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Self-Efficacy as a Tool to Enhance Students' Classroom Participation: TVET/FET College's Student Views on the Causes of Student Passivity

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to shed light on the role of self-efficacy in enhancing the classroom participation of students at Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in an attempt to improve performance in general. The context of the study was TVET/Further Education and Training (FET) colleges that came into being in South Africa to fill the critical skills gap. The efficiency of TVET colleges in meeting their mandate of developing qualified artisans has continued to be a matter of intellectual debate. This study used Bandura's theory to explore students' views on how self-efficacy contributed to their passivity in class, a situation resulting in the poor performance of students. A qualitative research design was used and 30 participants from three TVET College campuses were selected, using a purposeful sampling technique. Data was collected by conducting three focus group interviews and a document analysis. The thematic qualitative data analysis approach was used to analyze the collected qualitative data. The findings of the study established that the low self-efficacy of teachers and students has led to student passivity in class, something that ultimately led to students' poor performance. Among the recommendations made were the prioritization of professional training programmes for TVET lecturers by the Department of Education and the creation of a conducive teaching and learning space.

Introduction

High self-efficacy is a crucial construct in preserving a conducive teaching and learning environment where all learners, regardless of their abilities, receive equal treatment and the best opportunities to be successful (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016; Gandola, 2020; Schwab, 2019). Self-efficacy is defined as a person's particular set of beliefs that determine how well one can execute a plan of action in prospective situations (Bandura, 1978). The study focused on the personal beliefs of teaching personnel and students at TVET/FET colleges, a situation that affects student classroom participation; the teaching and learning process and the ultimate throughput of the TVET colleges. The reason for this study emanated from TVET college students' self-efficacy-linked justification of their passivity in classroom activities, where there is no collaboration between students and lecturers. This lack of collaboration resulted in a hostile teaching and learning environment in which, due to self-efficacy linked reasons teachers lacked the confidence to teach (Gandola, 2020) and students became passive during lessons. One of the objectives of the paper was to identify elements leading to the lack of classroom participation in that it focused on the level of self-efficacy of lecturers and students and its influence on the year-end results of colleges. The paper is premised on the idea that the low self-

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efficacy of lecturers and students hampered effective collaboration between them and resulted in the low pass rate of students. Therefore, the main objective was to investigate self-efficacy-linked elements in the institutional milieu that resulted in students' classroom passivity.

The South African TVET/FET colleges were developed and administered under the 1923 Higher Education Act to simultaneously incorporate theoretical and industrial training (Zwane et al., 2014, p. 990). The focus of the study was on the training that takes place in classrooms where students display passivity. One of the self-efficacies linked challenges of these colleges is lecturers' lack of practical knowledge as well as industry experience (Kuehn, 2019) which render them incompetent. The creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment in TVET colleges requires a qualified teaching personnel, something that is lacking in South Africa and other countries (Hondonga & Chinengundu, 2021). The shortage of competent vocational trainers in some of the African TVET colleges, South Africa included is worsened by insufficient funding, lack of proper coordination of TVET programmes, and failure to liaise with companies and industries to ensure relevance (Grijpstra & Papier, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Due to the above limitations, South African TVET colleges, unlike in the western countries do not apply the dual system where partnerships are forged between schools/institutions and companies to provide vocational education and vocational skills (Remington, 2018). The current situation compels the TVET college lecturers to assess real-life experiences (Ramaligela, 2021) done by companies in countries practicing the dual system.

A wide literature indicated the need for the reskilling and upskilling of TVET lecturers to capacitate them with the requisite knowledge and skills (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Buthelezi, 2018; Wedekind, 2016). In the same breadth Hoftijzer et al. (2020) highlighted the need to reskill lecturers for the provision of skills and knowledge to help lecturers mitigate the negative impact brought by the current pandemic – Covid 19. The study is premised on the idea that the reskilling of lecturers would heighten their self-efficacy, which might culminate in an increased learner participation.

Notably, literature available to date does not provide evidence of studies, which reported on students' views of self-efficacy-linked classroom passivity and how it affects their year-end performance. This study sought to bridge the gap. The outcome of the study sheds light on the influence of TVET/FET colleges' teaching and learning environment and the contribution that the self-efficacy of teachers and students have made to promote lively classrooms.

The study followed a qualitative approach. A purposeful sampling method was employed, using the maximal variation sampling strategy to select participants. Data were collected, using focus group interviews and document analysis. The findings of the study established that the low self-efficacy of teachers and students resulted in student passivity in class, something that ultimately led to poor performance of students. Emanating from the introduction, the study sought to answer the following research question:

What is self-efficacy-linked environmental elements that led to student classroom passivity?

The following sub-questions were formulated:

- What self-efficacy attributes are displayed by students and lecturers that hindered the creation of a lively classroom?
- How do low self-efficacy influence students' attitude toward their studies?
- Which strategies can be employed to develop high self-efficacy and student performance in general?

The rest of this article is structured as follows: First, a theoretical framework and literature provide a focus for the study. Second, the sampling and data collection methods are outlined. Third, the findings and discussion of self-efficacy-linked behavioral traits of TVET colleges' lecturers and students that led to classroom passivity. The article concludes with a summary of the study and some recommendations.

Theoretical framework

The study indicates loss of self-efficacy by lecturers and students at TVET colleges, which hampers active classroom participation; it is thus underpinned by Bandura (1978)'s Theory of Self-efficacy and the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1994, p. 1). According to Bandura (1978), self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. People's self-efficacy behaviors are thus determined by psychological procedures and are distinguished from response-outcome expectancies.

Perceived self-efficacy influences the choice of behavioral setting; and Bandura (1978) outlines four sources of efficacy expectations, namely, performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state.

Performance accomplishments are based on personal mastery experiences, namely success-raising mastery expectations and repeated failures lowering them. Vicarious experience or modeling are those experiences where one observes others perform threatening activities; and can generate expectations in observers that they will also improve if they intensify and persist in their efforts. This means that a teacher who role models good behavior will attract positive responses from students.

Verbal persuasion: when faced with stressful situations and a history of prolonged failure, people need some form of social persuasion. People need to be motivated that they possess the capabilities to master difficult situations and should be equipped with mechanisms to deal with such situations. The general behavior of students and teachers can either motivate or demotivate students to prioritize their studies.

Emotional arousal: Having personal stress can affect perceived self-efficacy in coping with threatening situations. High arousal usually debilitates performance; individuals are more likely to expect success when they are not beset by aversive arousal, like being tense and viscerally agitated. Fear reactions generate further fear of impending stressful situations through anticipatory self-arousal.

The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989), on the other hand, contends that effective learning occurs when an individual is in a social context and able to engage in dynamic and reciprocal interactions between the person, the environment, and the behavior (LaMorte, 2016). According to Bandura (1989, p. 9), most external influences affect behavior through cognitive processes. Many human dysfunctions and torments stem from problems of thought. This is because people often dwell on painful pasts and perturbing futures of their own invention. They burden themselves with stressful arousal through anxiety-provoking rumination. They debilitate their own efforts by self-doubting and other self-defeating ideation (Bandura, 1989, p. 10)

LaMorte (2016) outlines the six constructs of Social Cognitive Theory as follows:

(1) Reciprocal determinism: the dynamic interaction of person and behavior.
(2) Behavioral capability: the individual's actual ability to display the appropriate behavior.
(3) Observational learning: learning a new skill or piece of knowledge by observing others (and potentially modeling them).
(4) Reinforcements: the external responses to the individual's behavior that either encourage or discourage the behavior.
(5) Expectations: the anticipated consequences of behavior.
(6) Self-efficacy: the person's confidence in his/her ability to perform a behavior (LaMorte, 2016).

Bandura (1988) suggests the following to increase a person's self-efficacy:

- The adult must demonstrate prosocial behavior (peer modeling).
- Motivation should be given concisely and frequently.
- Student participation should be encouraged through active learning.
- People should be allowed to make their own choices. Allow students to make their own decisions to experience their own mistakes and learn from such mistakes.

Literature review

The literature was reviewed to provide the framework to understand the lecturers' role to enhance classroom participation as well as the role played by self-efficacy in influencing the collaborative engagements.

Lecturers' Role In Enhancing Classroom Participation To Boost Learner Performance

The lecturer in the TVET context has been identified as an essential component of the learning environment (Buthelezi, 2018; Lippman, 2010), the role of which, was to help students apply knowledge via classroom instruction, using the lecture instructional method (Aziz & Kazi, 2019). Zacharias (2014) alluded to the important role of the lecturer as a factor of the learning environment and his/her influence on students' classroom participation, by pointing out that it is the lecturer who controls turn-taking in the classroom and that lecturers should maintain classroom discipline and protect minority groups among the students, thereby creating a psycho-social environment where everyone feels safe to participate.

A large body of literature is documented on the influence of the lecturer's choice of instructional strategy on the level of student classroom participation (Abdullah et al., 2012; Mustapha et al., 2010; Susak, 2016). Teachers from international countries can employ effective teaching strategies because they received relevant training and majority of them hold a bachelor's degree in TVET qualification Grosch, 2017). Unlike in the South African context where TVET teachers qualifications are that of normal school teachers, the western countries have specialized vocational secondary schools as well as universities that offer a section of TVET qualifications (Na, 2014). Lee et al. (2017) indicated the need for professional development of teachers to boost their self-efficacy and enhance their teaching capabilities.

Creating a warm educational setting is also enhanced by lecturers' behavioral traits, such as being supportive, understanding, approachable, and friendly, which increases students' classroom participation (Aziz & Kazi, 2019). This view is supported by Mustapha et al. (2010) who suggested that lecturer traits such as smiling, acknowledging student responses and giving students positive feedback encourage classroom participation.

Equally important is the way in which the lecturer organizes or arranges his/her tools or resources to enhance student classroom participation (Ryan 2013). The South African TVET college lecturers are faced with a challenge of having to deal with the diversity of learners namely those who dropped out of school in Grades 10 and 11 and those who came from academic schooling with Grade 9 (Chinengundu, 2021) and this requires them to employ effective teaching methodologies to cater for the needs of a diverse cohorts of learners. Apart from the diverse educational backgrounds, these students bring with them their own motivations, emotions, experiences, and personalities (Abdullah et al., 2012; Susak, 2016). Susak (2016) and Abdullah et al. (2012) agree that student' personalities, such as shyness and lack of confidence, can negatively impact on their level of classroom participation. Mustapha et al. (2010) highlighted internal and external factors that affect classroom participation, namely learner motivation, interest, previous knowledge, age, and previous experiences. In the same breadth, peers and the lecturer were identified as external human elements that can positively or negatively influence students' classroom participation (Mustapha et al., 2010).

The physical learning environment such as size, lighting, ventilation, conditions of the classroom and the seating arrangements (Kausar et al., 2017) have an influence on the encouragement of student participation. Ryan (2013) supports Kausar et al. (2017)'s view by indicating that some classrooms are designed in a way that stifle students' creativity or do not promote classroom engagement. Classroom seating in the 21st century must enhance movability, where seating arrangements can be easily changed to suit the changing needs of classroom activities, different learning styles and teaching methods. (Harvey & Kenyon, 2013; Phillips, 2014). The semi-circle or horseshoe seating arrangement should be used in adult learning as each student will have a front seat (Phillips, 2014)

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Encouraging Collaborative Engagement

Self-efficacy is regarded as a tool to encourage collaborative engagement (Schwab, 2019). The power of collaborative engagement between learners is indicated in the study conducted by Takimoto (2012) in which learners who had collaborative engagement with their peers outperformed those who did not. In the teaching and learning space, teachers are supposed to be an educational resource to preserve such a collaborative space (Schwab, 2019). However, a study by Badenhorst and Radile (2018) indicated that teachers experienced a number of challenges in their endeavors to preserve such a learning environment, namely motivating students, designing learning tasks that enhance collaboration and classroom management. A high self-efficacy has been identified as one of the elements that enable teachers to deal with classroom challenges that pose stress and burnout (Schwab, 2019). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) suggested a high self-efficacy will assist teachers to create a conducive teaching and learning environment when dealing with classroom challenges by adapting their instructional methods to accommodate learner diversity. In addition, teachers with high self-efficacy are able to maintain discipline and provide constant motivation to students (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016). In his study, Cayirdag (2017), indicated that comparatively speaking, an internal locus of control (internal self-efficacy) contributes more on general teacher performance than teacher experience, which is an external locus of control. The increased teacher internal locus of control that refers to the internal motivation will in turn give rise to a high students' self-efficacy; where learners become actively involved in the learning process and gradually show high commitment to their work (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Margolis and McCabe (2006) further posited that student motivation can be enhanced by teachers who appreciate little student successes by giving positive feedback, something that will boost self-efficacy that will serve them throughout their academic career and beyond.

In the same breadth, teachers can preserve a healthy learning environment by enhancing collaborative engagement between them and students and by treating students as co-constructors of curricula (Sekonyela, 2021). Allowing students to have ownership of the learning process will enhance their self-efficacy and they will show a better academic performance and commitment to remain in school (Chemers et al., 2001). The support that teachers offer students not only increases students' self-efficacy, but also develops their need to engage in continuous learning, the so-called life-long learning (Oviedo-Trespalacios et al., 2015).

Methodology

The researcher followed a qualitative research approach and was guided by the constructivist research paradigm, since knowledge was interactively constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) by the researcher and participants during the research process. The above approach helped the researcher to interpret situations from the perceptions of the students who were experiencing self-efficacy-induced behavioral patterns that contributed to student classroom passivity in South African TVET/FET colleges.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study comprised TVET/FET College students from three campuses who were pursuing their studies in the National Certificate Vocational (NCV), Engineering studies and National Technical Education (Nated) business.

A purposeful sample of 30 students was selected, using the maximal variation sampling strategy to participate in three focus groups (FGDs) interviews, one per campus. The maximal variation sampling strategy was enabled by a large sample and included individuals that differ in some characteristics or traits (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the sample selected varied in terms of courses students did and gender and their age that ranged from 19 to 30. A total of 18 students were enrolled in business studies programmes and 12 studied engineering courses. The sample consisted

of 22 black South African males and eight females. The sample's home language was African language and all of them had English as a second additional language. Ethics principles such as informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality were applied by the researcher to protect the identity of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

Data Collection Strategies

Data was collected, using three focus group interviews (one from each campus) and a document analysis. Each focus group consisted of 10 participants from each campus. The interviews took place at a neutral place outside the school premises, and they lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour each. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to allow him to ask probing questions to explore self-efficacy-linked contributory factors that led to student passivity in class and the concomitant poor student performance in more detail (Hoets, 2012; Jensen & Laurie, 2016). The participants' responses were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded. Ethics principles such as informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality were applied by the researcher to protect the identity of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).

Data Analysis

The researcher followed a thematic analysis approach for qualitative data to construct the meaning of participant comments and behaviors (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2018; Billups, 2012). This process involved a review of all the transcripts and preliminary coding of possible categories, followed by a more detailed process of creating categories and themes within the data. Three themes, related to the research sub-questions, emerged from the qualitative data, namely the participants agreed that teachers and students' low self-efficacy prevented the creation of lively classrooms, low self-efficacy-induced negative behavioral attitudes of lectures and students; and, finally, motivation was found to be effective in increasing the level of efficacy.

Findings

Three themes emerged from the data collected, namely, students and teachers' low self-efficacy attributes led to students' passivity in class, Lack of classroom participation impacted on student performance in general and students' indication about strategies to increase self-efficacy

Students and Teachers' Low Self-Efficacy Attributes Led to Students' Passivity in Class

The students' responses during the three focus group interviews indicated that self-efficacy-linked classroom passivity was ignited by environmental factors. The participants indicated that the TVET/FET teaching and learning environment did not encourage active participation, because of certain behaviors displayed by students and teachers and the physical factors. The findings revealed that the behaviors TVET students show indicate low self-efficacy, which promotes passivity in class. It has emerged from this study that disruptions by classmates and lecturers caused students to be shy and lacking confidence.

Participant A commented as follows in this regard: "*Both the lecturers and students laugh at us and call us names when we provide wrong answers, therefore I don't have the confidence to speak in the class, even if I know the correct answer I just keep it to myself.* "Participant B added:

> "*Lecturers don't know or use our names; they lack personal touch. Some of the lecturers give us bad attitude when we ask questions, therefore we just keep our silence in the classroom. Our lecturers are not approachable at all. They appear to be too serious we fear to approach them or ask questions.*"

Most of the participants in the study indicated that the language barrier increased students' lack of confidence: Participant C declared: *"English is too difficult for some of us and we do not understand what is being taught. To avoid any embarrassment, I will remain silent rather than to orally participate in the classroom."*

It has emerged from this study that students' poor discipline disturbed the teaching and learning process; thus, they could not actively participate in class, as pointed out by Participant D commented as follows in this regard: "*Some learners are stubborn show disrespect because they know nothing will happen to them. One learner can go outside to answer their phones maybe 4–5 times during a lesson and this disrupts the flow of the lesson.* "

Apart from factors arising from the school milieu, findings from this study indicated that some self-efficacy-linked behaviors are caused by students' backgrounds, as indicated by Participant E:" *Some of our African cultures, regard keeping quiet as a good behavior and we were taught this at an early age so I do not participate in class.* "

Participant F added: "*Some of us have emotional stress caused by parental responsibilities and the physical and emotional abuse we face in our home.* "

The Impact of Low Self-Efficacy on Students' Attitude Toward Their Studies

The findings indicated that students' low self-efficacy has a negative impact on their studies. Participant C commented as follows in this regard: *"I have registered Electrical engineering N2 three times before I could pass the subject. Apart from the language barrier students' disruptions during lessons and lecturers' 'don't care' attitude prevented me from mastering the required content."*

It has also emerged from the study that teachers' level of qualifications reduced their confidence in applying effective teaching methods that would encourage students to learn and participate in class. Participant F commented: "*When I read the textbook I do not understand, and the lecturers' textbook method does not help me to understand, so when lecturer ask questions I do not respond because I do not understand the lesson.* "

Participant B added: *"the lecturers are not confident when they teach, hence the reading of a textbook. Sometimes they interpret information wrong and when you rectify them, they victimize you and as a result students develop attitude to the course and fail at the end of a trimester."*

The findings from this study indicated that students and lecturers' lack of confidence makes the teaching and learning process boring, Participant G: "*what is happening inside the classroom do not motivate us to learn, many students dropped out and the level absenteeism of students and lecturers is high. Absenteeism leads to lecturers not finishing the syllabus and students miss a lot of content."*

Strategies That Can Be Employed to Develop High Self-Efficacy and Student Performance in General

The participants repeatedly indicated that lecturers' poor qualifications and lack of competence lead to low self-efficacy and they suggested that these lecturers be retrained.

Participant I said the following in this regard: "*Our Lecturers should further their knowledge in the subject they teach so that they can explain better. I am doing N6 engineering and my lecturer's highest qualification is N6, so some concepts are challenging him and we end up not participating because things aren't clear to us.* "

Participant J added: *"Lecturers should be taught to be professional adult leaner educators. I suggest that lecturers go for workshops so that they can be taught to be active in class. If our lecturers can be trained on how to use technology, they will be able to use teaching methods which doesn't make us passive in the classroom."*

The participants also suggested the use of teaching methods that will enhance student participation – projects, group work, role play and simulations.

Participant E remarked as follows in this regard: "*the use of projects enhances collaborative engagement between students and lecturers and between students themselves. The lesson becomes so interesting when we share information, it is not boring. When we collaborate with other students, we learn a lot about the importance of communication, and we always meet the submission deadlines. But the fixed desks in our classroom prevent us to collaborate with ease as a group*."

As far as role play and simulations are concerned, participant K said: "*In Contact Centre Operations (CCO), we simulate real life challenges of dealing with customers over the phone and I personally find it beneficial. They help in developing public speaking and communication skills that we need when we are at work especially for those of us who are doing marketing*."

Participant L added: *"During the Integrated Summative Assessments Tasks (ISAT), the presentations we do help us to be gain self-confidence and not be afraid to speak in front of people."*

Availability of physical resources was seen to be another essential commodity to increase self-efficacy and student performance in general, Participant D remarked: "*The material in the libraries should be regularly updated so that we find relevant books for our studies. We also need Wi-Fi connectivity, it will help us to do research with our smartphones."*

Participant M said: "*One resource that is needed to improve classroom participation especially in engineering are the workshop materials we use to do practicals. Practicals help us understand concept and understanding concepts help improve our classroom participation*."

Document Analysis

A survey was done to assess the general performance of students at TVET/FET colleges and the table is attached at the end of the article labeled:

Discussion

This study indicated the role that self-efficacy plays in creating a conducive teaching and learning environment that promotes students' active participation during lessons. It became evident from this study that lecturers and students show low-efficacy traits that prevented healthy interpersonal relationships, where students tended to be victims as they did not register progress in their studies. Low self-efficacy of students was indicated by the unruly and disruptive behaviors during lessons, namely frequent movements in and out of the classroom; students laughing at other students who attempt to answer questions and name calling. Even more worrying was lecturers who are expected to manage the classrooms by maintaining discipline (LaMorte, 2016; Zacharias (2014) displayed a I "don't care" attitude, as posited by participant C. "*The classroom disruptions made students not to concentrate on the lesson delivered and when lecturers asked them questions they were unable to answer because they lost touch with the lesson and because they feared mockery. Lecturers' low self- efficacy became evident again when they, like students reprimanded students when they gave wrong answers and called them names. The negative behaviors and comments made the classroom environment toxic and reinforced passivity, shyness and fear to students who wished to be actively involved in class*." The study affirmed the assertion of; Bandura (1978) that negative verbal persuasion demotivates students who need positive reinforcements (LaMorte, 2016) to increase their self-efficacy. Students developed low self-efficacy because their attempts to answer questions were not appreciated; and this study affirmed the assertion by Margolis and McCabe (2006) that positive feedback will boost the recipient's self-efficacy. The researcher presupposes that the lecturers negative verbal persuasion could be a sign of low self-efficacy because they could not motivate the students or maintain discipline to deal with disruptions during lessons (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Fackler & Malmberg, 2016). The lecturers' general behavior and inability to maintain classroom discipline enhanced classroom passivity as more students chose to be quite because of what happened to other students, what Bandura (1978) refers to as a vicarious experience.

The study also revealed lack of confidence to be another low self-efficacy-linked attribute, which contributed much to the already tense classroom situation. The language of learning and teaching, English, appeared to be a barrier that caused many students to be quite in class because they are unable to express themselves. The language barrier prevented collaborative engagement between students and lecturers, collaboration that is seen as a tool to increase self-efficacy (Schwab, 2019). The lack of a collaborative engagement caused by the language barrier resulted into student poor performance that supports Takimoto (2012)'s assertion that students who had a collaborative engagement with their peers outperformed those who did not. The study sheds light on the important role that Africanization and Decolonization of a curriculum can play, where the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is the students' home language to enhance active participation in classrooms. It became evident from this study that in as far as the language barrier is concerned, the lecturers' self-efficacy played no role in preventing the students' collaborative engagement. The study highlighted the need to address the issue of LoLT (which is a political issue) in the South African institutions so as to enhance students participation and increase the throughput rate.

The lecturers' lack of self-confidence was also displayed by their inability to employ a variety of teaching methods. The researcher may argue that the lecturers' inability to apply effective-teaching strategies to the diverse cohort of students they were teaching, was caused by the fact that the majority of these students were high-school dropouts (Chinengundu, 2021). But, the above assertion was opposed by the existing literature, that the high self-efficacy enabled lecturers to preserve the conducive environment where all learners, regardless of their abilities, receive equal treatment and the best opportunities to be successful (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016; Gandola, 2020) . The findings from this study indicated that the use of a textbook method of teaching not only make students lose focus, but also prevent them from understanding the lesson. From the participants' point of view, one would attribute lecturers' stress to having low self-efficacy, because they lacked the expertise to teach; hence, the use of a textbook method, which does not cater for students' diverse needs. The "cold classroom" situation, where students are beset with aversive arousal, not only enhances student passivity, but also leads to a high student drop-out rate and an increased level of absenteeism of students and lecturers, as posited by participant G. The high level of absenteeism leads to student content gaps and inadequate syllabus coverage by the lecturers, which ultimately results in low throughput and students repeating one course many times, as indicated by participant C. The study affirmed the existing literature about the impact that a lecturer's choice of instructional strategy has on the level of student classroom participation (Abdullah et al., 2012; Mustapha et al., 2010; Susak, 2016).

The findings of the research indicated the emergence of an ignition of the sources of efficacy expectations, namely emotional arousal (Bandura, 1978). From the data collected, it became evident that self-efficacy-linked behaviors of lecturers and students make classrooms a very stressful environment. The results of document analysis in Table 1(below), which reported on student performance of

Table 1. Student Performance Survey.

SUBJECT & LEVEL	2018	2019	2020
Computer Practice N6**	42%	32%	17%
Marketing Communications N6**	43%	44%	39%
Public Finance N5*	38%	39%	21%
Public Law N6**	24%	18%	16%
Electrical Principles Level 4**	23%	23%	18%
Advertising &Promotions Level 4**	24%	31%	10%
Economic Environment Level 4**	33%	39%	42%

Source: The author developed a table indicating some subject performances from the three campuses.
*None exit level
** Exit level
N6 is the exit level for National Technical Education (Nated) programmes
Level 4 is the exit point for National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes; and is equivalent to Matric/Gade12/ National Senior Certificate.

selected courses, indicated a decline in the student pass rate. The analysis indicated a low throughput in exit levels, which means that students' dreams of getting employment to break the circle of poverty are shattered. The table also indicated an increase in the student failure rate in years – the graph, which indicates student performance from 2018 to 2020, show a persistent drop in the pass rate. This finding will make one believe that signs of individual low levels of self-efficacy at TVET/FET colleges are on the increase annually and needs urgent attention.

When the researcher asked the participants how to ameliorate the situation at TVET/FET colleges, they suggested above all, improvement in human and physical resources. Participants' suggestions that the teachers need to improve their qualifications agreed with a large body of literature to the effect that teachers are essential components of the learning environment; and that teacher professional development will boost their self-efficacy and enhance their teaching capabilities (Lee et al., 2017; Lippman, 2010; Sharma, Shaukat, & Furlonger, 2015). The lecturers' incompetence could be linked to their level of education for an example the assertion made by participant I that his lecturer's highest qualification is N6 attests to (Kuehn, 2019′s finding that the South African lecturers are underqualified. The study revealed without doubt that lack of proper qualifications reduced the lecturers' self-efficacy because their content-gaps prevented them from becoming assertive during their lesson presentation. The TVET colleges' underqualified lecturers contributed to a high failure rate because according to Grosch (2017) a throughput rate in other countries is caused by the existence of TVET lecturers with high and relevant qualifications. The above finding also indicated the need for the adoption of the western TVET colleges' dual approach where the companies with skilled trainers are employed to train students (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Buthelezi, 2018; Wedekind, 2016)) so as to mitigate the lecturers' content and skills gap. Teachers' need for empowerment was also indicated by their inability to use technology to enhance the teaching and learning process, which was one of the recommendations put forward by students. Since this study took place during the time of the Covid 19 pandemic, it has shed light that the acquisition of online skills, would not only enhance teaching and learning, but it would also empower lecturers with skills needed to mitigate the negative impact of the Covid 19 pandemic (Hoftijzer et al., 2020).

Since most students seemed to have a challenge in grasping what is being taught during the lesson, they suggested group work engagement, which was not possible because of the classroom arrangement – fixed desks that prevented student collaborations. The above situation is supported by Kausar et al. (2017)'s view that some classrooms are designed in such a way that stifles students' creativity or do not promote classroom engagement.

The study also indicated that the poorly resourced libraries with obsolete sources, absence of WIFI and computers prevented the learners from doing an independent study; hence, they remained empty and passive in class. Partly, the above is an affirmation of the report by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017)) that South African TVET colleges have poor supply of data. The situation in these colleges not only limit learners' participation in classroom but it also confirms that a change in the teaching and learning approach (which arise from high self-efficacy of students and lecturers) could be impaired by external factors, such as the availability of resources. To this end students suggested beefing up libraries with recent sources and access to computers and WIFI which would enhance learning

Conclusion

The study focused on a relatively less-explored area about the role played by self-efficacy in determining students' classroom participation. The low self-efficacy of lecturers and students resulted in students' passivity in class. Students' unruly behavior and the lecturers' "I don't care attitude" appeared to be signs of low efficacy that leads to high failure rate and drop out level. Evidence was provided to suggest that the textbook teaching method used by the lecturers; the absence of computers and WIFI coupled with a poorly resourced library, reduced students" self-efficacy, which contributed much to their passivity in class. Few studies were conducted to listen to

students' views on the impact of self-efficacy on their classroom performance. I believe that this study could contribute to the body of knowledge to enhance the self-efficacy of students and lecturers at institutions of learning to increase performance and the through-put rate. Directions for future research is that the study is undertaken in other cases since the focus of this study was in three FET/TVET colleges. The conduction of the study in other cases will improve the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommended are made.

- Professional training programmes for both practicing TVET lecturers and prospective lecturers should be prioritized. This becomes important as the government is encouraging school leavers to take TVET colleges as tertiary education institutions of choice. The training should be focused on advanced subject content and preparing lecturers to be professional adult student educators. Training should also focus on classroom management and discipline and instructional strategies.
- The classroom structure, the furniture arrangement should be re-designed. Various 21st-century classrooms seating arrangements, such as group pods, can be used to improve classroom participation. The TVET classrooms should be transformed to be flexible, collaborative, and accommodate various instructional models.
- TVET/FET college libraries must be improved and there should be computers with free WIFI
- The Dual approach must be adopted to solve the problem of incompetent lecturers.
- The government must prioritize the funding of TVET colleges to make resources available.

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