

Influence of lecturer absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training students' academic performance in Limpopo Province.

By

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Influence of lecturer absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training students' academic performance in Limpopo Province.

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



20 June 2022

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Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Raesetsa Cathrine who is my number one fan and pillar of strength

ABSTRACT

Since 1998, South Africa has seen substantial expansion in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In this sector, education and training were targeted at empowering South African youth. Policies have been developed and implemented to manage the absenteeism of lecturers but absenteeism seems to be increasing. The purpose of the study was to study the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET college students' academic performance in Limpopo province. A qualitative approach was used and a case study method was applied in an attempt to meet the purpose of this study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted with 8 students, 4 lecturers and 4 education specialists. Data were analyzed using thematic data analysis method. The findings demonstrated that college-related issues, personal issues and lecturer-related issues contribute to lecturer absenteeism. Poor management and supervision were also found to be contributing factors to lecturer absenteeism. It was also discovered that lecturer absenteeism has an influence on student dropout, syllabus completion, lecturer substitution and college pass rate. This study recommended that the TVET College should implement disciplinary measures, high motivation and access system to ensure that lecturers follow policies and avoid absenteeism without notice/valid reason.

Keywords: Lecturer absenteeism, Student academic performance, monitoring, disciplinary measures, syllabus completion & motivation.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training.

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

FET: Further Education and Training.

NCV: National Certificate Vocational.

DPSA: Department of Public Service and Administration.

PILIR: Policy and Procedures on incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement.

ES: Education Specialist

SRC: Students Representative Council

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Chapter 1: Orientation

1.1. Introduction

Lecturer absenteeism and its management mainly fall within human resource management (DHET Annual Report for 2017/18). Human resource capacity remains a serious challenge following the conclusion of migration process. Regional offices of the department also lack capacity, hence key human resource functions have remained centralized at Head office (DHET Annual report, 2017/18: 124). According to this report, more misconducts addressed at disciplinary hearings were absences from work with no proper reason or permission (DHET Annual report: 159). Meticulous monitoring of sick leave in the public service is imperative (DHET Annual report 2017/18:155).

This report further indicated that the department is in the process of identifying additional human resource functions which could be decentralized to colleges (DHET Annual report 2017/18:155). This means that a great probability is that more information relating to lecturer absenteeism and the influence could be obtained from the colleges themselves. For purposes of this research, the words ‘lecturer’, ‘educator’ and ‘teacher’ mean the same thing and will therefore be used interchangeably. Educator refers to anyone who provides teaching, educating or training other people or gives educational services professionally at an institution (SACE ACT 31 OF 2000: E-3).

Section 3 referred to in the definition of an educator says;

“3. The act applies to all appointed educators

- d) In terms of the Further Education and Training Act, 1998 (Act 98 of 1998);
- e) At a further education and training institution” (SACE ACT 31 OF 2000: E-3)

TVET lecturers are also expected to register with SACE to qualify to teach. In terms of chapter 3, section 21, subsection 2 of the SACE Act 31 of 2000, unless one is registered with SACE, they may not be appointed to teach or practice as a teacher (SACE Act 31 of 2000:E-9).

Poor academic performance as well as certification rate in the TVET sector are and have

always been the concerns of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Such concerns are traceable from as early as 2013, when the department was publicizing policy to improve the outcomes in the then called FET colleges. As part of this improvement, the department wanted to develop policy to address the 40% student absenteeism that contributed to poor academic performance and low certification rate (The Herald, 2013:01-2). Therefore, it is worth-noting that today, there is an 80% attendance and punctuality policy for students due to the intervention of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

This 80% attendance and punctuality policy for TVET students was a result of DHET's concerns on high numbers of student absenteeism and low levels of academic performance. On the other hand, there is a serious gap on studies looking into specifically TVET Colleges regarding the absenteeism of lecturers who are also expected to be in class with students and the possible influence on performance of students. Therefore, this research aims to investigate lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program, possible influence on the academic performance of students and determine intervention strategies.

The following table shows the transformation that has taken place in the sector.

Table 1: Historical context of FET Colleges

| FET Act 1998 | New institutional Landscape 2001 | Recapitalization 2005 | Introduction of NC(V) and Bursary Scheme 2006-2007 | Establishment of New Funding Norms 2008-2009 | Transfer to DHET 2012 |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| 302550 Students | 356049 Students | 377584 students | 320679 Students | 420475 students | 509643 Students |
| 152 Technical colleges | 50 FET Colleges | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| R780m budget (1.7% of National Education Budget) | R793 Budget (1.3% of National Education Budget) | R1.35b budget (1.6% of National Education Budget) | R2.7b budget (2.5% of National Education Budget) | R3.77b budget (2.7% of National Education Budget) | R4.95b budget (2.4 % of National Education Budget) |
| | | | R66 million NSFAS Allocation | R299 million NSFAS Allocation | R1.7 billion NSFAS Allocation |

Source: DHET 2013, FET Social Dialogue: Singizi Consulting

In its transformation journey leading up to its transfer to DHET as shown in the table above, the Department of Higher Education also developed and signed into effect a Leave Policy (DHET: Leave Policy, 2011: 1-27). This requires further research to determine strategies and solutions to transform the TVET Colleges sector in the country, hence this research aims to contribute towards solutions to transform the TVET sector in the area of lecturer absenteeism and its influence on the academic performance of students.

1.2. Contextual background

My contextual background for this research shows the journey of the TVET colleges in the country by focusing mainly on the capacity of systems to identify and manage lecturer absenteeism and linking such absenteeism to the academic performance of NCV students.

The TVET colleges sector has been and is in a developmental and transformational process, which includes (1) its human resource management section which is the main player responsible for management of lecturer absenteeism, working collaboratively with management of campuses and the academic managers who can link the absenteeism of lecturers to the academic performance of students in the NCV program. So, effectiveness and capacity of human resource section and management of campuses when it comes to

managing lecturer absenteeism is key.

Reports indicate that capacity is one of the major challenges of TVET colleges because TVET colleges have been through and are still going through transformational process and this could also affect the management of lecturer absenteeism and the ability of colleges to identify the connection of absenteeism to the academic performance of students in the NCV program. This research aimed to investigate lecturer absenteeism and its influence on the academic performance of NCV students.

Even with capacity challenges, DHET indicated that a lot of misconducts addressed at disciplinary hearings were continual absences from work without permission (DHET Annual report: 159). On the other hand, Public Service Commission also recognized a necessity for cautious monitoring of sick leave within the public service sector (DHET Annual report, 2017/18:155).

1.3. Statement of Problem

Teacher absenteeism has been a subject of interest for researchers and government officials for many years. Many studies have been carried out to get a deeper comprehension of its causes and the way it can be curbed. However, many of these studies focused on school-teacher absenteeism and student absenteeism. These studies are rarely about absenteeism of TVET college lecturers. Most of these studies also fail to investigate the influence of the phenomenon (teacher/lecturer absenteeism) on student performance as perceived by students themselves.

Despite students being at the receiving end of teacher/lecturer absenteeism, many previous studies have neglected the views of students. The challenge with this one-dimensional approach is that the views of students appear less significant. It is my belief that a broader perspective needed to be explored, including all relevant stakeholders, which is why leaving students out is not likely to yield better results. A multi-dimensional approach where the views of all stakeholders are considered is likely to yield inclusive intervention strategies to the problem. This study is therefore aimed at affording students a platform to express their views on how they believe teacher/lecturer absenteeism affects their performance.

Limited empirical data currently exist on the influence that lecturer absenteeism has on student academic performance. Taking issues explained above into consideration, this study recognizes that lack of information on lecturer absenteeism and the influence it may have on the academic performance of students has serious implications on students' academic development. This situation necessitated conducting a study that might provide scientifically generated information, obtained mainly from those directly affected by the influence of lecturer absenteeism.

1.4. Significance of the study

The findings of this research may enable lecturers to better understand the influence of lecturer absenteeism on the academic performance of students within the NCV Program of TVET Colleges. The findings may also reveal the extent to which students are affected by lecturers who stay away from their classes or work entirely.

The findings may provide intervention system for combating lecturer absenteeism in the TVET sector and other institutions.

The findings may further establish and enrich discussions on lecturer absenteeism and its influence on students' academic performance as well as to influence policy development in the Department of Higher Education and Training and beyond.

1.5. Purpose of the study

This study aims to investigate the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance.

1.6. Objectives the study

The following objectives guided this research:

- To explore the factors that influence lecture's absenteeism.
- Explore views of students, lecturers and education specialists on causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program.
- Determine how lecturer absenteeism affects students' academic performance.

- Explore views of students, lecturers and education specialists on what is perceived to be solutions to lecturer absenteeism.

1.7 The main question of the research

What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on academic performance of TVET College NCV Students?

The research aimed to answer the sub-questions that follow:

- How prevalent is lecturer absenteeism in TVET College?
- What are possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program?
- What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on academic performance of students?
- What are the possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism?

1.8 Research Design and Methods

For this study, a qualitative technique was used since it provides an investigative mechanism that focuses on a specific methodological approach to investigate a social or human problem in its natural setting (Creswell, 2013). This research method allowed the researcher to obtain a better knowledge of the social world in which we live and why things happen the way they do. As a result, the researcher served as a tool for gathering information from research participants in their normal environment (Rossman & Rallis, 2003:44). The researcher took on the role of primary instrument in research design, data collecting, and data analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Chapter 3 of this study gives a detailed discussion of these factors.

1.8.1 Research Design

This section discusses the research paradigm, research approach and strategy.

1.8.2 Research Paradigm

Creswell (2014) argued that a researcher's philosophical perspective may be hidden in research but always informs and influences the actual practice of research. Creswell

labelled this as a paradigm, which is a basic set of beliefs that guided the researcher's action to a study. This study was premised within the confines of constructivism paradigm. Constructivism believed that reality is created by social world (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

According to Kivunja & Kuyini (2017:33), as understanding the subjective world of human experience is the central endeavor of constructivism, an effort is made through the approach to get inside the heads of the studied subjects to understand and interpret what the subjects think as well as the meaning they make of the context. This study therefore attempted to get into the heads of the subjects to understand their thinking and the meaning they make in terms of the influence of lecturer absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training students' academic performance in Limpopo Province.

Constructivism model permits engagement between the researcher and participants in the research study. In this case, the participants shared with the researcher factors that result in lecturer absence. Participants had an influence and voice in the research study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011).

1.8.3 Research Approach

The research approach is defined as a research plan and method that follows from general thoughts of comprehensive methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative research approach was used for this study because it situates the observer in the world and incorporates interpretive behaviors that make the world visible (Flick, 2014). The qualitative research approach was used to investigate participants' perceptions and experiences in the college (Creswell, 2013). To strengthen the dependability of the findings, data were obtained in this study using interviews and observation (Meijer *et al.*, 2002). Data were gathered from lecturers, students and education specialists.

1.8.4 Research Strategy

The research design utilized in this study was a case study. A case study gives the researcher the chance to get deeper knowledge on what is being studied by interacting

with people in real situations (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a case study puts stress on acquiring more understanding with regard to the situation in a single unit. Case study research methodologies illustrate what occurred in the research setting and provide the story behind the results by recording thorough information on what occurred from each case (Neale *et al.*, 2006). A detailed discussion of this research type is presented in Chapter 3.

1.9 Research Methods

This study used the qualitative approach. The researcher's choice was influenced by the design of the study, which focused on exploring participants' thoughts and feelings in Capricorn TVET College (Kielmann *et al.*, 2012). A specific method related to the selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical issues were also employed in this study. The qualitative approach was employed in this study, and the researcher's choice was informed by the study's design, which focused on investigating participants' feelings and ideas at Capricorn TVET College (Kielmann *et al.*, 2012). This study also used a specific approach for participant selection, data collecting, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations which are discussed below.

1.9.1 Population and sampling

The participants of the study were 8 students, 4 lecturers and 4 education specialists from two Capricorn TVET College campuses. The research was conducted in the two premises of Capricorn TVET College. Both sampled campuses are situated in Limpopo province, South Africa. Participants were selected based on their personal involvement in the research topic (Bhattacherjee, 2012:65). In any research, sampling is an important step because studying the whole populations is seldom practical. This study sample size consisted of 8 students, 4 lecturers and 4 educational specialists. The researcher selected the participants using purposive sampling.

1.9.2 Data Collection Instruments

According to Creswell (2012), data collection is described as identifying suitable persons for research, as well as securing their permission to gather information through asking questions and observing their behaviour. In qualitative research, the predominant means of data collection are interviews (Greeff, 2011). The researcher used semi-structured interviews and observation as instruments for data collection. This allowed the researcher to have each participant's detailed picture of beliefs concerning the study subject (Greeff, 2011).

- **Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 8 students, 4 lecturers and 4 educational specialists. The interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants, and thereafter transcribed verbatim. The use of tape-recording was to ensure the trustworthiness of the outcomes for the interviews conducted (Brown, 2013). Observation occurred when the researcher acted as an observer and visited the college, taking notes without becoming involved with the research participants (Creswell, 2012). This allowed the researcher to witness and capture key information needed for the study from the college. According to Okeke and Van Wyk (2015), during non-participant observation, the researcher does not participate in the events happening in the environment under investigation; yet, the observer's purpose is well understood by those being observed.

1.9.3 Data Analysis

The study collected data by using semi-structured interviews and observations. In addition, the study used tape recording and notes to gather data. Creswell (2014) recommends that a tape-recording technique is applied when interviews are conducted. The interviews were later transcribed. Codes were generated from the transcripts to label manifested data, and sub-themes were collated, which were transformed into major themes. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis technique. The data in this study was presented in the form of italic and verbal descriptions.

1.9.4 The Research Trustworthiness

This study used qualitative research methods, which have necessitated the researcher to triangulate the collected information. The following terms were used to evaluate the quality of the qualitative method: transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability (Wahyuni, 2012).

1.10 Ethical Considerations

Permission was asked to conduct this study at the University of South Africa and Ethical Clearance Certificate was granted. This document helped the researcher to gain access to the college. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), ethical principles are to be followed by every researcher who is conducting a study. Therefore, proper measures are to be adhered to when dealing with people to ensure that their participation is voluntary, and that informed consent is given prior to participation. In undertaking this research, the researcher made certain that informed consent forms are provided to the participants to ensure that they knew what the study was all about. The names of the participants remained confidential and their privacy was respected (Somekh and Lewin, 2011). The researcher provided a thorough explanation of the study in the form of an information sheet, which outlined what was required of participants, the voluntary nature of the study, the potential risks of participating in the study, and the commitment to uphold the highest levels of confidentiality.

1.11 Chapters of the study

This study is organized into 5 chapters.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction of the study. The study stressed the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET students' academic performance in Limpopo province.

Chapter 2 discusses theoretical and conceptual framework based on lecturers and students relationship in an attempt to establish the influence and the causes of lecturer absenteeism. In this chapter, a rationale for empirical research is also outlined.

Chapter 3 presents qualitative research method which was used in this study and the data collection that was presented through the use of case study method. In this chapter, the

research methods are explored.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research based on the data analysis.

Chapter 5 outlines the key findings summary, conclusion and recommendations related to the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET students' academic performance in Limpopo province as reviewed in the literature in Chapter 2 and based on the research findings presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed understanding of this study through the Human resources management in the TVET Sector, theoretical and conceptual frameworks. According to Adom et al. (2018:438), a researcher must carefully select the relevant theory or theories that underpin the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be investigated. This research is based on two important complementary theories.

First is the Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development in order to show the irreplaceable need for the teacher to be physically present in the classroom for effective teaching and learning to take place; and secondly, the system theory to look into the system as a whole, as well as its interrelatedness and interdependence of roles of people in the system and the functional elements of the system to ultimately ensure the system addresses the issue of lecturer absenteeism and improve student academic performance.

2.2. Human Resources Management in the TVET Sector

This background for this study shows the journey of the TVET Colleges in the Country focusing mainly on the capacity of systems to identify and manage lecturer absenteeism and linking absenteeism to the academic performance of NCV students.

The TVET college sector has been in a developmental and transformational process, which includes (1) its human resource management section which is the main player responsible for management of lecturer absenteeism, working collaboratively with management of campuses and the academic managers who can link the absenteeism

of lecturers to the academic performance of students in the NCV program. This suggests that effectiveness and capacity of human resource section and management of campuses are key to manage lecturer absenteeism.

However, human resource capacity remains a serious challenge following the conclusion of migration process (DHET Annual Report for 2017/18). Regional offices of the department also lack capacity, hence key human resource functions have remained centralized at head office (DHET Annual report, 2017/18: 124). This report further indicated that the department is in the process of identifying additional Human Resource functions which could be decentralized to colleges (DHET Annual report 2017/18:155). On the other hand, TVET colleges Technical Task Team Final Report (2014:35) recommended that Capacity Building of College Management should be prioritized to ensure that required resources are available. Reports indicate that capacity is one of the major challenges of TVET colleges because TVET colleges are still going through transformational process and this could also affect the management of lecturer absenteeism and the ability of colleges to identify the connection of such absenteeism to the academic performance of students in the NCV program. This research aims to investigate lecturer absenteeism and its possible influence on the academic performance of NCV students.

Even with capacity challenges, DHET indicated that a lot of misconducts addressed at disciplinary hearings were continual absences from work without permission (DHET Annual report: 159). On other hand, Public Service Commission also recognized a necessity for cautious monitoring of sick leave within the public service sector (DHET Annual report, 2017/18:155), In its transformation journey, the Department of Higher Education also developed and signed into effect a Leave Policy, DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 1-27). More research is required in order to find strategies and solutions to help transform the TVET colleges sector in the country. This research aimed to contribute towards solutions to help transform the TVET sector in the area of lecturer absenteeism and its influence on the academic performance of students.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

Grant and Osanloo (2014) as cited by Adom et al. (2018:438) indicated that theoretical framework is ‘a blueprint’ or guide for the research. Imenda (2014) as cited by Adom et al. (2018:438) further added that a research without a theoretical framework lacks accurate direction to the search of appropriate literature and scholarly discussions of findings from the research.

2.3.1. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky’s theory on the Zone of proximal development supports the supposition, tested in this study that lecturers need to be in class. It implies that tasks which are very complex for children to understand on their own, can be learned with the help and direction of someone older or better skilled peers and or more knowledgeable others such as teachers. This understanding puts teachers or lecturers at the centre of ensuring that effective learning takes place. Zone of proximal development is defined by Vygotsky as the distance between the level of development and potential development level, determined in terms of problem solving guided by an adult or with a highly capable peer.

According to Cole (1996:111), Vygotsky placed the interaction with adults and more capable peers at the heart of this zone, providing the basis upon which, in an ideal world, the education of children would be organized. Cole (1996:111) argues that it is in this very zone that teachers can lay their hands on the actual learning process in the students’ minds. Vygotsky (1978:90) indicated that learning stimulates a range of internal developmental processes that are able to function only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in collaboration with peers.

This suggests that learners may not be able to learn effectively in isolation but can do better with guidance from those with better knowledge and in a collaborative setup. In the context of today’s system of education in South Africa, that encourages collaborative learning where the teacher or lecturer provides guidance and support, the Zone of Proximal Development becomes a practical idea. The unavoidable fact is that in a

classroom, a teacher or a lecturer's presence is absolutely important.

In support of the above, Vygotsky (1987:211) further argues that things a child has the ability to do in collaboration now, the child will have the ability to do it independently in future. In a classroom environment, it would still require the teacher to be there in order to facilitate a collaborative learning process and provide both guidance and support. Gillen (2000:193-194) also acknowledges and emphasizes that adults, teachers or more capable persons should interact with the child. The above view brings to the discussion the concept of scaffolding emanating from the concept of Zone of proximal development. In scaffolding, a scaffold is constructed by the scaffolder separately and presents it for the use of the novice (Daniels, 2002, p. 59). At the centre of the concept of scaffolding, is support. In more specific and relevant terms scaffolding would in this case mean the support and or assistance given to learners in completing tasks they cannot complete by themselves.

Although the Zone of proximal development is often considered in terms of expert– novice interaction, wherein the expert offers the necessary mediational means that foster cognitive development. Lantolf (2000b:17) maintains that the Zone of proximal development is better seen as collaborative construction of opportunities for people to realize development in terms of their mental capacities. Over and above all, in terms of the Idea of the zone of proximal development, lecturers or teachers, peers, parents, adults and caregivers play a significant role in the process of students' learning. In a classroom context, lecturers or teachers have the greatest role to guide and facilitate collaborative and interactive learning as well as providing the necessary support or scaffolding to students. Therefore, in terms of this research, it is clear that the presence of the lecturer or teacher in the classroom to ensure effective learning is absolutely imperative.

2.4. The System Theory

To explore the issues which influence lecturer absenteeism in this study, I drew on some of the tools provided in systems thinking to interpret the realities and the research question in the context of Capricorn TVET college campuses. Systems thinking is an epistemology or way of viewing factors from a broad perspective including seeing

interrelationships between components (students, lecturers and education specialists) of a system (college) and their relationship (Lyneis et al., 1995 as cited by Togo, 2009:83).

Bertalanffy (1968) as cited by Togo (2009:83) defined a system as a set of elements that are interrelated. In the context of this research, I consider different elements in the life of the college, and how they are interrelated within a more complex environment surrounding the elements influencing aspects of college life. A college system using the description of what a system is as viewed by Abercrombie et al (2006:55) would, like all systems, have four sub-systems which correspond to functional imperatives, namely, a) "adaptation: the need to relate to the environment by taking resources from it; b) goal attainment: the setting of goals for the system; c) integration: the maintenance of the internal order; and d) pattern maintenance (latency)": the generation of sufficient motivation to perform tasks. In adapting to their internal and external environments, social systems have to solve these four problems in order to continue to exist. Parsons as cited by Abercrombie et al. (2006:55) refers to the four sub-systems as 'functional needs'.

In the case of this study, the problem of absenteeism requires the college system to change its practices to achieve its goals (i.e. it needs to find solutions to absenteeism to achieve its goals). This is important for the regular pattern of the college to continue and the system needs to achieve higher levels of integration of their parts i.e. the parts of the system need to work together for better. In this study, I particularly consider how the roles of lecturers, education specialists and students may be considered as interrelated components of a social organization system which has a relationship with the environment. I propose through the findings of this study that these roles are more closely aligned in addressing lecturer absenteeism.

The investigation among lecturers, education specialists and students as components of the school system links to the systems of epistemology, i.e. how we know what we know (Banathy, 2000) as cited by Togo 2006: 86) and is concerned with organized components. For this study, I also considered the environment of lectures and the roles of lecturers and education specialists in addressing the lecturer absenteeism issue.

In developing an understanding of the systems dynamics associated with lecturer absenteeism, I looked into constructivist epistemology to consider the understandings and

experiences of these members of the college system, and what reasons are generated to explain absenteeism. I also considered how they define and construct their different roles, and what interrelations they see in relation to the roles that they might play in enabling effective strategies that could be applicable to overcome the current challenges experienced. Constructivist theories tend to be concerned with the sense that individuals make of the world (Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler, 2008: 99). I therefore considered the views of these different role players in the college system in relation to the points that Abercrombie et al. (2006:389) raise about systems and their need to seek ways of adapting to new issues, responding to goal attainment imperatives, integration and pattern maintenance. Abercrombie et al. (2006: 389) state that evidence of goal attainment, adaptation to change, maintenance of patterns and integration and provide the 'real evidence' of a system's adaptation to its environment.

Some of the critiques of systems theory perspectives are that they assume that there will be enough agreement within a system to support such adaptation or goal attainment and that a system is able to manage its own process of adaptation. Other critiques are that systems approaches are too reliant on functional descriptions (i.e. how things function), and therefore neglect to focus on, for example, the meanings that people construct. I therefore focused on the meanings and roles of people in the system, as well as the functional elements of the system and their adaptations.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

According to Grant and Osanloo (2001) as cited by Adom et al. (2018:439), conceptual framework shows the series of action the researcher intends to take in a research study. Adom et al. (2018:440) also indicated that conceptual framework is a researcher's own constructed model that he or she uses to explain the relationship that exists between the main variables in his or her study. Therefore, in this study, lecturer absenteeism is taken as dependent variable (DV) and, lecturer issues, personal factors and college issues are taken as independent variables. There are various factors of the absenteeism of lecturers in work places that influence student academic performance. Therefore, keeping lecturers at work places is very important.

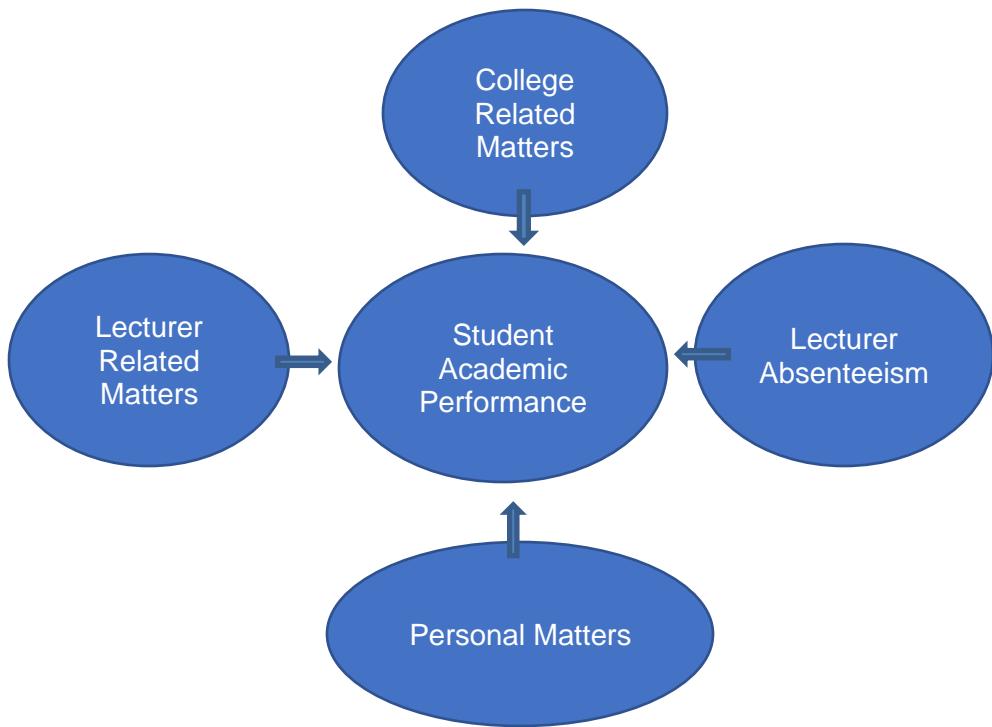


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework

2.6. Summary

The above theoretical and conceptual frameworks have attempted to present a wide conceptualization of absenteeism and an indication of the dimension and complication of the subject. While studying absenteeism, the challenge is not a shortage of research material but deciding what path new work should take. Theories on absenteeism discussed in this research are Zone of Proximal Development and System theories.

2.7 Literature Review

2.7.1 Introduction

According to Punch and Qancea (2014:207), the reasons for reviewing literature are to review empirical evidence critically, review conceptual and theoretical tools critically, and link one's study to the literature. Review of literature focused on the existence and or prevalence of lecturer or teacher absenteeism, the influence of teacher or lecturer absenteeism (both generally and more in particular on students' academic performance), the causes, reasons or factors that contribute to teacher or lecturer or educator

absenteeism, policies in line with teacher or lecturer absenteeism and management in dealing with teacher or lecturer absenteeism. In terms of the above- mentioned focus, the research looks outside the country and narrowed down to South Africa.

2.7.2. The prevalence of lecturer or teacher absenteeism inside and outside the country.

Teacher absenteeism remains one of the biggest challenges confronting education departments. This submission is reinforced by Obiero, Mwebi and Nyang'ara (2017:2) who indicated that teacher absenteeism is a serious problem that goes beyond borders. Usman and Suryandarma (2004:18) reported that there were challenges of teacher absenteeism in Indonesia and about 18.7% of the teacher absenteeism was as a result of official responsibilities outside schools.

According to Policy Brief for the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (2014:4), rates of absenteeism in Uganda range from 20-30% with slight differences per district and over 30 US\$ is lost yearly as a result of paid services that are not rendered. According to Chauhury et al. (2006:104) in Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru and Uganda, health facilities and primary schools have poor infrastructure such as unavailability of toilets, and classrooms that are not covered, unclean floors, unavailability of libraries and higher rates of absenteeism of officials.

Bennel (2004:26) indicated in the World Development Report that up to 45% of teachers in Ethiopia absent themselves during one week.

The policy brief also showed the following statistics on teacher absenteeism in Africa:

Table 2: Teacher absenteeism rates by reason and location (2004).

| Country | Location | illness | Duty | Leave | Other Authorized | Non-authorized | Total |
|--------------|----------|---------|------|-------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| Ghana | Rural | 4.5 | 0 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 0 | 12.6 |
| | Urban | 10.1 | 13.6 | 0 | 0 | 3.6 | 27.3 |
| Sierra Leone | Rural | 4.8 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 0 | 0 | 11.2 |
| | Urban | 2.5 | 5 | 1.7 | 2.5 | 0 | 11.7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|
| Tanzania | Rural | 8.5 | 16.9 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 1.7 | 32.3 |
| | Urban | 4.9 | 4.9 | 0 | 10.9 | 10.9 | 13.7 |
| Zambia | Rural | 1.6 | 0 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 2.3 | 7.9 |
| | Urban | 4.1 | 0.5 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 6.4 | 16.8 |
| Malawi | Rural | Na | na | na | na | na | 17.2 |
| | Urban | na | na | na | na | na | 17.6 |

Chaudhury (2006:101) further indicated a challenge of lecturer absenteeism in South Asia and further argued that other responsibilities outside the school such as campaigns on public health are contributing to high absenteeism of lecturers. Absence of lecturers is a challenge in other countries and the above findings offer some glimpse on the prevalence of teacher absenteeism across the world.

Lack of capacity in the human resource of DHET in the country may signify a challenge in the management of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program of the TVET colleges. This reflected in the DHET annual report 2017/18, “Human resource capacity remains a serious challenge following the conclusion of migration process. Regional offices of the department also lack capacity, hence key human resource functions have remained centralized at head office (DHET Annual report, 2017/18: 124).

Research conducted on the absenteeism of students in the Department of Basic Education found that lecturer absenteeism was more of a problem compared to student absenteeism (Daily Sun, 2008:4). The following challenges and solutions of teacher absenteeism broadly in other countries and specifically in South Africa in terms of the work done on teacher absenteeism.

2.7.2.1 Tanzania

In a study on the impact of Teacher Absenteeism on Pupils’ learning in Kigoma/Ujiji Municipality, Tanzania; Biyara (2015:66-67) made the following findings categorized into four objectives;

Objective 1

The intention of the first objective was understanding the contributory factors to

teacher absenteeism in the Kigoma/Ujiji Municipal Primary Schools.

In the context of obtained field responses, five major reasons for teacher absenteeism were identified as follows;

- Health Problems
- Lack of residence houses for teachers
- Economic constraints
- Pregnancy/ Maternity leave
- Laziness of teachers

Objective 2

The second objective sought to comprehend the effects of the absenteeism of teachers on pupils' learning.

Identified effects of absenteeism of teachers included the following;

- Poor academic performance
- Pupils' failure in reading and writing
- Increased learner or student absenteeism
- Reduced learner discipline
- Failure by teachers to complete the syllabus

Objective 3

The third objective looked into measures already taken by authorities to deal with educators with a habit of absenting themselves.

The following measures were identified to have been taken by authorities;

- Firing of some educators
- Taking legal action against such teachers
- Writing warning letters to affected teachers

These measures have also been reported by authorities to be effective in reducing teacher absenteeism.

Objective 4

The fourth objective needed to find good methods or strategies to address teacher absenteeism.

Strategies from field responses included the following;

- Deductions of salaries of absent teachers

- Paying teachers in terms of the days they actually worked
- Reporting teacher absenteeism
- Discipline teachers accordingly
- Provide better salaries for teachers
- Build residences for teachers
- Introduce incentives to motivate teachers.

2.7.2.2 Malawi

Teacher absenteeism is also a serious problem in the schools of Malawi. According to Kadzamira (2006: 12), educators find it a better option to do other jobs or secondary jobs in order to supplement their income and that results in serious absenteeism of teachers in their schools.

Kadzamira (2006:13) also found that in terms of teacher absenteeism, most teachers regularly cite the following reasons for their absenteeism;

- Personal sickness
- Funeral attendance and;
- Taking care of sick family members

2.7.2.3 India

When it comes to teacher absenteeism, India is not excluded. According to Kremer et al. (2005: 658), there is generally a challenge of teacher absenteeism in primary schools of India, however, there seems to be higher absenteeism rates in the primary schools controlled locally.

Kremer et al. (2005:661-662) further argued that there is gap in terms of the link between pay and teacher absenteeism and this gap can contribute to teacher absenteeism. On the other hand, teachers seem not to be seriously worried and see very little risk of being fired for their absence from work.

According to Narayan and Mooij (2010:63), the absenteeism of teachers particularly in government primary schools of the rural parts of India is a serious challenge.

In their study Narayan and Mooij (2010:63), they also noted that high levels of teacher absenteeism are partly caused by lack of teacher motivation, resulting from amongst other things, the following;

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Poor infrastructure
- Unfilled vacancies
- Lack of adequate training
- Multi-ability classes
- Multi-lingual classes
- Declining teacher profession status and,
- Lack of incentives for teachers.

Clarke and Jha (2006:13) as cited by Narayan and Mooij (2010: 64) noted that many schools in India are not monitored regularly and this lack of capacity may be because of a shortage of supervisory staff. They also emphasized that from a hierarchism point of view, periodic supervision and monitoring are important to support teachers to do their job effectively and control teacher absenteeism.

2.7.2.4 Kenya

According to Obiero, Mwebi and Nyangara (2017:125), absenteeism of teachers in Kenya is a very serious problem that is also draining the limited financial resources of the country. They also indicated in this discussion that efforts by the Kenyan government to optimize the use of teachers are often undermined by high levels of teacher absenteeism in the country.

They further argued that teacher absenteeism is not only a challenge in terms of monetary costs but also contributes to the reduction of student academic performance.

Stressing and emphasizing on the need for physical presence of educators in the classroom for effective teaching and learning, Obiero, Mwebi and Nyangara (2017:125) further indicated that it is needed for the teacher to be in front of a classroom. In the same discussion, they argued that in a developing country like Kenya where substitute teachers are not common, teacher absenteeism has serious consequences such as student idle

time, students drop-out and doubling up of classes.

2.7.2.4 Nigeria

According to Ejere (2010:15) as indicated in the World Bank Report of 2010, The Champion Teacher Absenteeism in Nigeria is estimated at 20% of the teaching staff, especially in the government primary schools. It further argued in this discussion that absenteeism negates the goal of improving productivity and it leads to loss of productivity.

Ejere (2010:118) further argued that low levels job satisfaction has the likelihood of increasing the already high levels of absenteeism in the country and indicated that teachers in Nigeria are lacking enough motivation and rewards for the work they do, which results in low morale. Further in this argument, it is argued that the low status of the teaching profession itself in Nigeria partly shows the reason why it is deserted by men and only recommended for women who are seen as a weaker sex in Nigeria.

In his study, Ejere (2010: 119) recommended the following strategies to deal with teacher absenteeism;

- Application of existing rules and regulations.
- Cultivating a culture that does not tolerate excessive absence.
- Improving the economic and social status of teachers.
- Promotion of conducive working environment
- Rewarding attendance
- Empowering teachers
- Empowerment of head teachers and school based management committees
- Developing wellness programmes
- Increased professionalization of teaching.

2.7.2.6 Indonesia

A study by USAID 2009 based on Papua, Indonesia noted work done and progress made in the area of basic education (Suryahadi & Sambodho, 2013:14). The challenge noted however, is teacher absenteeism which is identified as one of the most chronic problems.

In this study by Suryahadi and Sambodho (2013:1-14), the following were found:

- About 70% of the indigenous children live in remote rural communities with little or insufficient teachers.
- Teaching conditions in rural areas that are isolated are poor, have no adequate housing.
- Shortage of food supply
- Poor sanitation
- Lack of access to clean water
- High rates of teacher absenteeism in rural schools
- Little administrative support, such as teachers, equipment, materials and books.
- Class sizes are small
- Students travel long distances to school

The study further noted that the challenge of teacher absenteeism in Papua has two distinct characteristics compared to other regions in Indonesia.

- The challenge of teacher absenteeism in Papua is much higher than the national average. For instance in a study by UNCEN et al. (2012) as cited by Suryahadi and Sambodho (2013:14) found that in 2011, the rate of teacher absenteeism in Papua was at 33,5 %. This in simple terms meant that one in three teachers where absent from work on a day they are supposed to teach.
- The second aspect was the duration of absence by teachers in Papua compared to the duration of absence by teachers in other regions of Indonesia. A typical teacher in other regions of Indonesia may be absent for a few days but in Papua, a teacher can be absent from work or school for as long as several months (Suryahadi & Sambodho, 2013:14).
- The study generally noted that teachers working in schools that are frequently monitored have lower levels of absenteeism (UNCEN et al., 2012 as cited by Suryahadi & Sambodho, 2013:14).

2.7.2.7 South Africa

A study on Comparative Trends Analysis of changes in Teacher absenteeism in South

Africa by Msosa (2020:1-13) looked into, compared and analyzed the change in the rates teacher absenteeism among South African provinces and contributory elements to student performance.

Msosa (2020:1) argued that teachers play an important role to nurture learners, build their knowledge base and skills to help them contribute positively into society. He further added that teachers are also expected give support to students and motivate them to enhance their academic performance but also on the other hand argue that this can only happen or be achieved if teachers are present in the classroom and participating actively in teaching and learning.

This study also noted that some teachers may have valid reasons for absenteeism from work or the classroom but majority of teachers have no valid reason for their absenteeism as they are engaged in moonlighting, conducting private teaching lessons not sanctioned by their schools.

The study also looked into statistics of the rates of teacher absenteeism in the nine provinces of South Africa based on secondary data for 2011 and 2017 academic years. The statistics were as follows;

A quantitative analysis based on secondary data indicators for the 2011 and 2017 academic years.

Table 4. Summary statistics of different provinces' rates of teacher absenteeism (%)

| NO | Variable | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----|---------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| 1. | Eastern Cape (EC) | 4.400 | 48.200 | 25.000 | 19.068 |
| 2. | Free state (FS) | 1.900 | 43.000 | 25.025 | 17.079 |
| 3. | Gauteng (GT) | 5.400 | 41.100 | 25.000 | 15.574 |
| 4. | KwaZulu Natal (KZN) | 1.200 | 52.600 | 20.975 | 24.616 |
| 5. | Limpopo (LP) | 0.900 | 61.700 | 25.000 | 25.928 |
| 6. | Mpumalanga (MP) | 1.800 | 48.200 | 25.000 | 18.947 |
| 7. | Northern Cape (NC) | 4.000 | 40.000 | 25.000 | 16.793 |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| 8. | North West (NW) | 1.900 | 42.100 | 25.025 | 17.056 |
| 9. | Western Cape (WC) | 5.400 | 50.400 | 24.975 | 18.970 |

Msosa (2020: 5)

The study indicated that there is a significant statistical increase on teacher absenteeism between 2011 and 2017. The study also found that Kwazulu-Natal (KZN), Limpopo (LP) and Western Cape (WC) had higher rates of teacher absenteeism in the country.

Amongst other things in order to deal with teacher absenteeism, the study recommended the following:

- Principals to instill a culture of discipline.
- Principals to regularly evaluate issues affecting teachers and causes of teacher absenteeism.
- Mentorship and in-service training for teachers.
- Training to specifically deal with and change the negative mindset and attitude of teachers.
- Awareness on the implication of teacher absenteeism.

2.7.3. The influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' performance.

In showing the extent and seriousness of lecturer absenteeism, especially when it comes to the influence it has on students' academic performance. Usman et al. (2007:207) argue that when a lecturer is not at school, it means there is no school for students. In the same breath, Pattillo (2012:14) argues that lecturer absenteeism could be viewed as 'quiet corruption'. This is because students are robbed of classroom contact time they miss as a result of absent lecturers.

Clotfelter et al. (2009:24-28) argue that absence of lecturers from class is part of the contributory factors to poor matriculation results. According to Reddy et al. (2010:24), time is lost for learning and teaching when lecturers are away and this also contributes to

students' misbehaviour and absenteeism. Suryadarma et al. (2006:423) agree with the above, that there was significant relationship between higher lecturer absences and lower student scores in mathematics.

Msosa (2020:1) argued that teachers play an important role to nurture learners, build their knowledge base and skills to help them contribute positively into society. He further added that teachers are also expected give support to students and motivate them to enhance their academic performance but also on the other hand argue that this can only happen or be achieved if teachers are present in the classroom and participating actively in teaching and learning.

The Policy Brief for Association for the Development of Education in Africa (2014:1) indicated that there is a significant prejudice by lecturer absenteeism on the learning outcomes of students which leads to serious financial loss and also negatively affects the school culture. According to Roggers and Vegas (2009:4), the absence of lecturers, without doubt affects the quality of education. They further point out that if students only play in the school yard or busy on their own, the likelihood is that minimal learning will take place. Roggers and Vegas (2009:6) further argue that there is a relationship between lack of incentives and the challenge of lecturer absenteeism.

According to Miller et al. (2007:8), there is a positive relationship between absenteeism of teachers and the academic performance of learners. Stressing and emphasizing on the need for physical presence of educators in the classroom for effective teaching and learning, Obiero, Mwebi and Nyangara (2017:125) further indicated that it is needed for the teacher to be in front of a classroom. In the same discussion, they argue that in a developing country like Kenya where substitute teachers are not common, teacher absenteeism has serious consequences such as student idle time, students drop-out and doubling up of classes.

2.7.4. Causes of lecturer absenteeism

There is literature that speaks to causes or reasons for lecturer absenteeism, such as Clotfelter et al. (2009:28) who argue that lecturers whose students experience academic

difficulties may increase their sick leave days as a result of frustration. In the same argument, Usman and Suryandarma (2004:18) reported in their research that about 18.7% of absences of lecturers in Indonesia were because of official responsibilities outside the school. In agreement with the above, Chaudhury (2006: 101) in a study done in South Asia, argues that governmental responsibilities outside the school such as voter registrations are contributing towards high lecturer absenteeism. Mampane (2013:22) further contributed in this argument and argues that there is involuntary absence of lecturers which refers to matters that are not within the control of lecturers, such as the passing on of a family member and other private engagements. According to Mthombeni (2010:1), one of the reasons for the absenteeism of lecturers is lecturers being demoralised as a result of among other things, school infrastructural shortages and lack of learning and teaching materials while Van Nuland (2009:10) argues that one of the causes of absenteeism of lecturers is personal ill-discipline.

Clarke and Jha (2006: 13) as cited by Narayan and Mooij (2010: 64) noted that many schools in India are not monitored regularly and this lack of capacity may be because of a shortage of supervisory staff.

Kadzamira (2006:13) also found that in terms of teacher absenteeism, most teachers regularly cite the following reasons for their absenteeism;

- Personal sickness
- Funeral attendance and;
- Taking care of sick family member

Kremer et al. (2005:661-662) further argued that there is no link between pay and teacher absenteeism and this gap can contribute to teacher absenteeism and on the other hand teachers seem not to be seriously worried and see very little risk of being fired for their absence from work.

Ejere (2010:118) further argued that low levels job satisfaction has the likelihood of increasing the already high levels of absenteeism in the country and indicated that teachers in Nigeria are lacking enough motivation and rewards for the work they do, which results in low morale. Further in this argument, it is argued that the low status of the teaching profession itself in Nigeria partly shows the reason why it is deserted by men and

only recommended for women who are seen as a weaker sex in Nigeria.

In their study Narayan and Mooij (2010:63), they also noted that high level of teacher absenteeism is partly caused by lack of teacher motivation, resulting from amongst other things, the following;

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Poor infrastructure
- Unfilled vacancies
- Lack of adequate training
- Multi-ability classes
- Multi-lingual classes
- Declining teacher profession status and,
- Lack of incentives for teachers.

According to Kadzamira (2006: 12), educators find it a better option to do other jobs or secondary jobs in order to supplement their income and that results in serious absenteeism of teachers in their schools.

2.7.5. Policies in place for lecturer absenteeism

Reddy et al. (2010) as cited in Naidoo (2017:38) argue that not much is known regarding the extent, nature and types of leave educators in the country take; therefore, leave taking in this context needs to be studied more. In the same breath, the department said in one of its reports that sick leave in the public service need to be carefully monitored, (DHET Annual report 2017/18:155). Usman and Suryadarma (2004:19-23) reported that there was a need for policy makers to be equipped with relevant information for purposes of making relevant changes and or contributions in order to shape policies, both nationally and beyond borders. Reddy et al. (2010:20) in stressing the importance of policy in this context, argue that the rate of lecturer absence cannot be effectively studied outside the policy framework or simply disregarding policy provisions regarding lecturer absenteeism, hence this study also looked into policies.

All Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges have in place the DHET:

Leave Policy approved and signed by the Director General, Mr. Qonde G.F on the 17th of June 2011.

The policy finds its legislative frameworks from the following:

- Public Service Act, 1994 as Amended.
- Public Service Regulations, 2001.
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997.
- DPSA directives and determination of leave of absence.
- PILIR (Procedures for Incapacity Leave and Ill-health retirement).

In terms of the scope of application, the policy applies to all employees of the Department of Higher Education and Training and is based on fairness, confidentiality, equality and professionalism.

According to DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 7), in terms of leave forms and registers, Form 1 (Z1) needs to be completed whenever leave is taken by employees. It also indicates that when an employee takes annual leave, the form must be completed in advance. The Policy further indicates that before leave forms are submitted to the sub-directorate: Staffing Services, the relevant supervisor or manager must have recommended and approved the leave.

DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 8) indicates that managers or Supervisors need to make certain that for all absences, leave forms are submitted, ensure that they do follow-ups and obtain all outstanding forms from the employee concerned. The Policy further emphasizes that there should not be any employee who is absent for any time during the working day without completion of a leave form as well as getting permission from the direct manager or supervisor.

DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 8) also shows that the supervisor or manager has authority to complete leave forms for an absent employee if the concerned employee decides not to complete them or refuses. The employee concerned will have to prove if their absence was justifiable in line with the policy or else their absence will be treated as leave without pay.

Generally the DHET: Leave Policy (2011:1-26) covers the following areas of employee

leave:

- Sick leave.
- Temporary incapacity leave.
- Permanent disability.
- Leave for occupational injuries and diseases.
- Maternity leave.
- Adoption leave.
- Family responsibility leave.
- Special leave and release from duty for particular purposes which include: Study, examinations attendance of classes/lectures and workshops during working hours.
- Sport purpose.
- Resettlement.
- Special leave: miscellaneous.
- Leave for office bearers and shop stewards of recognized employee organizations.
- Long Service recognition.
- Closure of the Department during December.
- Sabbatical leave.

2.7.6. Management in dealing with lecturer absenteeism.

Bennell and Akyeampong (2007:19) argue that the manner in which lecturers are managed, significantly affects the quality of teaching.

Paton (2006:1) argues in relation to the above that, there needs to be a great deal of commitment and responsibility on the part of managers, in managing lecturer absenteeism as well as structured interventions. Reddy et al. (2011:23) argue that job satisfaction, high motivation levels and clear goals are important in order to improve lecturer attendance.

On the other hand, biometrics are said to be one of the best interventions that can be used to help address or deal with lecturer absenteeism. According to Gelb and Clark (2013) as cited by Mampane (2013:39), the system (biometrics) effectively captures teacher

attendance and allows individual employees to enter their place of work and exit, without a need for providing any personal information. The Policy Brief for the Association of the Development of Education (2014:6) recommends the following in order to help reduce lecturer absenteeism:

- Making use of class representatives to record lecturer time in and time out can be helpful in tracking lecturer contact time.
- Reducing authorized lecturer absences and instead allocating non-teaching responsibilities to deputy principals, principals and or other non-teaching staff.
- Develop programmes to support health awareness in order to reduce absenteeism as a result of health issues.
- Consider seriously improving the working and living conditions of lecturers.
- Look into using technology or ICT based programmes to manage daily lecturer absenteeism.

Roggers and Vegas (2009:4), argue that high levels of lecturer absence often indicate deeper challenges in terms of governance and accountability.

DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 8) indicates that managers or Supervisors need to make certain that for all absences, leave forms are submitted, ensure that they do follow-ups and obtain all outstanding forms from the employee concerned. The Policy further emphasizes that there should not be any employee who is absent for any time during the working day without completion of a leave form as well as getting permission from the direct manager or supervisor.

DHET: Leave Policy (2011: 8) also shows that the supervisor or manager has authority to complete leave forms for an absent employee if the concerned employee decides not to complete them or refuses. The employee concerned will have to prove if their absence was justifiable in line with the policy or else their absence will be treated as leave without pay.

Banerjee et al. (2012:567) also argued that to reduce teacher absenteeism we also need to forge a contractual relationship that will have both students and teachers mutually accountable to each other to be present at school and in class.

In his study, Ejere (2010: 119) recommended the following strategies management to deal

with teacher absenteeism:

- Application of existing rules and regulations.
- Cultivating a culture that does not tolerate excessive absence.
- Improving the economic and social status of teachers.
- Promotion of conducive working environment
- Rewarding attendance
- Empowering teachers
- Empowerment of head teachers and school based management committees
- Developing wellness programmes
- Increased professionalization of teaching.

Clarke and Jha (2006: 13) as cited by Narayan and Mooij (2010: 64) noted that many schools in India are not monitored regularly and this lack of capacity may be because of a shortage of supervisory staff. They also emphasized that from a hierarchism point of view, periodic supervision and monitoring are important to support teachers to do their job effectively and control teacher absenteeism.

2.8 Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on factors that are influencing lecturers' absenteeism at the TVET College. Literature review in this chapter shows that factors that influence lecturers' absenteeism are lecturer-related factors, personal-related factors and college related factors. This chapter also revealed that lecturers' absenteeism has a potential of influencing student academic performance. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET students' academic performance in Limpopo province, South Africa. This study chapter presents a rationale for the research design and research methods. It was necessary to apply a qualitative research approach to investigate the research phenomenon. It provided study area information, population of the study and sampling procedure followed in the study. The researcher outlined the data collection instruments used in the study, discussed the method used for data analysis and lastly, the ethical considerations that reinforced the study were discussed.

3.2. Rationale for empirical Research

A qualitative approach was used in this study to collect information about interactions in people's life, beliefs, behaviours, emotions, and feelings (Burklow, 2018:32). The experiences of the participants continue to be an influential aspect of the research study in qualitative research (Viswambharan and Priya, 2015:43). Through interpretations and reflections, the participants' experiences were transformed into knowledge (Soraya et al., 2019:32). Thus, qualitative approaches are methods of researching people and their social worlds by travelling there, intensively observing them in their natural surroundings, and examining how to assess their situations in the setting and explain their behaviour.

The method allowed the researcher to collect information from individual participants to better understand the phenomenon under investigation (Miles et al., 2014:43), with the goal of determining participants' perspectives on the impact of lecturer absenteeism on student academic performance in a TVET college. Considering the purpose of the study, a qualitative technique appeared appropriate, as the researcher sought to determine the perspectives of students, lecturers, and education specialists on the impact of lecturer absenteeism on student academic performance. Mason (2002:21) focused on the social reality, emphasizing the underlying causes, influence, and solutions. Given the goal of the study, the qualitative technique was critical for this research since it provides a

knowledge of social life within the community and reveals how people generate meaning in their natural contexts (Neuman, 2014:89).

The researcher's concentration was on the study of human behaviour in their natural context and through the eyes of the participants themselves (Caswell, 2013:40). As a result, the approach recognized the researcher's engaging relationship with the participants, their own experiences, and how they constructed truth based on those experiences (Rahman, 2017:33). According to Creswell (2012:27), the qualitative design is just as strict as the quantitative design, but it stresses on collecting data on natural occurrences. The purpose of qualitative research is to gain a thorough understanding of human behaviours and the factors that influence their actions (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). Creswell (2012:8) backs qualitative researchers whose goal is to make meaning of perceptions, events, social circumstances or thoughts as they take place in the real world.

3.3. Research Design

3.3.1. Research Paradigm

Neuman (2014:96) describes research paradigm as, "organization frameworks for theory and research that include basic assumptions, key issues, models of quality research and methods for seeking answers". The constructivism technique was used in this study to seek understanding and meaning for the research problem. According to Leavy (2017:65), a paradigm is a framework that provides assistance in a research study to understand one's experience of the world. According to the constructivism theoretical perspective, to grasp the study problem generated by social, researchers have to incorporate human participants (Leavy, 2017:69). Crotty (1998) in Creswell (2009:26) indicated the assumptions that support constructivism:

- "Researcher examined participants experience by adopting open ended interviews.
- It gave the researcher a platform to engage with participants.

3.3.2. Research Approach

Qualitative approach has been adopted for purposes of this research. According to

Kumar (2011:31), this approach is adopted when a study is carried out with the objective to either explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a specific research study. As earlier indicated, little empirical data currently exists on TVET College lecturers as well as possible influence on students' academic performance. A qualitative approach is based on generating a deep understanding of meanings and experiences people have regarding a particular issue (Meanwell, 2017:28). The advantage of this approach is that it helps the researcher to obtain greater and more in-depth insight into complex phenomena, due to the methodology's great explanatory power. It also provides a chance for participants to have their say (Biggam, 2008:98). The other benefits associated with qualitative research method adapted from Creswell (2014:55) are:

- Researcher got direct experience with the participants
- Data was collected through different audio visual material
- Researcher was in control of the research questions
- It provided the participants an opportunity to share their experience in the research topic
- Participants could also provide the background history information in the research study.

This strategy was chosen because the researcher believed it would aid in gaining a thorough understanding of the topic, with a focus on process and findings (Gray, 2014:25).

3.3.3. Research Type

Research design can be understood as a “blueprint” showing how to execute research. It provides guidance to the researcher throughout the process on what to follow, to arrive to the needed information for the research problem. The researcher found the research design helpful in providing a map to show the way in terms of how to conduct the research, and in looking at types of questions to be used in the research. This study employed a case study design. Punch and Qancea (2014:151) argue that a case study is carried out in real-life contexts and sets out to come up with in-depth accounts of particular cases, hence the use of a case study. Case study strategy of inquiry included interviews and observations (De Vos et al., 2011:195). In this study, interviews and observation were

applied. Case study method focused on explaining why individuals thought or behaved in a particular manner. It provided the researcher with an opportunity to understand individual feelings or emotions in the research study (Polit & Becks, 2004:60).

3.4. Research Methods

This section focuses on study area, population of the study, sampling and sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis, measures that guided this research to ensure trustworthiness of the findings and ethical considerations.

3.4.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in Capricorn TVET College. Capricorn TVET College comprises of four campuses, namely, Seshego, Ramokgopa, Senwabarwana and Polokwane. The study was conducted in two of the four campuses of the College situated in Capricorn District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.



Figure 1.2. Map of Limpopo Province showing the study area

Source: *Thulamela Municipality (2014)*

3.4.2. Population of the study

Babbie (2011:366) defines population as “the subjects that will be the focus point to draw conclusions”. For this study, the population was immediate supervisors of lecturers

(Education Specialists), lecturers and NCV Level 4 students of a TVET College in Limpopo.

3.4.3. Sampling and Sampling Procedure

3.4.3.1. Sampling

According to Scott and Morrison (2007:21), sampling is the process of selecting a selection of goods or individuals from a larger population to ultimately represent the full population.

3.4.3.2. Sampling size

The sample size is defined as the number of units from which data is derived (Lavrakas, 2008). According to Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:242), the size of the sample in qualitative research should not be so large that it is impossible to extract rich data, nor should it be so small that obtaining data saturation is difficult. For purposes of this study, a total number of 8 students were selected to participate in this study, 4 Education specialists were recruited from both the sampled campuses and 4 lecturers from both the sampled Capricorn TVET college campuses.

3.4.3.3. Sampling strategy

Firstly, purposive sampling method was used to purposefully select the college and campuses from which respondents were selected. This is supported by Schutt (2006:278) who argues that purposive sampling “helps the researcher to focus on key informants, who are knowledgeable of the issues under investigation”.

Student respondents were purposefully recruited from NCV Level 4 classes. The principal reason for selecting level 4 students is that they have been in the program for a number of years and may possibly have adequate experience on the phenomenon being studied. The researcher further holds a view that students from this level would have in-depth comprehension of the subject under investigation. Level 4 students are generally above the age of 18 and the focus was purposefully on level 4 students above 18 years of age. The education specialists were also purposefully selected because they are immediate supervisors of lecturers who manage lecturer attendance and work. Lecturers were purposefully selected to share their experiences on lecturer absenteeism.

3.4.4 Data Collection

Polit et al. (2004) argue in support of the use of interviews in research, that if we need a clear understanding of the construction of reality by other people, we need to ask them in a manner that allows them to tell us in their terms instead of imposing and allow them to tell it in the depth and relevance within their context. Semi-structured interviews and observations are the data collection methods used in this study.

3.4.4.1. Semi-structured interviews

According to Polit et al. (2004:184), semi-structured interviews are guided by a set of questions and prompts for discussion, but have in-built flexibility to adapt to particular respondents and situations; for these reasons, they are among the most popular forms of interviews in education research, and are particularly favoured by beginning researchers. As a beginning researcher, one found semi-structured interviews doable and advantageous because they allowed some structure as well as flexibility, hence they were used for purposes of this research. In order to avoid conflict of interest in terms of the researcher's assumptions and interests, bracketing was engaged. According to Sohn et al. (2017:130), bracketing can help researchers increase their level of awareness of their assumptions and intentionality. They argue that it is not possible for one to set aside their knowledge, bias and presumptions about a particular phenomenon. It is further argued that bracketing does not produce objectivity, but rather helps with strong alertness of expectations and assumptions.

Sohn et al. (2017:130) continued to argue that if the researcher does not look into bracketing, he may find himself leading participants' focus to aspects that he (researchers) deems important instead of what stands out in the perceptions of participants. They further indicated that heightened self-awareness is the only benefit of bracketing but as the researcher begins his study as an interviewee, it helps him to build empathy for the participants.

In line with the above scholars, the researcher began the study as an interviewee in order to build empathy for participants. This was also for purposes of maximizing the level awareness, assumptions and intentions as well as understanding the shoes in which

participants find themselves. The researcher first went through an interview by an experienced phenomenological interviewer, where his own experience of the phenomenon was explored. The interview of the researcher took place before data was collected.

3.4.4.2. Observation

The observation took place on the premises of the two Capricorn TVET College campuses and it is a systematic procedure of gathering information on the occurrence of an event (Queiros et al., 2017:43). Lecturer absenteeism and its influence on student academic performance, was studied in this research. The observation took place on the campus grounds one week before the interviewing procedure began. The observation aided the researcher in comprehending the significance of what was going on at the college as well as hearing what the participants stated during interviews about their personal feelings and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2014:66). The researcher spent time observing lecturer classes. Through the observations the researcher got better understanding and insight into the observed event (Cooren & Malbois, 2019:126). The observation was non-participant (Lapan et al. 2012:175). According to Creswell (2013:34), in these cases, the researcher becomes an outsider of the research group, observing and taking notes from a distance while not engaging with participants.

3.5 Data Analysis

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007:3) argue that analyzing data involves interpretations of meanings, functions and consequences of actions of humans and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local and possibly also broader contexts. In qualitative research, thematic data analysis technique can be referred to as the process of understanding the data collected from participants' experiences and views (Cohen et al., 2007:7). Pages of field notes and interview transcripts were scrutinized and compiled by the researcher. This research data was analysed using thematic analysis technique, wherein each transcript was read and re-read, and thereafter codes generated by labelling manifest data and the codes, then collated into subthemes, to be transformed

into major themes.

The researcher followed data analysis of Creswell (2014:247) comprising six steps as follows:

"Step 1: Organising and preparing data

The information on the issue explored was gathered through interviews with students, lecturers and education specialists. The researcher has converted taped information from an audio file to a word document.

Step 2: Reading all data

The researcher read the transcribed data several times in order to gain a better comprehension of the data.

Step 3: Coding of data

Coding entailed organizing and labelling data into text or categories suggested by participants. The data was organized into themes that made sense. Furthermore, data was programmed based on newly discovered information.

Step 4: Generating a description and themes for analysis

The researcher employed themes. Detailed information about persons, locations or events in an environment was described. Codes were created by the study participants using narrative information.

Step 5: Presenting the themes and descriptions

The researcher presented the findings. Using the narrative technique, the findings of the study were presented.

Step 6: Interpretation of data

This was the last stage of the data analysis. The study's principal findings have been examined by the researcher. The major goal of the study was to investigate the factors influencing lecturer absenteeism at TVET College and how they were managed."

3.6. Measures that guided this research to ensure trustworthiness of the findings.

3.6.1 Transferability

According to Shanton (2004:69), in order to ensure transferability, the researcher needs to collect thick descriptive data that allow comparison of this context to other possible

contexts to which transferability might be contemplated.

Thick description involves the researcher elucidating all the research processes from data collection, context of the study to the production of the final report (Li, 2004:305).

For this purpose, the researcher explained and clarified all research processes to provide thick descriptions of the study in order to attain transferability.

3.6.2. Trustworthiness and Credibility

In order to ensure credibility of research findings, Mampane (2013:76) argues that it is important for the researcher to: record all interviews on tape and transcribe them verbatim and make sure that transcribed data is verified by the participants. The researcher has for this reason recorded all interviews on tape and transcribed them verbatim and made sure that participants are given an opportunity to verify the transcribed data.

3.6.3. Confirmability

According to Anney (2014: 279), confirmability refers to the extent to which the results of an enquiry could be confirmed or confirmed by other researchers. Tobin and Gegley (2004:392), further argue that “confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination but are clearly derived from the data.” This is why raw data, interview and notes of observation and records collected from the field are kept for cross-checking and confirmation to demonstrate that data and interpretations of the findings were clearly derived from the data.

3.6.4. Dependability

According to Bitsch (2005:86), dependability refers to the stability of findings overtime. It further “involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from informants” (Anney, 2014:278). For issues of dependability, respondents were given an opportunity to evaluate the findings, interpretations and recommendations of the study.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

According to Clasquin-Johnson (2011:93), ethical challenges could affect all steps in the process of research. In order to ensure this research proceeded with ethical issues, the following were considered;

3.7.1. Permission consent

The researcher was aware of the issues gatekeepers deal with, as argued by Punch and Qancea (2014:65) that a principal, may need to consider a lot of things deciding on a request for access to their school, to prioritize between competing demands on pupils' and lecturers' time.

Mindful of this, prior the commencement of the data collection phase, the researcher first secured permission from university of South Africa (UNISA)'s Ethics Committee to conduct the study. An ethical clearance certificate, issued by the committee which was obtained, served as an indication that the university granted permission for the study to be carried out.

The researcher further wrote to the College Principal seeking permission to conduct the study within the College under his or jurisdiction. The letter outlined the purpose of the study, its significance and the possible benefits to be brought about by its findings.

Through this letter, the researcher further undertook to protect the rights of students and not to expose them to any situation that might harm them. Level 4 students targeted in this case, were above the age of 18.

Upon securing permission, the researcher secured consent from campus managers of selected campuses through the College Principal. Meetings were arranged and held with individual campus mangers of the affected campuses. During these meetings, the purpose of the study, methodologies to be used in collecting data as well as benefits of the study were explained.

3.7.2. Informed Consent

According to Cohen et al. (2005:50), informed consent is part of the basis of ethical procedures. The objectives and benefits of the study were explained to the respondents

before the commencement of the data collection phase.

Participants were further afforded an opportunity to ask clarity seeking questions regarding the study. This was to ensure that participants have adequate information from which to decide if they want to participate in the study or not.

Respondents were also informed that their participation in the study was voluntary. As a result, they were free to withdraw from the study anytime they want. Respondents were also informed of the use of a tape recorder to record the interviews. An assurance was given to respondents that recordings will only be used for academic purposes and will not be used against them in any way. Respondents were requested to sign a consent form.

3.7.3. Anonymity

Researchers are always advised to safeguard the identity of their respondents. This is because “it is unethical to identify an individual respondent and the information provided by him/her. This is supported by Cresswell (2009:88-90) who argues that the anonymity of research participants in social research must be taken seriously and respected. For this study, the researcher put several measures in place to ensure that the confidentiality of all respondents is protected. Firstly, pseudo names were used instead of respondents’ real names to identify the respondents during the data collection and data analysis phases.

This was to ensure that the true identity of those who provided the information remains confidential. Secondly, numbers were used to identify the selected campuses during both the data collection and data analysis phases to guarantee that true identity of campuses from which respondents came remain anonymous.

3.8. Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology that was used in this study. Explanation of qualitative research as a method for data collection and analysis was provided. The data collection measures were discussed in this chapter. Information about population and site was given. Ethical principles in this chapter were given. The next chapter discusses data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, a discussion was made on the research design and methodology used in this study. The selection of instruments for data collection was explained. This chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of the findings.

This study investigated the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET college students' academic performance in Limpopo Province and also recommended strategies to deal with the issues at hand. The main research question was: Which factors are influencing lecturers' absenteeism at a TVET College in Limpopo province and which strategies can be recommended to deal with the challenge? The sub-questions were as follows:

- What are the possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program at a TVET college in Limpopo province?
- What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance at a TVET college a Limpopo province?
- What are possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism at a TVET college in Limpopo province?

4.2. Biographic information

The total number of participants involved in this study were 8 students, 4 lecturers, and 4 education specialists in terms of the biographic information below.

Table 4.1: Biographic information of lecturers

The biographical information sought to establish the gender and the program in which lecturers are attached to. The gender difference was an important variable in the analysis of the study because it shows the exact number respondents per gender and demonstrate how a dominant gender would affect the overall outcome of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate the frequency counts of gender as illustrated in table 4.1 below:

| Participants | Gender | Program |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Lecturer 1 | Male | Tourism |
| Lecturer 2 | Male | Accounting |
| Lecturer 3 | Female | Office management |
| Lecturer 4 | Female | Electrical engineering |

Table 4.1. Indicates that there were four (4) respondents who participated in the study. The frequency distribution in table 4.1 above indicates that two of the respondents were male, representing 50% and two respondents are female, representing 50%. The respondents are a small portion of the population representing the whole population of lecturers attached to program of Tourism, Accounting, Office management and Electrical engineering. In accordance with table 4.1. The study statistically shows that there was gender balance between the male and female respondents due to the frequency of two male and two female respondents.

Table 4.2: Biographic information of students

The biographical information sought to establish the age, gender, level of study and the NCV programme of students. The age, gender, level of study and the NCV programme difference were important variables in the analysis of the study because they show the exact number respondents per age, gender, level of study and the NCV programme and demonstrate how a dominant age, gender, level of study and the NCV programme would affect the overall outcome of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate the frequency counts of age, gender, level of study and the NCV programme as illustrated in table 4.2 below:

| Participants | Age | Gender | Level of study | NCV Programme |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------|---------|------------------------|
| Student 1 | 18 years | Female | Level 4 | Financial management |
| Student 2 | 20 years | Female | Level 4 | Electrical engineering |
| Student 3 | 21 years | Male | Level 4 | Tourism |
| Student 4 | 27 years | Male | Level 4 | Office Administration |
| Student 5 | 22 years | Female | Level 4 | Electrical engineering |
| Student 6 | 25 years | Female | Level 4 | Electrical Engineering |
| Student 7 | 27 years | Female | Level 4 | Financial Management |
| Student 8 | 18 years | Female | Level 4 | Tourism |

The frequency distribution in the table revealed that the majority of respondents were aged 18 with (n=2), and 27 (n=2) representing 50% followed by 21 years (n=1), 20 years (n=1), 22 years (n=1) and 25 years (n=1) with 12.5% each. The frequency distribution in table 4, also indicates that two of the respondents were male, representing 25% and six respondents are female, representing 75%. In accordance with table 4.2. The study statistically shows that there was no gender balance between the male and female respondents due to the frequency of two male and six female respondents. The frequency distribution in the table above revealed that the respondents were all in level 4 representing 8 (100%). The table shows that two respondents were enrolled in the financial management programme, two respondents were enrolled in the Tourism and one respondent was enrolled in the Office Administration programme.

Table 4. 3: Biographic information of Educational Specialist

The biographical information sought to establish the gender and the teaching experience of education specialists were important variables in the analysis of the study because they show the exact number respondents' gender and years of experience and demonstrate how a dominant gender and level of experience would affect the overall outcome of the study. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate the frequency counts of gender and level of experience as illustrated in table 4.3 below:

| Participates | Gender | Service experience as Education Specialist |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| Education specialist | Male | 15 years |
| Education specialist | Male | 4 years |
| Education specialist | Female | 3 years |
| Education specialist | Male | 4 years |

The frequency distribution in table 4.3 also indicates that two of the respondents were male, representing 50% and two respondents were female, representing 50%. In accordance with table 4.2. The study statistically shows that there was gender balance between the male and female respondents due to the frequency of two male and two female respondents. The frequency distribution in the table above revealed that the two respondents were having 4 years teaching experience representing 50%, while respondent was having 15 years (25%) and 3 years (25%) respectively .

4.3. Emerging themes

This study comprises four themes formulated from research questions. The interview data were collected from 4 lecturers, 8 students, and 4 education specialists. Students, lecturers and education specialists' participants were sampled from two of the campuses

of Capricorn TVET offering NCV. Participants were asked questions according to semi-structured interview schedules. Interviews were recorded with the approval of the participants. Data collected through audio recordings were later transcribed. The views of the participants are cited in italic to provide the evidence. The research questions, themes, and sub-themes are illustrated in Table 4.4 followed by a comprehensive explanation.

Table 4.4: Research questions, themes, and sub-themes

| Research questions | Main themes | Sub-themes |
|--|---|---|
| What do you understand by the concept of lecturer absenteeism? | Theme 1:Conceptualization of the concept 'lecturer absenteeism' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absent from class but present at school • Absent without notice/valid reason |
| How prevalent is lecturer absenteeism in college | Theme 2:The prevalent of lecturer's absenteeism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payday, Monday, and Fridays • Student Anxieties |
| What are the possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program? | Theme 3:Possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecturer related factor • Issues related to college • Personal issues |
| What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic Performance? | Theme 4:The influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic Performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College pass rate • Student drop out • Syllabus completion • Lecturer Substitution |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| What are possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism? | Theme 5: Solutions in place to address lecturer absenteeism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring access system • Proper supervision and management • Awareness • Salary increment • High motivation |
|---|--|---|

4.4. Presentation of fieldwork with students, lecturers and education specialists.

4.4.1. Theme 1: Conceptualisation of the concept 'lecturer absenteeism'

The responses on lecturer's absenteeism have been used to understand lecturers, students, and education specialists' conceptualization of the concept 'lecturer absenteeism'. Students, education specialists, and lecturers had a common understanding of the concept. Below are their responses:

- **Absent from class but present at school**

According to my understanding, I think lecturers absenteeism means when a lecturer is present at the campus but absent during period... (SR 8, 1).

Ok...as a student what I understand about it is that a lecturer is not present in the class. It's either he or she has a lot of work to do or maybe he has taken a leave or has been out to a workshop (SR 2).

I think it's twofold eh when a lecturer failed to report on duty, it's eh absenteeism. Sometimes a lecturer can report but failed to render the service which he or she is supposed to render I also consider it absenteeism although it will indicate the lecturer is around (ESR 3, 4).

The above responses show that respondents conceptualize lecturer absenteeism differently by indicating that a lecturer is not present in the class because he/she either has a lot of work to do despite being at work or maybe he/she has taken a leave or has

been out to a workshop. The findings also indicate that lecturer absenteeism means that a lecturer may have reported for duty but failed to render the service which he or she is supposed to render.

- **Absent without notice/Valid reason**

Lecturer absenteeism is understood as lecturers who don't go to college or at the work regularly without any occasion, special occasion, or without any notice (SR 9, 4, 7).

Education specialists also concur with students by responding that: *One could explain absenteeism as being intentionally being absent from work, from the workplace without any valid reason. And, it's like when a lecturer doesn't notify his or her immediate senior about his whereabouts and that might be happening throughout the official day of work (ESR 1, 2).*

Ok, my understanding of lecturer absenteeism is that lecturers stay away from work or don't work or don't come to work (LEC 2, 4).

Mmm... I think lecturer absenteeism is when a lecturer does not go to class or a class that he or she is scheduled for without any valid reason or without them informing their supervisor that they will be unable to facilitate that particular lesson (LEC 1,3).

The findings of the study show that respondents have different understanding of lecturer absenteeism by indicating that lecturer absenteeism is when a lecturer does not go to class or a class that he or she is scheduled for without any valid reason or without them informing their supervisor that they will be unable to facilitate the lesson.

4.4.2. Theme 2: The prevalence of lecturers' absenteeism in the College.

Data that emerged from interview sessions with participants indicated that lecturers don't report to work during certain days of the month.

- **Payday, Mondays, and Fridays**

It is found that during payday, Mondays and Fridays, lecturers are usually absent without any valid reason which negatively affects the academic performance of students. The following sentiments support the above statement:

Okay in our college hmm... it is not that really bad but in most cases, you can see it during month-end or week of pay or payday week. People don't come to work because simply

they want to...um, how I can put it. People want to go and do some other things personal things, personal staff. Also on Mondays and Fridays, they don't come to class simply because perhaps they are tired on Mondays, and on Fridays, they are rushing to go back home for those who stay far (LR 3, 5).

Oh, my college we are, I can say that it's very bad at this stage. Eh we are faced with a situation where you find that lecturers are not at work and most of the time as a new supervisor you are not even aware of the lecturer's whereabouts, so at this stage from the past three years I can say that it's been very bad (ESR 1,3).

The prevalence of this absenteeism is worrisome to the extent that the lecturers do not inform their superiors of their whereabouts.

- **Student anxieties**

The findings of the study indicated that students find themselves in a difficult situation, when they don't know what to do when they don't find lecturers in their classrooms but report to their SRC as indicated below::

As I am the SRC, I can give a score of seven out of ten. Why because some students come to me crying that some lecturers are not attending their classes (SR 7).

In our college lecturers' absenteeism is not much eh...we have eh...eh most students who are complaining and when we check is not many students, it is fewer students who are complaining. Meaning in our campus it's not that bad (SR 2).

It is clear that lecturer absenteeism causes anxieties to students and ultimately affects students' academic performance. Therefore, it is advisable that the lecturers should be held accountable for their actions to protect the education of the students.

4.4.3. Theme 3: Possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV Programme.

The participants during the interviews indicated few factors that contribute to absenteeism of lecturers at TVET the College. They have indicated the following: **Lecturer related factors:**

Data that emerged from interview sessions indicated that lecturer illness was the cause of

absenteeism. One lecturer shared that she cannot attend classes when she is sick. Another factor was the unpreparedness of lecturers for their classes. This is supported by the following sentiments:

I sometimes get sick and as a result, I can't come to college (LR 4)

Sometimes I will be honest when I have visited the doctor and get the doctors letter then I will submit the certificate but in most cases, I don't report my absence (LR 1).

The education specialists highlighted that lecturers become absent from college because they are ill and need to visit health facilities for care. The following quotes expressed this view:

The College doesn't have a health service, which is another reason lecturers are absent to go to a health facilities for care (ESR 2, 3)

The education specialists and students also indicated that lack of preparedness also contributes to lecturer absenteeism. This is echoed as follows:

Another thing that makes the lecturers to be absent is unprepared, unpreparedness. If a lecturer is not prepared eh, then it gives him a threat, so that when he comes in front of the learners what will he say? Nothing...then they don't go to classes (ESR 4)

I think the major two causes, first are lack of discipline and lack of planning. When a lecturer is not planning their work accordingly and their task for the day accordingly this affect everything they will do during the day because you will find that instead of them being in class for submitting certain tasks they are still busy doing a task they were supposed to have already been done with a long time ago (SR 8)

The findings of this study show that lecturer illness and unpreparedness impact their work because when they are sick they tend to stay at home or visit health care facilities and they do not report their absence in advance. They wait until their return to the college to report. Sometimes they would report only if they have proof or evidence like a medical certificate. It appeared that lecturers are not well informed that they should report their absence to their immediate supervisor, whether they have proof or not. The findings of this study are supported by Ullah et al. (2021) who found that illness and Laissez-faire leadership style contribute to lecturer absenteeism. It was also found that some lecturers lack

preparedness which leads them to bunk their periods because they are afraid to be exposed to students that they did not prepare before coming to class.

- **College-related matters**

It became apparent during the interviews that when lecturers choose to apply for a TVET college post, they are under the impression that they will be exposed to a better working environment, such as good management, and motivations such as incentives to keep them working. When these expectations are not met, lecturers start to get bored. Loads of work also had lecturers being absent from class. The above is supported by the following statements:

When lecturers start to get bored with their workplace, they start to lose interest in the course hence they will start to apply for other posts from other colleges then resign (LR 2).

As lecturers, we got...much work to do. You need to prepare your files, you need to prepare your lessons (LR 4)

Ok...so to that I may say some are not motivated. Motivated in a way that they are not eh...motivated that if you have done the good work they are not be told (SR 1,3,2).

One of the first the reason I think is no motivation. There is a lack of motivation, eh lecturers are not motivated. Eh...nothing is pushing them to come to work, cause some of them really feel that when they are working they become victimized so there is no motivation at all (LR 3,2).

I think the monitoring of attendance in fact by the education specialist and even to the management, your HOD, and then the campus manager. I don't think that they have got a system in place to check whether lecturers are coming and when they come they go to class eh well because we can just have effective monitoring from the education specialist (LR 1).

There are no incentives for lecturers' performance besides the salary we get. Like ehm... opportunities for improvement or for promotional posts (LR 4)

Okay, Er... the first one I would say that it's poor management, because my college is a public institution, first of all, the management doesn't do the best to ensure that lecturers

do the work they are hired for (ESR 2).

There is no consequence management within the campus for such misconducts as absenteeism. It then becomes a habit that is practiced by junior lecturers and other lecturers (ESR 3).

Lecturers' expectations and demands are more important but retention of lecturers in the institution is highly dependent on the students' performance. It appeared that lecturers' expectations were not met by the college and they lose interest. It looks like the college lacks resources and means to motivate and retain its employees.

- **Personal matters**

Data gathered from participants of this study revealed that the personal matters of the lecturers influenced their work. One lecturer cited that her personal problems affect her work because she is taking care of a family member who is sick and on the other hand she needs to attend workshops. Another lecturer showed that death cases in the family need his attention. This is echoed by the following:

Absenteeism I think it is caused by family responsibilities such as sickness of family members, a death case, or pressing urgent matters (LR 2, 4).

Some eh, the ill-health, the family responsibilities, family matters, some you can say the admin part, where you find that some people may have some meeting or maybe some workshops, the studies leave (LR 4).

From the comments in the interviews, it became evident that lecturers are dealing with issues that affect them personally to an extent that they affect their work. However, the college does offer support services for lecturers who are dealing with personal issues.

4.4.4. Theme 4: The influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic Performance.

Participants were asked about the influence of lecturers' absenteeism on students' academic performance. The majority of the participants indicated issues of student dropout, college pass rate, syllabus completion, and lecturer substitution.

- **College pass rate**

Lecturers and students responded by stating that students' academic performance is affected when the lecturers are not coming to classes, which ultimately affects the college's pass rate. This is echoed as follows:

It influences the academic badly and is where our mission as a Capricorn TVET college will not be accomplished e.g. we aim 100% but if lecturers are not attending their cases surely the college will not, all the campus will not reach this stage (SR 1, 4,7)

Obviously, the performance of students is going to decrease and which is going to affect the pass rate of the college. So I think if maybe if lecturers you find that lecturers don't go to class more often. Firstly they are going to derail the students from their school work. So they are going to be left behind and then you find that there are going to be tests, assignments and then students will not be able to pass (SR 1, 8, 9).

Mm I would say there will be a high failure rate in TVET colleges because of lecturers and student absenteeism. So the students will fail because the lecturer is not going to class to teach them and students like learners need to be assisted (LEC 2, 4).

It looks like the college's pass rate is challenged when lecturer absenteeism persists. Students along with lecturers believe that lecturers who are not going to classes put students who rely on them for assistance in a position to fail their tasks, exams and contribute to the college's low pass rate.

- **Syllabus Completion**

The participants during the interviews revealed that the syllabus is not completed within the timeframe provided when lecturers are absent. Students are left behind and when exam time comes, they don't do well. This is supported by the following statement:

On the side of students, you will find that eh students also don't attend classes as their lecturers are not on campus. And then you find that subject syllabuses are not completed on time therefore students, results are going, are not going to be good as they usually write their task without being thoroughly being lectured (ESR 4).

Education specialists indicated that when lecturers fail to complete the syllabus, teaching and learning will be affected since the results of the students tend to be unimpressive.

- **Drop out**

Lecturers and students raised an important point saying that poor-performing students are affected by the absenteeism of lecturers which tends to affect their academic results. These students rely too much on lecturers and when their poor performance persists, they drop out. A Lecturer and a student commented as follows:

It affects students with poor academic performance and some rely on lecturers before they study and if the lecturer doesn't come to class meaning students will fail and some will end up dropping out (SR 3).

Ok firstly, students who are intrinsically motivated become serious about their studies, and then those students who are not serious about the school um become worse and even end up dropping out because of lecturer absenteeism (LEC 2).

Student dropout is a major issue that comes as a result of lecturer absenteeism. Students need assistance from their lecturers throughout the year, however, when they don't get assistance, they fail during exams and end up dropping out of college. The findings of this study are supported by Niamatullah et al. (2020).who found that absenteeism has significant negative impact on the students' academic achievement because absenteeism affects student achievement, it is considered the most essential in each group that students' class activities are disturbed if the lecturer is absent in class and this causes non-incompletion of syllabus and reducing instructional hours. However, it was indicated that only a few students who don't seem disturbed by the lecture absenteeism manage to make it.

- **Lecturer substitute**

According to education specialists, when lecturer absenteeism persists, they are often replaced. This replacement tends to affect students' academic performance. This statement is supported by the following:

First of all, we have a very big college, if lecturer A has certain groups and he is not attending to them it will take maybe 2 hours to realize that this lecturer is not available and without that 2 hours clearly time has lapsed as well. And then the other thing is the issue

of substituting lecturers. If the lecturer is not there, there is a manner in which learners adapt easily to a particular person in the class, so you will find that there are certain lecturers that would take two weeks not being in class and as a management strategy, you will find that you, will have to find lecturer B to substitute lecturer A. That on its own because the students are not used to lecturer B also affects their way of progressing in class as well (ESR 1).

These findings only concentrated on one factor that contributes to students' performance, which is lecturer absenteeism while there could be many other factors that would equally share the blame. It is not ideal to provide students with a new lecturer during the course of the year. I believe that it is paramount to convince, motivate and support lecturer A to play a positive part in students' academic performance.

4.4.5. Solutions in place to address lecturer absenteeism

Participants of this study suggested the following strategies: Monitoring access system, proper supervision and management, awareness, salary increment, and high motivation to solve lecturer absenteeism.

- Monitoring access system**

Responses based on the monitoring access system for lecturers, indicated that its implementation can play a vital role in improving lecturer attendance of their classes. One lecturer said:

I think we need a monitoring system of access system whereby perhaps lecturers can just be given a card or the...when they enter they put their fingers to show that indeed they clocked at work (LR 2).

The lecturer believes that the installation of a monitoring access system in the college could mitigate the lecturers' absenteeism. It was mentioned that this system will assist since lecturers will have to clock-in through fingers using a system to indicate that they are present at work. The findings of this study are supported by Ullah et al. (2021) who found that poor supervision and lack of checks and balances on attendance are factors which are causing absenteeism.

- Proper supervision and management**

Participants emphasized that lecturer absenteeism can be managed if they could get

management support. They cannot go an extra mile for the college when they still see that no one is pushing them or is behind them to monitor their work, or if no one cares to brief them about absenteeism policies. This is supported by the following sentiments:

Eh, proper supervisor and monitoring from their supervisors eh if supervisor goes around monitoring their lecturers because they have timetables to say which lecturer is supposed to be in which class. Then at least they will have the motivation to say if they find me not doing my job then I will be held accountable and I can lose my job from it (LR 3).

I think the college management needs to hold regular meetings or workshops for lecturers to at least try to encourage lecturers to plan their work effectively every day in order to avoid absenteeism as a result of lack of preparedness (SR 1, 3, 8).

I think the campus manager should take such eh lecturers that are always absent to hearing and show them their wrongs and show them that if they continue being absent they can face serious consequences like dismissal (SR 3).

I think the senior management usually should be, have thorough briefing sessions of staff members and also issuing out of policies to those staff members at the beginning of each year term. So that lecturers could familiarize themselves with the consequences of absenteeism. And also senior should treat absenteeism with a serious tone to whereby one could say they should execute leave without pay for those lecturers who abscond from work (ESR 2).

- **Awareness**

Participants emphasized that lecturer absenteeism can be managed if they could be good management support and awareness on the impact of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance. A lecturer and an education specialist commented as follows:

Ok, I think it is upon the management to bring awareness to lecturers about the importance of attending school and also the impact it will have if the lecturers are always absent Lecturers must also be made aware that if they are always absent the pass rate of the college will drop and they will paint a negative image on the institution (LR 1).

They need to be informed so they become aware. Eh, of some eh government prescripts like maybe indicating to them, the importance of their presence to the student's

achievement of the goal and also indicate the negative impact if they are not around and also making sure that they are encouraged to sometimes to make sure that they manage this absenteeism themselves (ESR 1, 3).

The above responses emphasized that in order to address lecturer absenteeism, lecturers need to be addressed about the implications of their absenteeism on student academic performance, which ultimately negatively affects the pass rate of the college. It was further mentioned that lecturers should be made aware that their absenteeism prevents the students from reaching their academic goals.

- **Salary Increment**

A lecturer indicated that having salary increments could be a factor to address lecturer absenteeism. He said:

Obviously salary increment. We can't do everything with uhm... the standard of living is high (LR 2).

Lecturers believe that one of the ways to address lecturer absenteeism is by increasing lecturers' salaries. I believe that salary increment will motivate the lecturers in one way or another because they will see that they are cared for and they are able to meet their needs with the salaries they get.

- **High motivation**

According to the responses, high motivation should be included as part of the college's means to encourage lecturers to go to classes. A Lecturer and a student commented:

Yeah mmm...lecturers need to be supported not only be given instructions they need support and not only by pointed errors like corrections must come with support. Make sure they are being cared for by management. And nice incentives like many other colleges do a lot of incentives just to motivate their staff, their lecturers (LR 3).

Students also concur with the lecturer that motivation could be a key to ensure lecturers go to classes. She said:

Lecturers need to be motivated for their job. Is not part of their career job but they should be motivated to do what they love (SR 2).

From the interviews' comments, it appeared that the college does not have nice incentives to offer lecturers. Lecturers need to have nice incentives besides their salary to keep them motivated to go to work. It is ideal to include incentives to keep them motivated. The findings of this study are supported by Niamatullah et al. (2020) who found that absenteeism could be reduced through managing late arrivals by way of extra pay instead of threats to ensure that lecturers work in harmony with their superiors and this creates a corporate accord between lecturers and superiors, which is a necessary ingredient for performance.

4.5. Observation

Gorman and Clayton (2005:40) argue that observation involves the systematic recording of observable behaviour or phenomena in a natural setting. Tashakkori and Teddle (2003:312) also argue that observation is an important data collection method because people do not always do what they say they do. By using observations, the researcher sought to see how lecturer absenteeism manifests itself in the two college campuses. The non-participant observation was used as an essential data collection strategy (Flick, 1998:137). Data collection was planned and executed. In Leedy and Ormrod (2005:145-146), guidelines were suggested and the following are pertinent for this study as they assisted the researcher to manage and monitor observation:

The researcher remained relatively quiet and low-key, yet friendly to anyone who approached him. The researcher did not have to discourage participants from developing relationships with him and taking him into their confidence. When the researcher took field notes, he considered dividing each page of his notebook into two columns; he used the left column to record his observation (making notes) and the right column to write his preliminary interpretations. The researcher had to ensure that he did not confuse his actual observations with interpretations. He needed to be objective and kept the records of interpretation of what he had seen.

I had pre-planned observation schedules; in the first two weeks, I went to the campus to observe and capture patterns of all the college activities. Later on, I also allowed data derived from interviews to shape the observations. As specific categories and themes

emerged during the initial data analysis, which occurred concurrently with data collection, observations became more focused on those categories and themes.

In this study, I took the role of a non-participant observer. The researcher employed the following steps when conducting qualitative observations as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350): Once the site was selected, the researcher identified an initial role which guided the first sets of observations. There was a brief, initial, and fairly general period of observation during which the researcher eased into the site. The researcher built rapport and familiarity with the setting. With preliminary data collected, the researcher identified in greater detail the specifics of more intense observation and adjusted to his role as needed. At this point, more extensive, targeted observations were conducted".

As a researcher, I had to choose to be an outsider. The objective of this approach was to collect more data from the participants because if the researcher created an insider position too quickly, participants may recognize what was going on and the data might be compromised because the study was probing unacceptable behaviour. Observing lecture classes where lecturers spent their time was also a significant part of the study. I walked on the verandas observing lecturer classes. I observed and immediately after the observations I wrote field notes of incidents that had relevance to my study.

These notes aided me in comparing and contrasting actions and interpreting relationships.

Lecturer absenteeism involved social interaction. Therefore, Long-term field residency was used in the study to acquire abilities in selecting what should be included and what should be eliminated. The researcher observed and documented lecturer absenteeism as a phenomenon relevant to the anticipated issues, the broader conceptual framework, and the contextual aspects of interactions (Lincoln and Guba in Cohen et al., 2007:273). Field notes were used to capture details regarding who, what, where, how, and why an action or social scenario (lecturer absenteeism) occurred, when the researcher was in the field in order to make relevant field observations. The context was determined and the field notes were dated. The researcher composed his observation field notes in such a way that they were able to throw light on occurrences and were later utilized as a reference to a specific point in the research process. The field notes were saved in a secure location for future reference.

4.6. Summary

This chapter presented data analysis and research findings collected from participants' interviews which were segmented into themes and sub-themes. The findings revealed that factors influencing lecturer absenteeism include college-related issues, personal factors, and lecturer-related issues. Lecturers' absenteeism put challenges to the student's academic performance and ultimately the college's pass rate. Measures to deal with lecturers' absenteeism were also discussed and participants recommended that salary increment, high motivation, and also proper management and supervision amongst others should be considered. The next chapter presents the discussions of major findings, summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations.

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents possible remedies to address the identified factors that contributed to lecturer absenteeism at Capricorn TVET College's two campuses. Recommendations are offered on how to decrease lecturer absenteeism. Finally, the researcher discusses his findings in relation to his literature review. The study's underlying assumption was that lecturer absenteeism was related to student academic performance, student dropout, syllabus completion, and lecturer substitution.

A literature review was utilized to cross-reference the empirical findings of the acquired data to answer the study questions. The constructivist perspective influenced the qualitative approach used in the study. The 16 participants in this study were chosen using a purposive sample strategy, and data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and observation. Data was constantly analyzed utilizing coding until saturation was reached.

The objectives of the research study were as follows:

- To explore the factors that influence lecturers' absenteeism;
- Explore views of students, lecturers, and education specialists on causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program;
- Determine how lecturer absenteeism affects students' academic performance;
- Explore views of students, lecturers, and education specialists on what is perceived to be solutions to lecturer absenteeism

5.2. Summary of Research Findings

The summary of the findings of the research is given in terms of themes. The main research question was: Which factors are influencing lecturers' absenteeism at a TVET college in Limpopo province and which solutions can be suggested to deal with the issue at hand? Sub-questions were formulated to answer the research question; the following

sub-questions were asked:

- What are the possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program at a TVET college in Limpopo province?
- What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance at a TVET college in Limpopo province?
- What are possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism at a TVET college in Limpopo province?

5.2.1. Theme 1: Conceptualization of the concept of 'lecturer absenteeism'

Participants in this study had a common understanding of the lecturer absenteeism concept. It was found that lecture absenteeism is when a lecturer is absent from work without any valid reason. Some participants reported that lecturers come to the college but don't go to classes. Some indicated that lecturers come to college but since they have so much work besides lecturing, they spent much time in the office and at workshops. Juan et al. (2010) found some similar results that unplanned workshops can cause disruption.

Mwoombola (2001:38) concurs that lecturer absenteeism can also be referred to lecturers who are physically present at work but not engaging in actual work they are assigned for. This may negatively affect students' performance as lecturers though physically present at school, no lecturing is taking place, and as a result, the syllabus might not be completed.

5.2.2. Theme 2: The prevalence of lecturer absenteeism.

Paydays, Mondays, and Fridays played a role in the prevalence of lecturers' absenteeism in the college. It was reported by the students that during payday lecturers decide not to come to work to do some personal errands. It was found that students suffer a lot during certain days of the week whereby on Mondays, lecturers who stay far from work decided not to report to work just because they are tired. While on Fridays, they decide not to come to classes because they want to get home early for those who stay far from work. This finding is similar to that of Juan et al. (2010:37) who reported that in high and low-income countries, lecturers are more frequently absent on these two days of the week

and when they are attending professional development workshops. Juan et al. (2010:154) indicated that the reason why lecturers' absent rates are higher on Mondays and Fridays is simply to prolong their weekends.

5.2.3. Theme 3: Possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program.

The first component of the model deals with personal factors, lecturers couldn't attend classes because of illness. The second component of the model deals with lecturer-related factors, where lecturers could not attend classes because they were dealing with personal issues like death issues in the family, lack of preparations, and health issues.

The study found that some lecturers' take study leaves to be away for some time to study which puts student's academic performance in jeopardy. Rogers and Vegas (2009:38) however noted that if lectures are absent due to personal leave that is aiming at improving their productivity while at work, such absence may not slow student learning.

The study found that going to class was a challenge to lecturers who are ill or had to attend to death issues in the family. The study results are also consistent with Ajiboye and Tella (2006:39) who asserted that lecture classes were also affected by the health challenges of the lecturers. Kwesi (2013:10) concurs with the finding of this study since they found that HIV and AIDS and other illnesses contribute immensely to lecturer absenteeism. In the same vein, Musyoki (2015:44) in South Africa and Miller (2008:111) in Peru also found a link between ill-health and lecturer absenteeism.

The participants revealed that there is no health center on the college campuses, they recommend that the college needs to consider having a clinic to offer support service to the lecturers who are constantly absent due to health issues. The suggestion would improve lecturers' attendance of their classes based on the findings made by Wills (2014), who indicated that chronic illness was the cause of lecturers' absenteeism.

College-related factors were found to be the contributing factors to lecturers' absenteeism. Lecturers and students reported in this study that lecturers' expectations were not met because they joined the college with the hope that they would get motivation, good management, and a good working environment. However, the results were not what they

expected which tends to make lecturers be absent and compromise the academic performance of the students. It was suggested by students that management should punish the lecturers so that they oblige to the institution's rules. Castro et al. (2007:93) also stated that for schools to mitigate lecturers' absenteeism, serious steps need to be considered, including issuing lecturers with unpaid leave for the days they have been absent for no apparent reason.

It was also found from students and lecturers that lecturers have a lot of work to do apart from lecturing. They have to prepare files that consume their time to go to classes. Thus, they decide not to go to classes and continue with their paperwork in the office. The researcher believes that these factors contributed to the cause of lecturers' absenteeism because of the needs of the lecturers are not met, the beneficiaries will suffer the consequences thereof.

5.2.4. Theme 4: The influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance.

Students complained in this study that they are struggling to complete the syllabus as the lecturers are frequently absent. Lecturers play an important role in student life and most of the time students are inspired by their lecturers. The study revealed that lecturers' absenteeism had a negative impact on student's academic performance and college pass rate. This resulted in students failing and some dropping out while the college pass rate drops drastically. Miller et al. (2007:24) are in agreement with these findings since they found that lecturer's absenteeism negatively affects the academic performance of students and institutions as a whole in America.

The education specialists reported that when lecturers don't come to class, the syllabus won't be completed in time and when exam time comes, most students will fail. In agreement with these results, Musasia et al. (2012:184) found that syllabus coverage has a significant effect on student performance in Kenya, since institutions that cover 100% of the syllabus perform better than those that cover less than 50% of the syllabus. IBIS and NNED (2016) confirm these findings by indicating that time is lost when lecturers are absent and thus absent lecturers mostly do not complete the syllabus by the end of the

year neither do they get time to revise with their learners. It is therefore important that lecturers should go to classes regularly to improve the student's academic performance.

This study also discovered that lecturers' absenteeism affects students and that when a lecturer doesn't come to work, has to be replaced. Students reported that when they get a new lecturer they have to get used to the new lecturer which will take time and this will affect their academic performance.

5.2.5. Solutions in place to address lecturers' absenteeism.

Case and Jet (2007:32) asserted that the monitoring system was an important tool because it improves attendance and intervention for absenteeism. This study revealed that the TVET College does not have an access system as part of its monitoring system. The lecturer reported that the access system helps in a manner in which when the lecturer comes to school, he/she will clock in using his/her finger on the system to ensure that he/she came to work. It was also reported by students that lecturers should also have a register where they sign to show they came to work. The student further reported that there's a need for lectures to be motivated in for them to have the energy to come to work.

To improve and manage absenteeism, lecturers made the recommendation that salary increment should be provided because what they get is not enough and they tend to be absent from work because they don't get a salary that meets their needs.

It was found in this study from the students that proper supervision and management should be put in place to address lecturer absenteeism. They said the lecturers should be educated about the impact of their absenteeism on student academic performance. Education specialists also revealed that policy awareness on absenteeism should be made available to junior and senior lecturers and that they should face disciplinary action if they constantly abscond from work. Kramer et al. (2003:28) argue that retention strategy is a key function of an institution in managing attendance and various methods that could be applied in ensuring that lecturers are sustained. Lotkowksi et al. (2004:44) believed that retention strategies have a positive influence in managing the of lecturers' absenteeism.

5.3. Conclusions of the study.

This study investigated the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET students' academic performance in Limpopo province. The following three questions were addressed in this study:

5.3.1. What are the possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program at a TVET college in Limpopo province?

5.3.2. What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance at a TVET college a Limpopo province?

5.3.3. What are possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism at a TVET college in Limpopo province?

The following were some of the major findings of the questions above:

- Question 1: What are the possible causes of lecturer absenteeism in the NCV program at a TVET college in Limpopo province?

The study revealed that most participants identified that personal factors, college- related issues and lecturer-related factors are causes of lecturer absenteeism, while students mentioned the issue of lack of motivation for lecturers and poor management.

- Question 2: What is the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance at a TVET college a Limpopo province?

Lecturer absenteeism is a problem at two campuses where the study was conducted. It has been found that lecturer absenteeism makes students who are struggling in their studies to lag behind in their studies which makes them fail their exams and end up being dropouts. Education specialists and students believed that absenteeism results into failure to complete the syllabus which leads to poor academic performance and also affect college pass rate. Findings from the students show that they agreed that lecturer absenteeism affected their academic performance. Students explained that they fail their tasks because there was no lecturer to give them an understanding of the subject they are doing.

- Question 3: What are possible solutions for lecturer absenteeism at a TVET college

in Limpopo province?

Students felt that to address the lecturer absenteeism, motivating lecturers for good work they do should be implemented. Furthermore, students and lecturers also indicated that incentives should be provided to lecturers and education specialists suggested a monitoring access system (Biometric reporting) amongst other things to mitigate lecturers' absenteeism.

5.4. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made concerning the solution on lecturers' absenteeism:

5.4.1. Recommendations to the Department of Higher Education.

In terms of this study, most of the recommendations made, were from the findings of this study. Participants generally believed that the root causes of lecturer absenteeism are personal issues (illness or death cases in the families, lecturer-related issues (ill-health), college-related matters (lack of motivation and poor management) which led to too many lecturers being absent from work. As a result, the following recommendations are made to the Department of Higher Education, lecturers, students, and Education specialists:

The Department of Higher Education must allocate sufficient budget for motivation incentives for lecturers to avoid students being left unattended as lecturers decide to be absent due to lack of motivation.

5.4.2. Recommendations to lecturers.

It was recommended that lecturers should consider how their absence from work affects the students' academic performance. Therefore, they should demonstrate a high level of commitment and dedication to work.

Furthermore, lecturers should be encouraged to observe the existing policies and procedures dealing with lecturers' absenteeism in the institution.

5.4.3. Recommendations for College Management.

The disciplinary committee should be established consisting of lecturers, student representatives, education specialists, and college managers. The committee would discuss the level at which lecturers are absent from class and exercise discipline for those who have less minimum percentage agreed.

It is recommended that the college managers should effectively monitor the attendance register by overseeing that lecturers sign in during morning sessions and at the end of the day and this should also include monitoring if lecturers actually go to classes or not.

It is also recommended that education specialists and college managers should consider the possibility of using technology to monitor whether the lecturers did come to school, for example, the use of a monitoring access system which the lecturers will use their fingers on the machine to clock in (Biometric reporting system).

The TVET College should consider having its own functional clinics in its campuses where lecturers would be assisted promptly.

5.4.4. Recommendations for students.

In order to mitigate lecturers' absenteeism, it was recommended that students should change their attitude towards learning and put more effort into their studies even in the

absence of a lecturer in a class.

5.5. Avenue for future research

Recommendations for future research based on the findings are as follows:

Examining the effectiveness of substituting lecturers in TVET College as a solution for the Department of Higher Education to eliminate lecturer absenteeism.

5.6. Limitations of the study.

The populations were limited to 8 NC(V) students, 4 lecturers and 4 education specialists from two TVET college campuses due to time constrain otherwise the researcher would have expanded the study to other students, lecturers, and education specialists in the TVET colleges. The study was restricted to one college in Limpopo province, that the findings can be generalized to other colleges situated in Limpopo province and may not be generalized to all other TVET colleges in South Africa.

This study was limited to the NCV program of a TVET College in Limpopo province. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of lecturer absenteeism on TVET students' academic performance in Limpopo province. The findings of the study apply to the two campuses and may not apply to the other TVET Colleges in Limpopo province as the factors influencing lecturer absenteeism may vary from college to college.

5.7. Concluding Remarks.

This has been by all means a very interesting, thought-provoking, challenging and informative process through which I experienced what one may refer to as a real life story. It actually felt I was interacting with real life issues, especially during interactions with respondents.

Through this study, I realized that the issue of teacher/lecturer absenteeism and all other issues around it are real issues. These are real issues that need to be taken very

seriously if we want to see more effective teachers or lecturers and improved student academic performance.

It has become clear to me that each institution needs to deliberately create exclusive and generous time as well as platform to deal extensively with teacher/lecturer absenteeism also considering the general support lecturers or teachers need, institutional culture and serious implementation of policies on leave measures and related misconducts without fear of favor.

Through this research, it becomes clear to me that nothing needs to be taken for granted. Everything little thing in the management of teacher absenteeism is important as they all contribute into the bigger picture. All related things such as monitoring and management of the Z8/Time book/ lecturer attendance register, lecturer movement register, infrastructural measures such as biometric reporting system and student involvement need to be taken seriously.

I have also through this research realized that there is a great need for continuous advocacy on leave policies as well as consequences for absenteeism. As we get even more creative, it is very important to firstly note that the system has good measures in place. All institutions need to do, is to trouble themselves about implementation without fear or favor.

The system currently has measures in place and people appointed to manage lecturer absenteeism but a lot needs to be done with specific focus on strict implementation of leave policies, management of related misconducts, monitoring of lecturer attendance inside and outside the classroom as well strict control of the Z8 and or lecturer attendance registers coupled with support needed. Going forward, it most probably would assist for institutions to have continuous advocacy and a simplified manual specifically of management of the Z8, classroom attendance and leave taking continuous advocacy.

Finally, I have learnt through this study that the issue of absenteeism is so important that the success of any institution depends on the availability of its work force and in this

particular case, the success of teaching and learning depends on the availability of lecturers at work and in the classroom.

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Appendix A

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/03/10

Dear Mr RP Malatji

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/03/10 to 2024/03/10

Ref: **2021/03/10/ 50187252/10/AM**

Name: Mr RP Malatji

Student No.: 50187252

Researcher(s): Name: Mr RP Malatji
E-mail address: phatralphy@gmail.com
Telephone: 0735660381

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof V.P Mahlangu
E-mail address: mahlavp@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0827553154

Title of research:

**INFLUENCE OF LECTURER ABSENTEEISM ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO
PROVINCE**

Qualification: MEd Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/03/10 to 2024/03/10.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/03/10 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.



The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



1. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
2. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
3. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
4. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
5. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
6. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/03/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2021/03/10/ 50187252/10/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Appendix B

UNISA

REF:2021/03/10/50187252/AM

NAME: MR RP MALATJI

STUDENT NO: 5018725

APPENDIX B (1)

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CAPRICORN TVET COLLEGE.
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CAPRICORN TVET COLLEGE.

TITLE OF RESEARCH

**INFLUENCE OF LECTURER ABSENTEEISM ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
• TRAINING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

Date: 03 May 2021

TO: Mr Mamabolo L.J.

College Principal (Capricorn TVET College)

Tel: 015230 1800

Fax: 015 291 2767

Email: www.capricorncollege.edu.za

Dear Mr Mamabolo L.J

I, Phetole Ralph Malatji (al1") doing research under the supervision of Prof V.P Mahlangu in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a Master's in Education (M.Ed) at the University of South Africa.

We are requesting for access to conduct research in 2 of the Campuses of your College in a study entitled: **Influence of lecturer absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training students' academic performance in Limpopo Province.**

The aim of the study is to investigate the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic performance.

Your College has been selected because focus of the study is on the NCV Programme of TVET Colleges and that it is convenient for the researcher to conduct the research at your College.

The study will be Qualitative in nature and will mainly involve interviews with Education Specialists, Students, and Lecturers. These participants will be requested from 2 of the Campuses of your College. The study will also involve non-participant observations of classes.

Findings of this research may enable us to better understand the influence of lecturer absenteeism on the academic performance of students, particularly within the NCV Program of TVET Colleges.

Carrying out this study will provide a deeper understanding of the linkages between lecturer absenteeism and students' rates of performance.

Gaining a good comprehension of the problem might lead to creation of an appropriate intervention system for combating lecturer absenteeism in the TVET sector and other such institutions.

This study falls within low risk category (category 2) in terms of the UNISA Guidelines. The study does not involve any potential risk.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Access and all contacts of the researcher and the supervisor will be provided in order to give feedback to participants.

Yours sincerely

-H::?

(Signature of Researcher)

D. M. Prl J. (2)

(Name of Researcher)

, Position of the signatory: Researcher

Appendix C



CAPRICORN COLLEGE FOR TVET CENTRAL OFFICE

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Enq Personnel Officer: Mr Chokoe M M
To College Principal: Mr Mamabolo L J
From HRD Unit
Date 05/05/2021
Subject Application to conduct research in the college: Mr PR Malatji: Influence of Lecturer Absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training Students' Academic Performance in Limpopo Province.

1. PURPOSE

To obtain approval of Mr PR Malatji application to conduct research in the College.

2. BACKGROUND

The College received the application letter and form from Mr PR Malatji to conduct research in the College with the purpose of completing his qualification: MEd Education Management.

3. DISCUSSION

Mr PR Malatji is requesting the College to offer him an opportunity to conduct the research in the College. The proposed topic of research is the Influence of Lecturer Absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training Students' Academic Performance in Limpopo Province.

The College is expected to give him a full support to make research study a success.

Attached please find the following documents:

- DHET 004: APPENDIX 1.
- Request for Permission to Conduct Research.
- Unisa College of Education ethics Review Committee document.
- Senior Certificate.
- Bachelor of Education Honours.
- Degree.
- Transcript of Academic Record.
- SACE.
- I.D Number.

| POLOKWANE CAMPUS | SENWABARWANA CAMPUS | SESHEGO CAMPUS | RAMOKGOPA CAMPUS |
|--|---|--|--|
| C/o Dorp & College Streets 0699 POLOKWANE Tel: (015) 283 3300 Fax: 015 297 2183 | Senwabarwana Main Street 0790 SENWABARWANA Tel: (015) 505 3172 Fax: 015 505 3174 | 1919 Freedom Drive 0742 SESHEGO Tel: (015) 223 9600 Fax: 015 223 5187 | Next to Mokomene High School 0811 RAMOKGOPA Tel: (015) 526 2750 / 526 2670 |

CentralOffice

HRD is making the recommendation for the approval of the researcher's application as per request.

Not approved


PRINCIPAL
MR MAMABLO L J


DATE

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0699 POLOKWANE
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Next to Mokomene High School
0811 RAMOKGOPA
Tel: (015) 526 2750 / 526 2670

Appendix D



CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

INFLUENCE OF LECTURER ABSENTEEISM ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

I _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or got an explanation) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. M. S." followed by a stylized surname.

Date: 06/05/2021

Appendix D



INTERVIEW CONSENT/ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

INFLUENCE OF LECTURER ABSENTEEISM ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

I _____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the interviews may be used by Mr Phetole Ralph Malatji (Researcher) for research purposes. I am aware that the interviews will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the interviews to any person outside the interview in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: Malatji Phetole Ralph

Signature: 

Date: 06/05/2021

Appendix E



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE

INFLUENCE OF LECTURER ABSENTEEISM ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

1. What do you understand by lecturer absenteeism?
2. How prevalent is lecturer absenteeism phenomenon in your campus?
3. What would you say are the major causes of lecturer absenteeism in your campus?
4. Would you say lecturers' absence from class has an influence on students' academic performance at your campus? Please elaborate on your answer.
5. What do you think needs to be done to address the problem of lecturer absenteeism in your campus?

Appendix F

P.O BOX 663
THOLONGWE
0734
20 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

This is to certify that thesis entitled “Influence of Lecturer Absenteeism on Technical and Vocational Education and Training Students’ Academic Performance in Limpopo Province” by Malatji Phetole Ralph, student number 50187252 has been edited and proofread for grammar, spelling, punctuation, overall style and logical flow. The edits were carried out using the “Track changes” feature in MS Word, giving the author final control over whether to accept or reject effected changes prior to submission, provided the changes I recommended are effected to the text, the language is of an acceptable standard.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any enquiry.

Kind regards



Dr. Hlaviso Motlhaka (BEDSPF-UL, BA Hons-UL, MA-IUP: USA, PhD-WITS, PGDiP-SUN)

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