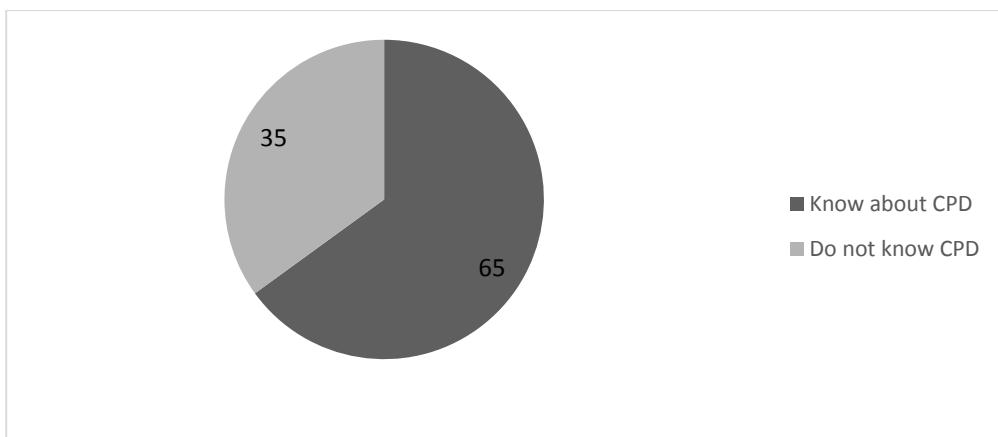
### **3.9 Limitations**

Due to the lack of knowledge, some of the students surveyed do not understand the meaning of CPD, leading to some of the questions not well answered. But we then made an effort to conduct 15 randomly selected sample of student via telephonically interview. This was successful. Not all questionnaires were fully completed and this had a slightly negative effect on the expected number of questions we intended to have completed. It also resulted in some questionnaires being invalid. The research covered transport and logistics students that are studying through the NGCL.

## **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Do you know what CPD/Continuous Professional Development is?

**Understanding of CPD:**



*Figure 4.1: Response to whether CILT students understands CPD*

Out of 129 participants, 5 percent of them understood what CPD is, while the remaining 35 percent had no idea of what CPD is. This suggests that even though CPD is a new concept, particularly here in Namibia, people know about it in general terms. The majority of the participants believed that they do know what it is.

Given the definition above, do you believe that you are engaging in CPD?

Engagement of Students in CPD:

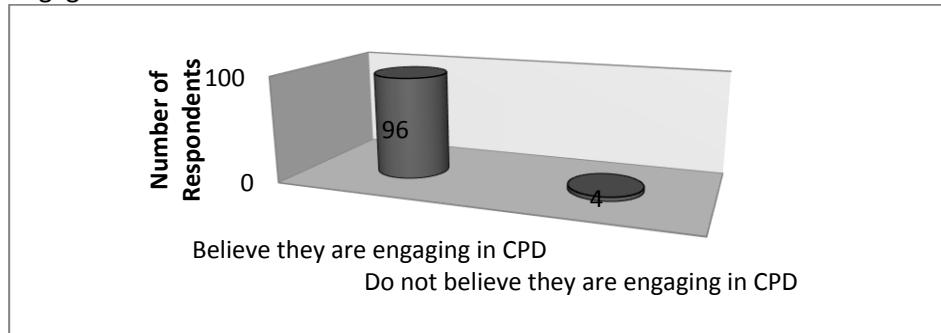


Figure 4.2: Response to whether CILT students believe that they are engaged in CPD

The results in Fig. 4.2 have shown that 96% of CILT students responded that they are engaging in CPD, and the other 4% responded that the course they are currently undertaking has nothing to do with their continuous professional development.

Student who believe that CILT is engaged with CPD provide reasons as follow:

- Most of the respondent said that, “CILT course enable us to grow and maintain our skills and knowledge to a higher level as well as share our knowledge with others, be it colleagues, family or among society members”.
- While others said that “CILT enable us to relate what we do at work and by this we are learning a lot, for our benefits as well as for the benefit of the country at large”.

Do you know of any professional development organizations in Namibia? If yes, please name them.

Participants who are aware of these professional bodies:

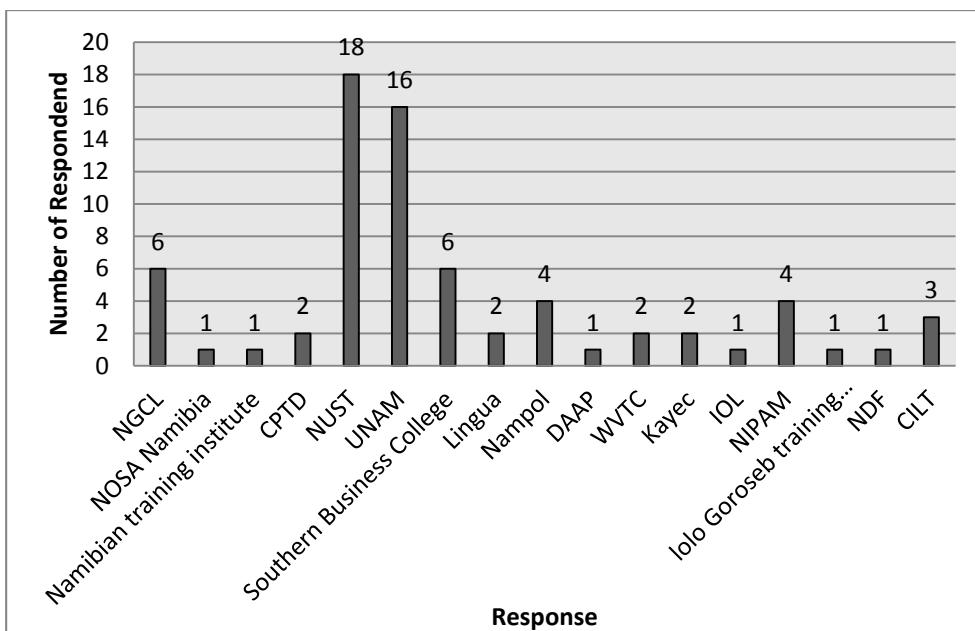


Figure 4.3: Response to whether CILT students are aware of any of the above mentioned professional bodies

Most students as illustrated in Fig. 4.3 see the polytechnic of Namibia as a professional development organisation at 18 % followed by UNAM at 16%. Only 3% of students are aware that CILT counts as a centre for professional development even though this is the qualification they are currently studying for. These overall results suggest that there is confusion in distinguishing between higher learning programmes and professional development programmes.

In your future professional environment, what do you think would motivate you to continue learning, irrespective of your profession/qualification/skill?

Many of the students responded that the following points have motivated them to continue learning:

- Working in the transport company
- To improve their logistics department
- To be able to compete with others in the world of competition
- The desire to become diverse in other fields
- Opportunities that will come from it
- Gain more knowledge and skills
- The desire to provide accurate services in logistics
- Promotion and salary

These results suggest that young Namibians appreciate the long term values and

benefits that come with partaking in continuous learning, as opposed merely to its short term monetary rewards.

Is CPD necessary in Logistics?

All participants agree that CPD is necessary in Transport and Logistics, because it helps develop academic and practical understanding of what it really takes to operate a profitable supply chain that delivers value to their companies and customers.

What are the potential benefits of CPD to the economy?

These are the reasons that are provided by the participants regarding the professional benefits of CPD to the economy.

- Country's infrastructure improves as more businesses and offices will be set up by these competitive people.
- Increase in production as work becomes flexible;
- Economic growth;
- Skilled work force;
- Reduce poverty;
- Leads to innovation as people start their own businesses

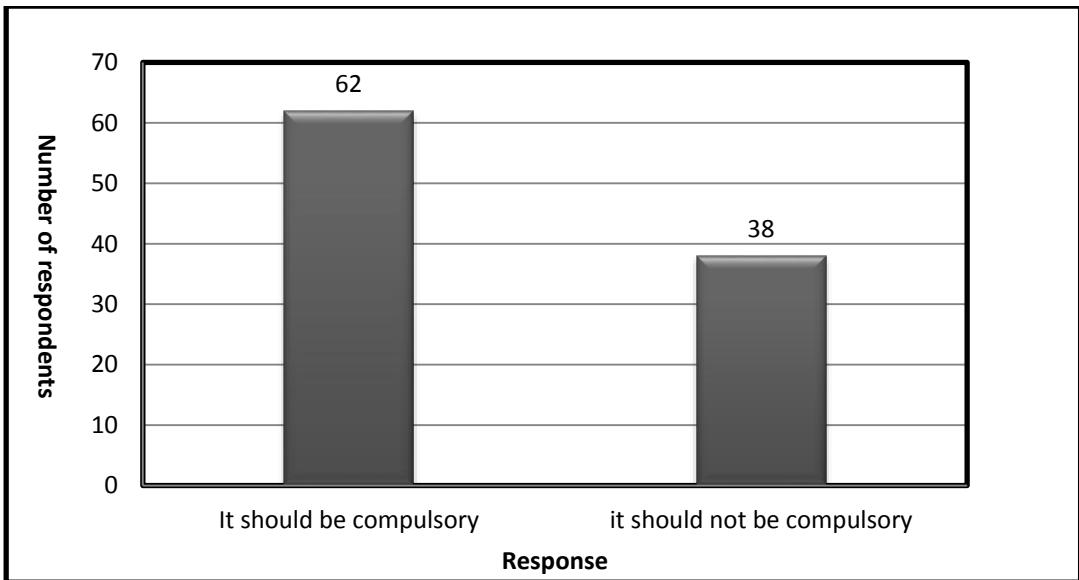
Should CPD be implemented in the workplace?

All participants agreed that CPD should be implemented in the workplace.

Should it be compulsory or voluntarily implemented?

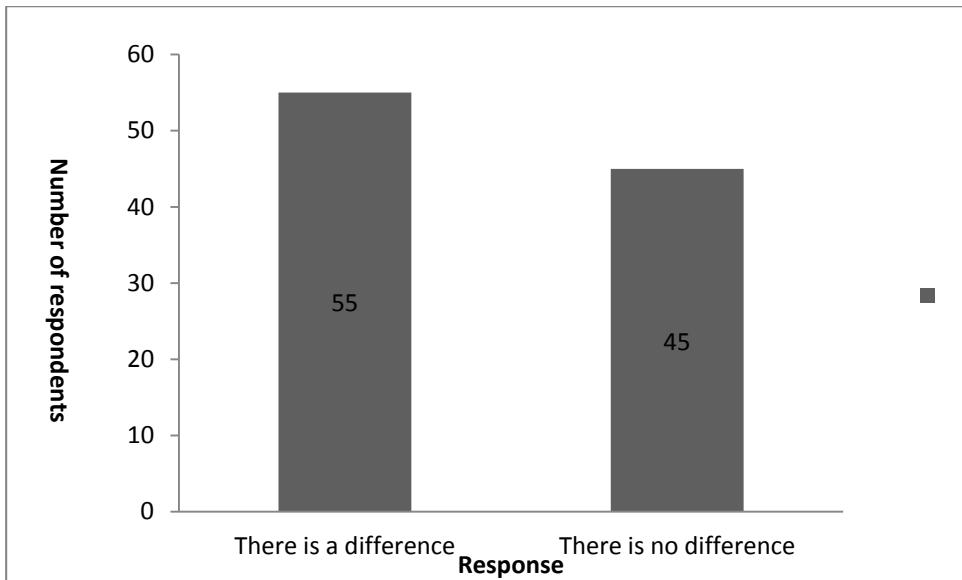
Some 62 percent agreed that CPD should be compulsory, and the remaining 38 per cent says that it should not. The reluctance of the 38% may be because either they lack proper understanding of what CPD entails, or are not interested in really enhancing their professional development and /or their careers.

Should CPD be compulsory



*Figure 4.4 Response to whether CPD should be compulsory*

#### Training and development



*Figure 4.5 Response to whether there is a reluctance to develop a professional portfolio.*

Of the sample population, 55 percent state there is a difference between training and development. Their reasoning being that, training is when you are taught new skills that you have to master. It should be noted that development is based on implemented infrastructure, technology and everything that helps to make work easier. The remaining 45 per cent felt that there is no difference.

### Participants with Qualifications

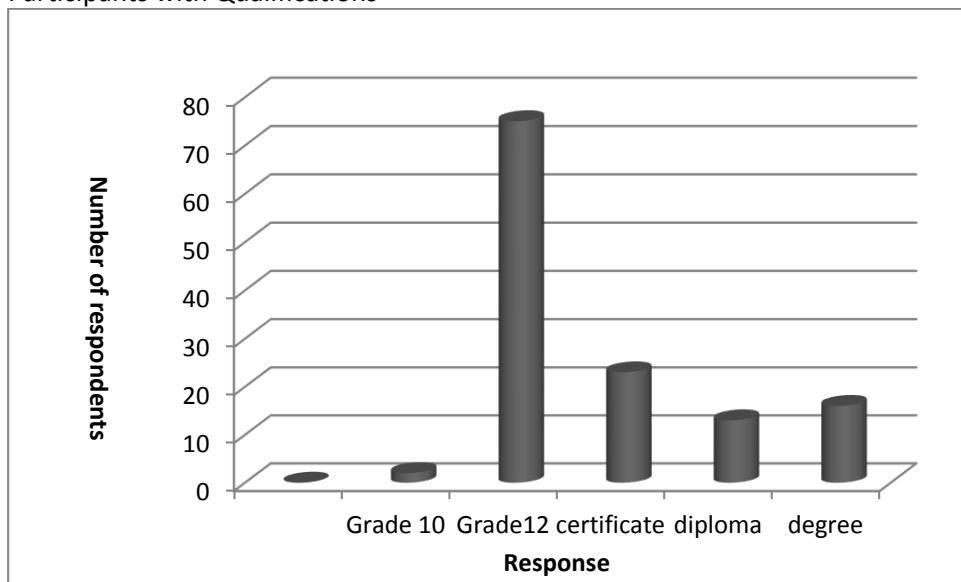


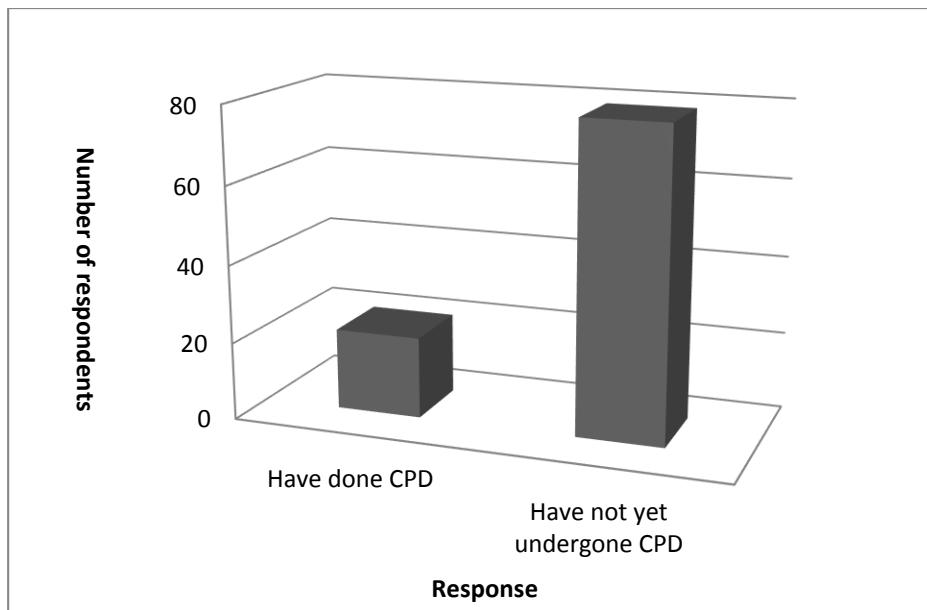
Figure 4.6 Response to students with qualifications studying the CILT Diploma course

As shown in the graph Fig. 4.6, most of the students have a grade 12 qualification and very few have certificates, degrees and diplomas. Thus, many of them may not understand what CPD is, due to the fact that the majority might not be employed or indeed have enough experience to understand what it's all about.

Have you previously undertaken CPD?

The majority, 79 per cent of the students doing a transport and logistics course at NGCL have not undergone any CPD programmes before, it is understandable since CPD is a new concept, and not all CPD undertaken may be fully reflected.

Students who have had exposure to CPD:



*Figure 4.7 Transport and Logistics students' exposure to CPD*

#### How CPD does contribute to a company's success

- Work become easier, hence logistics activities become smooth.
- Increase production
- Decrease costs.
- Increase sales and profits
- A competitive work force helps the company achieve its goals.

Students recognize that procurement officers must react to disruptive supply chains quickly. So the requirements to work in supply management are demanding. However, they understand the inherent successes that CPD can contribute to a company.

#### Should Transport and Logistics degree holders undergo CPD?

All survey participants agreed that Transport and Logistics degree holders should undergo CPD, in order for them to keep up with international standards and to meet customer expectations and to exceed them. To continuously improve customer service as well as keeping up with the latest technology and global trends.

### Responsibility for CPD:

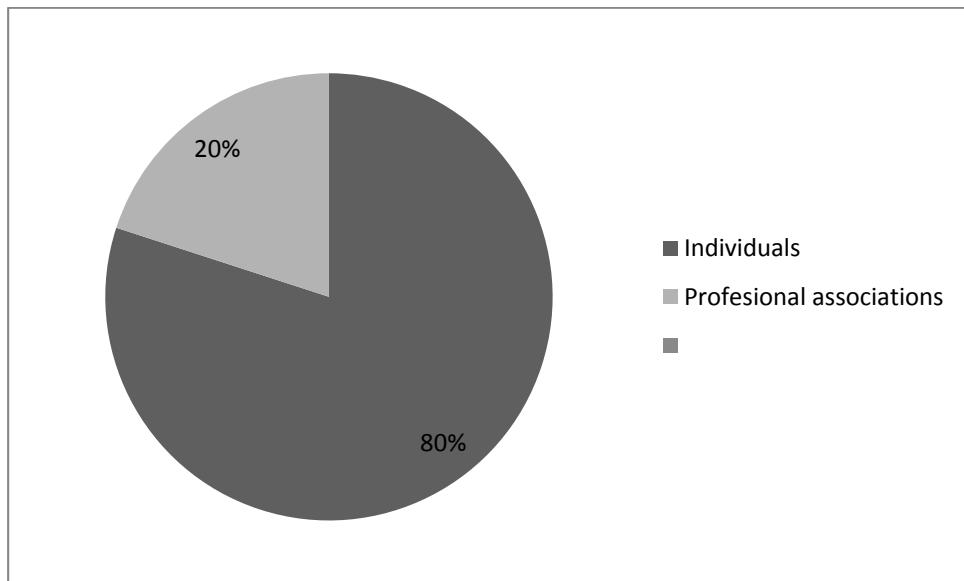


Figure 4.8 Response to whether as to whose responsibility is CPD, the professional associations or individuals?

Only 20 percent say it is the responsibility of the Professional associations, and 80 per cent says individuals should be responsible themselves if they want to prosper and be competitive in the

### Transport and Logistics Industry

This is an indication that the attitude toward CPD is extremely positive. People want development programmes in place and will take the necessary steps to help themselves. This is reflective of the fact that very few Namibian organizations invest in their staff development (Odero, 2014). Indeed the CILT students, who made up the participants in this survey, have already taken it upon themselves to invest in their own development out of their own pockets.

### Relevance of CPD to University graduates.

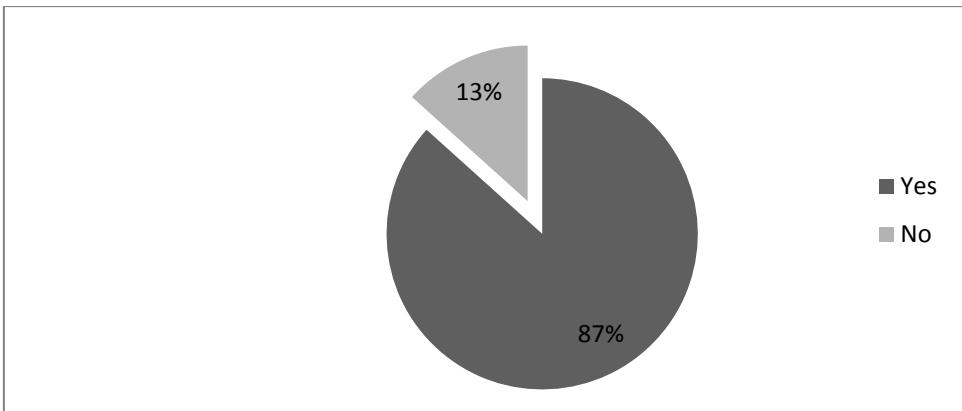


Figure 4.9 Do you think it is relevant for even people with University qualifications to join the professional bodies such as CILT?

Out of the 15 CILT students we contacted telephonically, 87% of the respondents feel that it is very important for University graduates to join Continuous Professional bodies such as CILT, while the remaining 13% feel that it is not needed.

#### How did you come to know about CILT?

Many of the respondents we called responded that they have heard of the course through the following:

- Newspaper
- Friends
- Lecturer
- Relatives
- Notice Board
- Colleagues
- Internet

Do you think there is a difference between enrolling for CILT or enrolling at the academic University that offer Transport and Logistics qualifications?

Here are the summarized responses from the many students who said 'Yes' there is a difference:

- CILT is more advanced, because it is a Professional body while others are just academic.
- With CILT, the course has a short timeframe, whilst at the academic University, specifically the Polytechnic of Namibia; the timeframe is quite a long one.
- In terms of funds, CILT is cheaper than the academic Universities and there is a possibility to go work abroad since the course is an international body, unlike with the academic Universities which are mostly national.

- The other difference is, enrolling with the Polytechnic of Namibia the management and staff are more dedicated to the students' progression, while with CILT, the Centre itself is not so well organized and their management is just too slow when it comes to processing students' paperwork.

Below are the shortened reasons, as to why fewer students think there is no difference at all:

- After all, students will be looking for the same type of job opportunities for employment.
- It is all Transport and Logistics and it's like the knowledge that one gets is all the same.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Private companies, public companies and universities, should provide encouragement and publicise CPD across the Namibian workplace landscape.
- Employers should extend enhanced financial and other resources, as a minimum, to members of their organisations who have professional qualifications.
- Public sector organizations should offer support to the development of professional staff and non-professional staff who show potential. In the form of time allocation for study, as well as financial aid.
- Professional Bodies must create a culture of raising awareness of CPD. They can do this by holding seminars or conferences on campus grounds informing students about CPD. But also on the sites of those companies who are keen to encourage capacity building initiatives.
- Universities should also participate in research and development to stimulate interest in the whole further development and dissemination of CPD concepts in society.
- Finally, in larger organisations, a recommendation is to have an independent Human Resources section dedicated to CPD. This section of the HR department would act in collaboration with other organisational functions, in order to work towards achieving the main organisational objectives through staff CPD engagement. The department should include CPD facilitators, leaders or coordinators, and learners or students interested in CPD.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The Namibian economy has an eventual vision of becoming globalised and industrialised, amongst other important objectives of its 'Strategy 2030' aims. The fact

that CPD is somewhat of an alien concept, and only truly understood by a few, does not overshadow the desire for learning and improvement. The infrastructure and support for CPD programmes may be inadequate at present, but there is comfort in as shown by our research that individuals are trying to get ahead by their own means. The long term benefits of CPD to the economy and individuals in terms of critical capacity building are extremely positive and worthwhile objectives. Such indicators as the individuals' willing attitudes and desires to accept CPD, brings hope for future ethical and moral enhanced practices as far as transport and logistics industry is concerned.

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