

**THE IMPACT OF STUDENT PROTESTS ON MOTIVATION,
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND RETENTION RATE AT
NKANGALA TVET COLLEGE, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Thoka Bella Mmapatji, declare the following: *The impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College, Mpumalanga Province* is my independent work. The sources utilised or cited are accredited by means of comprehensive list of references. I affirm that this work has not been previously submitted for any other degree at any other institution.



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Signature

30/01/2023

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loved ones who have provided unwavering support and inspiration throughout this journey. My parents, Linah and Thabo Thoka, have been a constant source of encouragement and support. My siblings, Lebogang, Lucky, Kgomantsho, and Thato, have also been a source of inspiration and motivation. And last but not least, my son Amogelang, who has been my biggest motivation and support throughout this journey. Their love and support have been invaluable and I am forever grateful for them.

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ABSTRACT

Student protests continue to be a challenge in most universities and TVET colleges in South Africa. The current study sought to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College, Mpumalanga Province. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College. Considering the nature of this study, the positivist research paradigm was followed by the researcher, and a quantitative research approach was used, utilising cross-sectional survey methods to collect data from 175 participants consisting of 160 NCV level 4 students and 15 lecturers. Secondary data on students' records were also used for the study. The Attribution theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. The research findings revealed that student protests have a negative impact on motivation, academic performance, and retention rates at the institution. It was also found that student protests result in teaching and learning disturbances, and such disturbances negatively affect student motivation, resulting in students' lack of motivation. Low motivation among students has also been indicated as the key contributor to poor academic performance and results in dropout and low retention rates. The results also revealed that most student protests are a result of financial burdens, especially for students financed by NSFAS. The study further indicated that it would be of benefit if NSFAS allowances were paid on time and if there was clear communication between management and students.

KEYWORDS

Academic performance; Motivation; National Curriculum Vocational (NCV); Retention rate; Student protests; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CIHE	Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education
CIHER	Centre for Higher Education Research
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
NCV	National Curriculum Vocational
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SAFETSA	South African Further Education and Training Student Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSS	Student support services
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PT	Part-time students
FT	Full-time students

CHAPTER 1: General orientation to the study

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College in the Mpumalanga Province. This chapter provides background information on the study by introducing the context in which the research problem arises. It states the rationale for the study, exposes the problem statement, and lists the research questions and objectives of the study. The definition of key terms and the demarcation of the study is also presented.

1.2 Background to the study

This section explores the TVET systems in Asia, Europe, and Africa. It then examines TVET education in South Africa, the country where the study is conducted, with a brief review on academic performance, dropout rate, retention rate, and student protests as they relate to the study problem.

1.2.1 *TVET colleges in Asia*

In Asia, TVET education is divided into two categories: formal and informal educational systems. The formal TVET system includes secondary schools, polytechnics, and colleges, while the non-formal TVET sector consists of pre-employment, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships (Matenda, 2019, p. 37). A few Asian countries have effectively implemented TVET education. Singapore is an example of a country that has linked TVET education with economic growth (Law, 2010). Singapore was able to establish a thriving TVET sector by modifying TVET institutions and altering people's perceptions of the sector by meeting developmental goals and following policies that meet the needs of multinational companies by providing relevant skills (Law, 2010).

On the other hand, TVET education in some Asian countries is associated with low-social standards. Agrawal (2012, p. 458) notes that in India, TVET education is perceived as an education sector for underperforming, poor students who are unable to gain admission to other higher education sectors. Matenda (2019, p. 39) agrees and states that finding employment after graduating from a TVET institution is a

daunting challenge for graduates in Asia. A 2008 World Bank Report noted that 60% of graduates from TVET institutions in India were unemployed, and graduates can spend up to three years after graduation looking for employment. Agrawal (2012) mentions that unemployment rates are high among TVET graduates compared to overall unemployment rates.

1.2.2 TVET colleges in Europe

TVET education in European countries was inspired by the need to combat youth unemployment by increasing employability and providing technical skills, drawing inspiration from the successes of various Asian countries (CEDEFOP, 2009). Kirchberger (2008) claims that by 2008, the TVET sector was in crisis, leading countries in Europe, including Italy, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, to begin reform efforts. However, according to USAID (2014, p. 40), Germany, France, and the UK continue to struggle with the “relevance and effectiveness” of the TVET sector. There is a perception that TVET institutions in Europe are less prominent and this is due to low pay for workers with TVET qualifications (Matenda, 2019, p. 31). Kirchberger (2008) highlighted Spain as an example, noting that the country faced challenges in the TVET sector as most graduates worked under adverse conditions and were often given temporary contracts or part-time positions. TVET graduates are perceived as low-skilled, with limited opportunities for advancement and inadequate pay. Bathmaker (2001), in a study of TVET institutions in England, found that placing graduates with TVET qualifications in low-status, low-paying occupations exacerbated socioeconomic inequalities. These disparities, according to Colley et al. (2003, p. 491), may be caused by the fact that TVET education in Europe is typically provided to young people from underprivileged backgrounds and with low academic performance. The TVET sector in Europe still has many operational flaws, but regulations are being put in place to address these issues (Matenda, 2019, p. 32).

1.2.3 TVET colleges in Africa

In Africa, as in most other continents, TVET institutions are considered to be playing an important role in combating high youth unemployment and supplying the labour market with competent workers. The African Union (2007) refers to TVET institutions in Africa as a sector of post-school education that may assist in reducing poverty by supplying the skills necessary for economic growth. However, an African Union Report (2014) claims that the TVET sector in most African countries has not been effective in lowering youth unemployment, as recommended policies have not been properly executed to increase the quality and standard of TVET education. Kirchberger (2008, p. 7) conducted a brief assessment of the TVET industry in Africa, describing it as “uncoordinated, uncontrolled, extremely fragmented, and characterised by low-quality training, obsolete teaching materials and equipment, as well as gender, geographical, and economic inequities.” According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2014), TVET education is associated with failing students and is seen as inferior to university education in Sub-Saharan African countries, such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal, and Tanzania. In most African countries, there is no clear path to post-graduate education through TVET education, which discourages students who wish to continue their studies after graduation.

The lack of collaboration between TVET institutions and the labour market, which results in a poor match between the credentials or skills supplied by these institutions and the demands of the labour market, is another factor cited by UNESCO (2016) as a barrier to TVET institutions in Africa. Other impediments include a lack of support for the industry, lack of career counselling, and an inability to teach students how to pursue self-employment. Matenda (2019, p. 33) notes additional difficulties faced by the TVET industry in Africa, include low throughput rates, lack of understanding of labour market demands, and inadequate infrastructure. It is clear that TVET institutions in most African countries fail to produce graduates who are trained and marketable for work or to combine TVET strategies to put employment policies into place, hire more young people, and reduce poverty.

1.2.4 TVET colleges in South Africa

Following the establishment of democracy in South Africa, the government initiated a significant reorganisation of the higher education sector, including the consolidation of technical institutions. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013, p. 12), by 2002 there were 152 documented public colleges, which were later combined into 50 colleges and rebranded as Further Education and Training (FET) institutions. These institutions were later renamed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges to align with international standards, as recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1999). Currently, there are approximately 50 public TVET colleges, with over 260 campuses spread across the nine provinces of South Africa, in both rural and urban areas (DHET, 2013, p. 12).

The South African government views TVET institutions as a potential solution to societal issues such as unemployment, inequality, and poverty. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III and the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRM-SA) have identified TVET colleges as crucial educational institutions that can address the skills gap in the country. These colleges also provide fundamental skills to professionals requiring technical skills for their jobs states Department of Education (2009, p. 21). The DHET (2013, pp. 11-12) supports this statement and states that the focus of TVET colleges is to train and educate young school leavers by providing them with technical skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for labour market employment. According to Matenda (2019, p. 3), TVET colleges are believed to promote economic growth and provide a solution to youth unemployment. These ideas were influenced by the industrial revolutions in Germany and Japan, where TVET institutions helped fill skills gaps and stimulate economies. The World Bank (2011) stated that countries like Singapore, China, the United States, and Britain have invested a significant amount from their national budgets to maintain and enhance the system, which has paid off, as per Matenda (2019, p. 37). Therefore, the industry requires sufficient funding to ensure the success of TVET colleges in producing skilled labour.

UNESCO-UNEVOC (2014) reported that the South African government invested R2.5 billion to renovate the TVET colleges, adopting international best practices. However,

only a few institutions were outfitted to acceptable standards. The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC, 2014) found that the government’s funding was unable to rebuild other TVET colleges. Kraak et al. (2016, p. viii) added that despite efforts to raise standards and quality, the state of certain TVET institutions remains concerning. DHET (2015, p. 32) reported that TVET colleges continue to face challenges such as low throughput rates, increasing failure rates, and alarmingly low retention rates.

1.2.4.1 Academic performance in TVET colleges

Gewer (2010, p. 10) states that, despite efforts, examination results reveal poor performance among students in TVET colleges. The DHET (2013, p. 17) agrees and notes that TVET college students typically have low success rates. Furthermore, statistics on student academic performance in TVET colleges have shown that students generally perform poorly. Table 1.1 illustrates the academic progress of TVET students between 2011 and 2016.

Table 1.1: Academic progress of TVET students between 2011 and 2016

Year	NC (V) Level 4			Report 190/1 N3			Report 190/1 N6		
	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate (%)	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate (%)	Number wrote	Number completed	Completion rate (%)
2011	17 836	7 638	42.8	2 909	1 366	47.0	2 428	1 488	61.3
2012	15 334	6 018	39.3	9 928	3 724	37.5	8 735	2 902	33.2
2013	22 470	8 346	37.1	65 788	26 186	39.8	52 052	18 584	35.7
2014	22 705	7 838	34.5	74 710	35 782	47.9	68 678	29 071	42.3
2015	26 144	10 465	40.0	73 650	43 259	58.7	89 454	53 125	59.4
2016	28 683	11 898	41.5	91 397	54 314	59.4	106 927	69 280	64.8

Source: DHET (2018)

As shown in Table 1.1, the average NCV level 4 completion rate nationwide between 2011 and 2016 was 39.2%, Report 191/N3 was 48.38%, and Report 191/N6 was 49.45%. There is a significant gap between the number of students who sat for exams and the number of students who completed a qualification during the academic years of 2011 and 2016. For example, in 2016, 28 683 students took their final exam, however, only 11 898 of them passed. This indicates that 16 785 NCV level 4 students

underperformed and were unable to earn their qualification. All of the college's programmes are affected by the poor academic performance of TVET students. This suggests that the majority of TVET college students struggle academically, and some may quit college before completing their course. It is clear that South African TVET colleges are struggling to provide students with the resources they need to complete their education within the allotted time. This is also noted in DHET (2013), which claims that the majority of TVET institutions fall short of both their institutional goals and students' exam results.

1.2.4.2 Dropout rate and retention rate in TVET colleges

The dropout and retention rates in TVET colleges have been a cause for concern in South Africa. In 2012, the Minister of Education Dr Blade Nzimande highlighted the below average retention rates at TVET colleges in the country (DHET, 2013). Abura (2013, p. 11) concurs and notes that the retention rate at TVET colleges is low. The high dropout rate in the TVET sector negatively impacts retention and throughput rates, which in turn affects the institutions' success rates and their ability to provide the country with skilled professionals. This problem not only has a detrimental effect on individual students' financial well-being and employment prospects, but also on society, government, and the economy (Gaffoor & Van der Bijl, 2019, p. 23). The Minister of Higher Education and Training, further emphasised at a conference in August 2014 that college dropouts have a negative impact on the country's economy, the institutions, and the individual students (Mdluli, 2017). High dropout rates by TVET college students exacerbate the already-prevalent problem of high unemployment rates, hindering economic development which the government is trying to combat through TVET colleges. Heublein (2014) suggests that decreasing the student dropout rate at TVET institutions by retaining students can be the most effective way of increasing the relevant workforce for economic development.

1.2.4.3 *Student protests in institutions of higher learning*

Student protests in institutions of higher learning have a long history in Africa, dating back to the anti-colonial uprisings of the 1940s (Aluede et al., 2005; Onwuejeogwu, 1992). These protests were driven by the desire to liberate the continent from colonial rule and establish a democratic society within and outside of educational institutions. In South Africa, student protests have a long history dating back to the anti-Apartheid marches that led to the country's democracy (Dlamini et al., 2018). According to Ntshoe (2002, p. 64), violent and savage anti-apartheid protests took place in educational institutions across South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, turning education into the epicentre of political unrest. The literature makes it very evident that student protests were a key factor in bringing South Africa from a colonised state to a democratic state.

In current years, in the democratic state students are still protesting. The fact that student protests continue today, decades after South Africa gained its independence, is supported by Onwuejeogwu (1992), who claims that students attending South African institutions protest at any given time during an "academic semester or academic year." The ongoing student protests appear to have an impact on how these institutions operate (Aluede et al., 2005). These student protests in institutions of higher learning have negative consequences and Stuurman (2018, p. 1) observed that these protests often involve violent behaviour, turning campuses into chaotic spaces. In some instances, police intervention can lead to further violence. College property can be vandalised and damaged, academic activities are interrupted, and time for teaching and learning is lost. Despite attempts to return to normal, students tend not to take into consideration the direct consequences of the protests.

Aluede et al. (2005) states that the public, academics, parents, politicians, and the media frequently judge and criticise students for initiating student protests while ignoring their explanations. Over the years the media, politics, and academic circles have paid some attention to student protests and disturbances in TVET colleges and universities, but their main focus is on violent protests that result in physical or mental harm or destroy infrastructure. The media portray protesting students as angry and dangerous without understanding the nature of the complaints or the repressive character of the institutions and systems under which they function. Aluede et al.

(2005), allude to the fact that student protests are mainly students' responses to authoritarian leadership, institutional deterioration, and management problems. This is corroborated by Hamid and Singaram (2016), who note that while there are many possible factors for why student protests occur, financing, National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), ambiguous college regulations, and colleges' inability to resolve its recurring issues are among the factors contributing to student protests. The way college administration handles student protests is also a critical aspect that needs to be studied together with the impact of student protests on students' academic lives.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The rationale for this study is based on the researcher's professional experience as an Education Specialist at a TVET college. Low student motivation, poor academic performance, and low retention rates are significant concerns for TVET colleges, as they impede the achievement of their main objective which is to give back to the labour market young skilled professionals. Despite a high level of interest among prospective students during registration, a significant proportion fail to complete their qualifications. This raises the question of what factors contribute to this phenomenon. As Papier (2009, p. 39) notes, TVET colleges are known for their low certification rates and high failure and dropout rates, despite the crucial role they play in addressing skills shortages. Sheppard and Sheppard (2012) also highlight the failure of TVET institutions to meet their objective of addressing the nation's skills shortages due to poor academic performance and low retention rates.

Given the prevalence of student protests in TVET colleges and the lack of research on this topic in the South African context, this study aims to investigate the relationship between student protests and motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College. The interest in this study is further motivated by the fact that currently very few studies have been conducted in South African TVET colleges on student protests, while the majority of studies on this topic have been conducted in universities, specifically surrounding the 2015 #fees must fall protests.

1.4 Statement of the problem

In recent years, there has been an increase in student protests at TVET colleges. Such protests often lead to the disruption of academic activities, as noted by Akpanke (2016, p. 1), which can cause significant setbacks for students and create challenges for the duration of their studies. These disruptions are often caused by students being kept away from college during the protests. After the protests have ended and academic activities have resumed, some students may struggle to adjust, resulting in some dropping out while others stay to write final examinations. Due to lost learning time, those who choose to stay and write exams often do not succeed. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College.

1.5 The research questions

The research questions for this study are indicated below.

1.5.1 Main research question

The main research question that the study seeks to answer is:

- What is the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College?

In order to answer the main research question, four sub-research questions will be posed.

1.5.2 Sub-research questions

The sub-research questions for this study are as follows:

- What factors contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College?
- To what extent do student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college?
- To what extent do student protests affect retention rate at the college?
- What recommendations can be made, if needed, to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college?

1.6 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim and objectives of the study are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

1.6.1 General aim

The study aims to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives that assisted the researcher in achieving the general aim are as follows:

- To establish factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College.
- To determine the extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college.
- To determine the extent to which student protests affect the retention rate at the college.
- To provide recommendations, if needed, to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study aims to reveal factors that lead to student protests at Nkangala TVET College, and to understand the impact of these protests on student motivation, academic performance and retention rate. The findings may serve as a valuable resource for stakeholders such as TVET colleges, policymakers and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET and policymakers will be provided with up-to-date information on issues affecting TVET students, which may assist in improving existing policies and developing effective strategies to control protests. The study may also educate students on appropriate ways to voice their dissatisfaction without disrupting academic activities. Additionally, the study aims to assist the Nkangala TVET College management and the DHET in formulating strategies to reduce student protests, minimise dropout rates and optimise academic performance and retention rates. Furthermore, the study intends to contribute to the

existing literature on TVET colleges and prompt further research to fill the current knowledge gap on student protests in TVET colleges.

1.8 Definition of key terms

1.8.1 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): UNESCO and ILO (2002, p. 7) define TVET as a broad term referring to the education system designed to offer education and skills to young school leavers at tertiary level, providing general education and technical practical skills for various economic sectors. Njenga (2020) further state that, TVET education is often considered an alternative to traditional academic routes, such as university and is designed to prepare students for a specific career or occupation.

1.8.2 Student Protests: The Oxford online English dictionary (2020) defines protests as an action or statement by unhappy individuals expressing their objection or disapproval of something. Rapatsa (2017) defines student protests as a form of student activism that takes place at educational campuses. Such protests encompass a wide range of activities that indicate student dissatisfaction with a given political or academics issue and mobilization to communicate this dissatisfaction to the authorities and society in general and hopefully remedy the problem.

1.8.3 Academic performance: According to Odunga (2015), academic performance refers to student academic achievement as measured by institutional performance standards based on specific learning outcomes through examinations or continuous assessment. Therefore, academic performance or achievement is the extent to which the institution, individual student, or teacher has attained their desired educational goals (Mdluli, 2017).

1.8.4 Retention rate: Moxley et al. (2001) define retention as the practice of keeping students in college until completion. According to Mdluli (2017, p. 15), retention rate is the percentage of students who continue to enrol in their intended courses year after year until completion.

1.8.5 Student Dropout: According to Heublein (2014), dropout refers to students withdrawing from their studies before course completion or graduation. According to Xavier (2020) there are many different definitions of dropout and related concepts:

(attrition, persistence, and retention) in the literature, usually related to a temporal conception. Inconsistent terminology is problematic because the ways dropout is defined determine how it is measured, tackled, and researched.

1.8.6 Motivation: McInerney (2015) define motivation as the psychological construct invented to describe the mechanism by which individuals and groups choose particular behaviour and persist with it. The Oxford online English dictionary (2020) defines motivation as the reason or reasons for a particular action, behaviour or decision.

1.9 Demarcation of the study

Chapter 1: General orientation to the study

This chapter provides the rationale, orientation, and context in which the study was undertaken. The research problem is described, along with the background, aim, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter presents a review of relevant findings in the available literature, with the intention of analysing other authors' views in relation to the current research topic. The theoretical framework underpinning the study is also discussed.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

This chapter gives an overview of how data was collected in this study. The methodological aspects include the research design, population, sampling methods, data collection methods, and analysis methods used. The validity, reliability, elimination of biasness, and ethical considerations of the study are also presented.

Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis, and discussion

This chapter presents a systematic interpretation and analysis of the data collected from the research. The analyses include illustrations to assist in discussing the findings as the results are analysed, interpreted, and discussed.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, recommendations, and general conclusions based on the study findings.

1.10 Summary

In the chapter, the researcher provided a comprehensive overview of the topic by introducing the study and giving an outline of the background. The problem statement is highlighted and discussed, along with the aim, objectives, and research questions of the study, and the significance for conducting the study. Key terms are defined and the chapter concludes by providing an outline of the structure of the study. The next chapter summarises and discusses literature to establish what is already known and identify gaps in knowledge. Corresponding and contradicting viewpoints are exposed, with a focus on relevant literature providing theoretical and empirical support for the study.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rates at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and universities. The study begins by investigating the factors that influence student protests. It then examines motivation as a concept and the factors that impact student motivation and academic performance. Dropout and retention rates are also discussed, with Attribution theory serving as the theoretical framework for the study.

2.2 Factors influencing student protests in TVET colleges and universities

Student protests in South Africa have a long history, dating back to the days of apartheid. Even in the post-1994 era, 28 years into democracy, protests still occur (Noyoo, 2018, p. 2). In recent years, the most well-documented protests have been the 2015-2017 “fees must fall” protests. The 2015-2017 student protests were mainly due to students demanding free and quality higher education (Kamga, 2018, p. 89). According to the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education (CIHE) report (2017, p. 10), what distinguished these protests from those that occurred occasionally over the decade prior was that they were centred at Historically White universities (HWI’s), which is why they received so much attention. The report goes on to say that the majority of protests experienced before 2015 occurred at Historically Black universities (HBIs) and received little media coverage, and although the protests occurred frequently, they were uncoordinated. These earlier protests were mainly due to issues such as “the inability to pay tuition fees, access to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), student accommodation needs and other related issues” (CIHE, 2017, p. 10). Cosser et al. (2011, p. 39) have described other reasons for student protests as probably instigated by students’ frustrations with “institution management, administration, teaching, finances, fees, meals, and accommodation or unhappiness with lecturers or external causes, like service delivery protests in the community”.

Funding is cited as the primary cause of student protests in universities and TVET colleges, despite these institutions receiving substantial funding. According to Tyatya,

(2017, p. 5) NSFAS is said to be underfunded and unable to support all qualifying students, resulting in significant funding gaps. These gaps are particularly prevalent in TVET colleges, as they enrol more students than they can accommodate with available resources in an attempt to meet Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) enrolment targets (Tyatya, 2017, p. 5). Tyatya (2017, p. 5) further reports that between 2010 and 2014, enrolment at 50 TVET colleges increased by 95%, and due to funding gaps, more and more students were not funded, resulting in the accumulation of high historical debts over the years.

In the midst of funding shortfalls, former President Jacob Zuma announced in December 2017, following the 2015-2017 student protests, that “the government would subsidise free higher education for poor and working-class students” (Noyoo, 2018, p. 2). The former President stated that “the definition of poor and working-class students referred to those who were enrolled at TVET colleges or universities from South African households with a combined annual income of up to R350 000. All first-year students with a family income of below R350 000 per year would be funded for the full cost of studying at universities and TVET colleges through qualifying for NSFAS” (Noyoo, 2018, p. 2).

Despite this, student protests continue to occur in universities and TVET colleges in recent years. While the consequences of these protests are not well documented, they remain a concern for affected institutions. The question arises as to why students continue to protest despite education being free through NSFAS. This report will examine factors that influence student protests in universities and TVET colleges in recent years.

2.2.1 Implementation of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

NSFAS revised system was implemented in 2018, following the former President’s announcement, to fund university and TVET college students for registration, tuition fees, and study allowances (NSFAS, 2022, p. 121). Prior to 2018, NSFAS only provided loans and bursaries to qualifying students, a portion of which had to be repaid to NSFAS. Under the revised system, students receive bursaries that do not have to be repaid. Funding recipients also receive a personal care allowance and a transport/accommodation allowance (NSFAS, 2022, p. 121).

While the idea of free higher education in public institutions is commendable, a problem arises from the NSFAS allowances not being paid on time, particularly for TVET college students. This was reported to the Deputy Minister of DHET during his tour of universities and TVET colleges. One student reported that “it’s June and qualifying NSFAS students have not received any of their allowances” (Samuels, 2020). This lack of timely payment, combined with students’ poor backgrounds, is a major reason for the demand for free higher education. Without the allowances, students are unable to afford food or accommodation, leading to protests.

Another reason for protests is NSFAS’s inability to fund all eligible poor students. This is supported by the Centre for Higher Education Research (CIHER) report (2017, p. 27) which states that “the TVET sector experienced budget cuts as a result of the 2015-2017 protests; this affected the administration of universities and TVET colleges, but also the students directly as bursary allocations were reduced.”

In universities, there has been a rise in historical student debt, as many students rely on NSFAS, but funding remains insufficient even with free education (Wildschut et al., 2018). The 2021 budget report indicate that the cabinet had approved reductions to the DHET baseline of R24.6 billion over the three-year medium-term expenditure framework. These reductions include R6.8 billion on the allocation to the NSFAS for loans and bursaries, R5 billion on university subsidies and R947.1 million on TVET college infrastructure grants.” Thus, NSFAS was unable to provide funding for all qualifying students due to the retrogressive budget cuts. On 12th March 2021, there were reports of student protests in several universities due to a combination of factors related to tuition fees and historical debt. This is supported by Duma (2021) who reported that “there was another wave of student protests at the beginning of the 2021 academic year after NSFAS reported it had a funding shortfall of R5.7 billion and was unable to confirm funding for all admitted first-year students who were eligible for funding. Additionally, returning students with historical outstanding debts were informed that they must settle their accounts before being allowed to register.

According to Duma (2021), the current methods of funding free higher education are inefficient. The lack of funds for students to study is a real challenge in most TVET colleges and universities. In South Africa, there are many students who cannot study without financial assistance. According to McKay et al. (2018, p. 19), “the demand for

funding for students to access higher education far exceeds the supply in South Africa,” which highlights the importance of supporting students financially once they are admitted. Duma (2021) further states that years after fees-free higher education was announced in South Africa, “the country is still far from achieving the goal of universal, free and quality tertiary education for all students.” It is unfortunate when student protests are not motivated by the quest for freedom, but rather by social injustices of educational exclusion due to financial difficulties.

As discussed above, funding is the most critical factor with regard to factors that influence student protests. Another factor perceived to influence student protests is the governance and management of TVET colleges and universities.

2.2.2 Governance and management of tertiary institutions

The governance and management of tertiary institutions, including TVET colleges, have been identified as significant challenges in South Africa. A report by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CIHE, 2017, p. 67) states that following the restructuring of TVET colleges, changes in management and governance methods have led to both challenges and successes in institutions. Mange (2021, p. 7) notes that the challenges faced by TVET institutions vary, from issues with leadership commitment and poor record keeping or administration, to a lack of accountability and misuse of funds. These challenges suggest that governance may be a major factor contributing to the failure of these institutions. According to Botha (2013, p. 1), “if an institution has nothing going for it except one thing – good management, it will succeed. If it has everything except good management, it will fail.” This sentiment is supported by the South African Further Education and Training Student Association (SAFETSA), which has noted that management and leadership challenges, such as a lack of experience and expertise in the TVET sector, are a major setback (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), 2019).

In addition to TVET colleges, the governance and management of universities in South Africa are also of concern. Despite the end of racial segregation, differentiation between universities based on past or language preferences persists (CIHE report, 2017, p. 78). Many universities in South Africa are still affected by their historical advantages or disadvantages, and are referred to as “Historically Black” (HBIs) or

“Historically White” (HWIs). HWIs are universities that primarily enrol white students or students who can afford tuition fees, are research-focused, and have funding from projects and sponsors. These universities are characterised by effective management and governance styles. On the other hand, HBIs are universities that have a majority of African students, are less research-focused, and often experience financial strain due to the poor backgrounds of their students. HBIs are often characterised by a lack of institutional transformation, underfunding by government, and poor governance and management practices. This is often the basis for student protests. In order to understand the influence of institutional governance and management on student protests, it is also important to examine the culture and climate of these institutions.

2.2.3 Institutional culture and climate

Botha (2013, p. 20) define institutional climate as the characteristics of the overall environment in an institution. He goes on to state that cooperation among all stakeholders is the foundation for a good and effective institutional climate. The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (NCBI) (2004, p. 98) defines institutional climate as the practices the institution operates under through adopted policies, principles, and procedures, both formal and informal, which influence the norms and standards, beliefs system, and attitudes of the organisation. Organisational culture is the beliefs and attitude that influence behaviour and it can be said that the organisational climate will influence the culture of the organisation and the organisational culture will in turn determine its climate. This is supported by Botha (2013, p. 24), stating that every institution has principles or uniqueness that distinguish it from other organisations which describe the shared values and the lifestyle that the institution selects to achieve its goals.

In education, Botha (2013, p. 24) notes that institutional culture is that aspect that influences the attitudes of management, lecturers, and students and has an impact on the functioning of the institution. According to Steyn (2002, p. 90), the climate in educational institutions is either open or closed. An open climate and culture is characterised by participatory decision-making by all stakeholders including students, as well as clear communication and a sensitive management style. Christie et al. (2007, p. 5) agrees and explains that a good culture and climate in educational institutions is characterised by optimistic students, motivated lecturers, and

management who set high but attainable goals and strive to attain those goals. Christie et al. (2007, p. 5) point out that an open climate is based on respect, trust, and honesty, with opportunities for lecturers, students, and management to engage cooperatively and constructively with one another. The author further states that institutions that have participatory decision-making experience less staff disharmony, and misbehaviour among students. Vail (2005, p. 7) is also of the view that good institutional climate and culture is achieved when students feel recognised and their views respected by management and they get motivated and strive to perform better academically. The culture and climate of an institution of higher learning have a significant impact on student motivation and the institution's achievement levels, as noted by Smith and Hoy (2007, pp. 556-557). They argue that institutional culture and climate influence students' behaviour, academic performance, and institution development and management. When the campus environment and culture are positive, students tend to be cooperative and less likely to protest. However, if the climate and culture are hostile, students may respond with hostile actions, such as initiating protests to be heard. Curriculum issues are also identified as a potential cause of concern.

2.2.4 Curriculum issues

The South African students during the 2015-2017 student protests, protested for a decolonised education. Professor Scott in the CIHE report (2017, p. 69) mentioned that the reasoning behind the demand for 'decolonised curriculum' could be an attempt to remove inequalities in institutions of higher learning. He continued to explain that there is no evidence that one racial group is performing better than another racial group but, there are racial and class-based inequalities in educational processes and access for undergraduate students. There has also been a lack of programmes and course development over the years, which indicates that some content taught is outdated, indicating curriculum design challenges and it not being relevant (CIHE report, 2017, p. 69). The curriculum challenges are evident in both TVET colleges and universities and results in graduates gaining outdated skills that cannot be used, leading to high unemployment of graduates and the country lacking essential skills. The SAFETSA survey report 2018, indicates that the TVET curriculum and some university qualifications did not match what was required in the labour market (PMG,

2019). The article by Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) indicate that one of the major challenges for TVET college's curriculum is the relationship with industry or the labour market and proposes that the curriculum in the TVET sector needs to be restructured to provide more competent and relevant graduates for industry to curb the shortage of essential skills in the country. They further state that both articulation between the TVET sector and industry remains a concern and is probably one of the reasons that discourage the success of TVET education. Decolonising higher education and making it more relevant to the demands of industry or employers is a national fight that most student bodies fight nationally through protests and demonstrations. Another factor contributing to the reasons for student protests is the lack of adequate infrastructure.

2.2.5 Infrastructure (including student accommodation)

The increasing enrolment in higher education institutions has led to a strain on infrastructure, including student accommodation, as reported in the 2017 CIHE report (p. 94). Duma (2021) further supports this, stating that enrolment has doubled between 1994 and 2019, but without the development of new infrastructure or provision of sufficient resources. The National Development Plan also acknowledges this issue, stating that the university sector is facing pressure due to an increase in enrolment without adequate funding, resulting in inadequate student accommodation, insufficient infrastructure and equipment shortages (Duma, 2021). This lack of infrastructure was also reported in the 2006/07 DHET report, highlighting that the higher education sector was expanding without considering the development of new infrastructure. Additionally, many TVET colleges, particularly in rural areas, lack basic infrastructure such as recreational facilities and computer internet access, which are necessary for effective teaching and learning (Mange, 2021, p. 7). The DHET (2013, p. 18) emphasises the need for universities and TVET colleges to provide adequate infrastructure and facilities to create a comfortable and safe learning environment for students.

It is surprising that TVET colleges expect a 100% pass rate, despite lacking basic resources such as libraries or study spaces. A college without the necessary infrastructure for simulations and workshops can negatively affect both pass rates and retention rates. Adequate infrastructure and student accommodation can improve

college success and retention. The importance of providing proper infrastructure and accommodation is acknowledged by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013, p. 18), who have highlighted that such provisions can improve students' comfort and create a more conducive study environment. Under these conditions, TVET colleges can effectively address students' hostile behaviour, improve results, and retain students until graduation. The lack of libraries, study centres, and resource centres is also reported in historically disadvantaged universities, which contributes to inequalities and is a common cause of student protests. Additionally, protests disrupt teaching and learning, as evidenced by the Council on Higher Education (CIHE, 2017, p. 26), which states that class time and examinations are lost during protests. Disruptions in teaching and learning negatively impact student motivation and interest in learning. The following discussion will delve into the importance of student motivation in education.

2.3 Student motivation in universities and TVET colleges

In order to minimise student protests and improve academic performance, retention rates, and reduce dropout rates in universities and TVET colleges, student motivation must be considered. To gain a clear understanding of the impact of student protests on student motivation, this section will explain the concept of motivation and how it applies to education.

2.3.1 *Motivation as a concept*

The term motivation comes from the Latin word "movere," which means "to move" (Cookie, 2012, p. 12). Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 227) assert that "to be motivated implies to be moved to do something," which is consistent with the roots of motivation. Mwamwenda (2004, p. 231) expands on the definition of motivation, stating that it is a desire that prompts individuals to want to act or behave in a particular manner. Motivation is seen as an influencing factor behind a person's actions. This idea is supported by Celikoz (2009, p. 114), who says that motivated individuals initiate, concentrate their efforts in the proper directions, work hard, and maintain their efforts. Additionally, this is reinforced by Muhammad and Ibrahim (2014, p. 41), who point out that motivation definitely differs from person to person based on the specific set of forces affecting them at any given time. This indicates that someone who lacks

inspiration to act (move) is regarded unmotivated, but someone who is energised or activated in the direction of a goal is seen to be motivated (Celikoz, 2009, p. 114).

A basic definition of motivation provided by Pintrich and Schunk (2002, p. 6) contains the components that the majority of scholars and practitioners believe to be essential to motivation. The definition states that motivation is the process through which goal-directed action is sparked and maintained. Meaning motivation is a process rather than a finished product; it contains objectives that give an action direction; it necessitates effort, whether it be mental or physical; and the reason behind initiating and maintaining a desired goal.

The discussion of motivation will continue below with a focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

2.3.2 *Intrinsic motivation versus extrinsic motivation*

Researchers and academics contend that every person has two sources of motivation: those that come from inside the person and those that come from outside the person. This statement is supported by Hugo (2000, p. 144), stating that motivation is an internal (inside the person) or external (outside the person) force that awakens zeal and tenacity to follow a certain path of action. The internal forces are also known as intrinsic motivation, and external forces are also known as extrinsic motivation.

2.3.2.1 *Intrinsic motivation*

Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 56) define intrinsic motivation as an internal force that originates from an individual's own interests, desires, and curiosity. This can be observed in a person's interest or pleasure in participating in a task for its own sake. It is believed that behaviour that is intrinsically motivated involves engaging in an activity and perceiving it to be of value (George & Jones, 2002, p. 184). It can be argued that students who are intrinsically motivated are motivated from within. They desire competence and achievement because they possess an inner drive. It can be concluded that motivation is fundamentally an internal factor, but external sources can aid in motivating those who lack it.

2.3.2.2 *Extrinsic motivation*

Unlike intrinsic motivation, which originates from within an individual, extrinsic motivation comes from outside the person. Behaviour that is extrinsically driven is carried out in order to receive incentives provided by external sources for participating in or completing a task (Mnyandu, 2001, p. 11). George and Jones (2002, p. 185) cite the definition of extrinsically driven behaviour as “behaviour that is conducted to gain rewards or to avoid punishment.” Therefore, when an individual is motivated by external factors, they act in a way that will ultimately guarantee them a reward. A typical example of this would be in an educational setting, where rewards are frequently used to encourage students when they lack intrinsic motivation to complete tasks. Extrinsic motivation can assist in encouraging students to engage in academic activities and exhibit the desired behaviour or action (Mnyandu, 2001, p. 11).

Students who lack motivation, or those who are amotivated, may also benefit from extrinsic motivation. According to Mnyandu (2001, p. 5), someone who lacks motivation to take action is considered amotivated. Students who are amotivated feel incompetent and powerless and believe they do not have control over their motivation, unlike other motivated students (Ahmed & Bruinsma, 2006, p. 556). Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000, p. 76) argue that from the perspective of the academically uninspired, extrinsic rewards may have a specific value in helping such students. One of the most practical methods of educational assistance for these students is to combine properly provided external rewards with engaging activities, as they generally do not find their academic work fascinating (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000, p. 74).

2.3.3 ***The responsibility for motivating students***

The motivation for learning that students bring to the classroom can range from intrinsic to extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is an internal force that may be strengthened by external benefits, while extrinsic motivation comes from external sources. Many academic tasks may not be naturally attractive, so intrinsic motivation cannot always be relied upon to promote learning. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 20) observe that not all students are intrinsically driven to complete all academic tasks, indicating that some students may be intrinsically motivated for certain activities but not others. Mnyandu

(2001, p. 62) claims that students should be intrinsically driven and that their intrinsic motivation may and should be increased by external motivating elements and pressures to improve performance.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, according to Mnyandu (2001, p. 10), are necessary for academic achievement and have a significant impact on students' academic performance. In support of this claim, Cookie (2012, p. 289) argues that for students to perform satisfactorily in the classroom, they must be both intrinsically and extrinsically driven to take ownership of their education.

Deci and Ryan (2008, p. 182) caution that people who receive extrinsic rewards but are intrinsically driven may feel as though their freedom is being compromised. Students may start to feel less in control of their behaviour as it becomes more influenced by external incentives, and intrinsic motivation may decline as the emphasis shifts to extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is dependent on continuous reinforcement, according to Dubrin (2002, p. 117), and if it is withheld, motivation may decline. This statement implies that extrinsic rewards can sometimes lower a student's performance and be de-motivating, particularly when a creative task is involved. According to Amrein and Berliner (2003, p. 52), students who receive prizes are less likely to be naturally motivated and to exercise critical thinking. Additionally, Crous et al. (2000, p. 177) caution against overemphasising extrinsic incentives as it may leave students completely reliant on lecturer support and direction, as well as other external drives. Extrinsic motivation should be used in conjunction with intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (2008, p. 182) contend that some behaviours should be externally incentivised to encourage students to perform unappealing tasks while also teaching them to accept responsibility. It is essential to ensure that external rewards are given in a certain way and at a certain rate to prevent weakening the intrinsic drive that exists in students. Extrinsic rewards may be harmful if intrinsic motivation is already present, claim Areepattamannil and Freeman (2008, p. 707). It is imperative for educators to differentiate and achieve equilibrium between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. External motivation would not be required if all assignments assigned to students in the classroom were engaging and enjoyable. However, students often have to complete assignments that are lacking in purpose, uninteresting, or in which they feel incapable. This implies that teachers should ensure students feel capable of

completing tasks and that they do so because they find them relevant, captivating, and purposeful (Boekarts et al., 2010, p. 536). Given that the aim of this study is to investigate the impact of protests on motivation and academic performance of students, it is crucial to comprehend the elements that influence student motivation and academic performance. The factors influencing student motivation and academic performance are discussed below.

2.4 Factors influencing student motivation and academic performance

In education, academic performance is a complex issue, and motivation is frequently cited as a key element in explaining academic performance. According to Bosman (2012, p. 1), research on motivation in education has been ongoing, and psychologists and educators have examined how motivation affects academic achievement over time. Mnyandu (2001, p. 4) concurs and notes that decades of research have demonstrated that motivation is a significant factor in academic performance, and Kusurkar et al. (2013, p. 13) argue that the basic model of motivation and academic performance are intertwined, with performance being seen as a function of motivation. Furthermore, Kusurkar et al. (2013, p. 27) states that motivation is one of the key factors affecting academic performance, and academic performance cannot be discussed without referencing motivation, as motivation frequently enhances performance.

Contrary to popular belief, George and Jones (2002, pp. 183–184) argue that a high degree of motivation does not necessarily translate into a high level of performance. They proceed to state that strong performance does not automatically equal high motivation. They further argue that motivation is one of several elements that contribute to academic performance and listed variables such as personality and aptitude, task complexity, resource accessibility, working circumstances, and chance or luck as other factors that might influence academic performance. Broussard and Garrison (2004, p. 106) assert that improved levels of student academic performance have consistently been connected to high levels of motivation and involvement in the learning process. According to Broussard and Garrison (2004, p. 107), a student's passion for learning is typically recognised as one of, if not the primary factor of, their performance in any academic context. Students must be motivated to achieve their

educational goals, and the following are the student factors that determine their motivation and academic performance.

2.4.1 Student factors

Bosman (2012, p. 7) claims that “students are the raw materials for education and the major products of educational changes, and most significantly, students are vital members of the labour force involved in constructing education.” Aiken (2002, p. 162) asserts that among all the factors influencing students’ learning, the students themselves are one of the most significant. This highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation to study for students to achieve the desired educational objectives. Lau (2003, p. 134) emphasises the importance of each student’s individual effort as they are the ones who determine whether they will succeed academically and continue attending college until graduation. Woolfolk (2014, p. 438) states that students can only be assisted in creating adaptable motivational patterns and improving their academic performance when the elements influencing motivation are recognised. Self-concept is explored below as a factor that affects student motivation and academic success as how students perceive themselves is significant.

2.4.1.1 Student’s self-concept

The key indicator of motivation in a student is how they consider themselves. Mwamwenda (2004, p. 310) defines self-concept as a psychological construct that refers to a person’s collection of beliefs and opinions about themselves, which are impacted by their thoughts and feelings. Gouws and Kruger (1994, p. 6) also define self-concept as “the concept or image a person has of him or herself and is unique, personal, and highly meaningful to the person concerned and it is never static, as it can change from positive to negative depending on the perceptions the individual has about themselves due to prevailing circumstances or situations.”

Mwamwenda (2004, p. 310) states that having a good self-concept enables students to remain intrinsically motivated and have confidence in their ability to complete academic tasks, which improves their academic performance. On the other hand, having negative self-concept makes students feel unworthy and inadequate, resulting in failure. According to Areepattamannil and Freeman (2008, p. 704), there is a positive correlation between students’ self-concept and their motivation and academic

performance. Specifically, students who possess a positive self-concept are more likely to have internal motivation, be goal-oriented, and perform well academically. This highlights the importance of students having a positive view of themselves in order to reach their full potential. It can be inferred that students who possess a good self-concept tend to be goal-oriented.

2.4.1.2 *Student's goal orientation*

The goal orientation of students plays a crucial role in their academic success. Individuals with positive self-concepts tend to set realistic and attainable goals for themselves, which guide their behaviour and give purpose and focus to their activities. Tuckman and Monetti (2011, p. 389) define a goal as anything that drives a person to take action, while Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 70) view goals as the reason why an individual engages in a task. Goals are effective motivators as they not only influence behaviour, but also the underlying cause (Tuckman & Monetti, 2011, p. 391).

Research has shown that goals serve as motivators by drawing students' attention to the gap between their current level of success and their desired level of accomplishment (O'Donnell et al., 2005, p. 153). Additionally, the type of goals a student chooses has an impact on their level of motivation to achieve them (Woolfolk, 2014, p. 384). Goal-oriented individuals tend to exhibit tenacity in the face of failure, greater levels of work satisfaction, and favourable attitudes towards learning, which predict long-term success (Spector, 2008, p. 217). Furthermore, setting objectives is believed to prevent perceptions of struggle, increase task engagement and inspire excitement, all of which boost motivation (Mnyandu, 2001, p. 5).

Research also indicates that students who set goals for themselves tend to perform better than those who do not (O'Donnell et al., 2005, p. 153). Furthermore, students who accept goals set by others and those who set goals for themselves perform better overall than their classmates who do not set goals (Mwamwenda, 2004, p. 237). Without goals and ambitions, students lack direction and motivation (Mnyandu, 2001, p. 5). In order to succeed in today's competitive world, students must be self-motivated and driven to achieve their academic goals (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). However, not all students are self-motivated to learn, thus, it is important for lecturers and educational institutions to provide ways to motivate them (Mwamwenda, 2004, p. 231).

2.4.2 Lecturer's personal qualities

Lecturers are widely considered to be the second most vital component in education, as students' motivation can be significantly influenced by the personal qualities of their lecturers. According to Mnyandu (2001, p. 55), "Almost everything lecturers do have a motivating effect on students, either positive or negative." Each student possesses a unique level of motivation, however, Mnyandu (2001, p. 55) posits that factors such as the relevance of tasks, the lecturer's behaviour and teaching style, and casual interactions with students have a significant impact on student motivation. In order for students to be motivated to learn, lecturers must provide a context that stimulates motivation. Consequently, it is crucial for lecturers to understand that they hold a position of power to promote students' motivation to learn. Mnyandu (2001, p. 27) asserts that lecturers must have a solid understanding of their students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in order to build motivation and encourage participation in academic tasks.

The factors that follow are related to lecturers that can affect student motivation and academic performance.

2.4.2.1 Lecturer's motivational state

The first principle of motivation, according to De Jesus and Lens (2005, p. 119), is that it is impossible to motivate others if one is not motivated oneself. Generally, lecturers are expected to take the lead in motivating their students. However, it is essential for lecturers to be motivated in order to motivate their students. Only an inspired lecturer can inspire students. Students will lack motivation if lecturers appear uninterested (De Jesus & Lens, 2005, p. 119). Similarly, as student motivation is greatly influenced by the motivation of the lecturer, so is student performance. As a result, educational administrators must ensure that lecturers are motivated to achieve the primary goal of improving student motivation and performance.

2.4.2.2 Lecturer – student interaction

The appreciation and regard of lecturers towards their students and their responsibilities to them has been found to be a technique for improving academic performance, according to Boekarts et al. (2010, p. 536). The authors continue to state

that students who are valued and respected for both their strengths and weaknesses are more likely to put forth their best effort and take ownership of their education. When students and lecturers are connected, it leads to improved academic performance. According to Brophy (2010, p. 188), classrooms become welcoming settings in which students may interact in ways that are both intellectually and socially effective. Boekarts et al. (2010, p. 536) argue that once students feel at ease, they are ready to study and motivated to complete their assignments. According to De Jesus and Lens (2005, p. 119), interaction between lecturers and students is crucial as it helps students comprehend and be more motivated to study by helping them understand the significance of their academic work. Klem and Connell (2004) state that lecturers who have strong bonds with their students' report that these students are less likely to miss classes and appear more self-directed, cooperative, and interested in their studies. When they are connected with their lecturers, students report attending their lectures more frequently and feeling less lonely. Furthermore, students who have greater rapport with their lecturers are more capable of succeeding in tertiary education (Klem and Connell, 2004).

On the other hand, when students have a negative relationship with their lecturers, they view their academic work as mandatory, useless, and hindering their ability to succeed academically. Bosman (2012, p. 166), also notes that the way a lecturer interacts with students in a class can either motivate or demotivate them. To increase student engagement, commitment to the course, and retention, lecturers should create and implement teaching and learning practices that encourage a more active, student-centred approach to learning that relies on students' prior experiences and interests (Crosling et al., 2009, p. 13). According to Bosman (2012, p. 166), lecturers who are attentive to their students' sentiments and views are more likely to be effective in their efforts to motivate them than those who are uninformed about these factors. Goals should be established by both lecturers and students, and lecturers must instil in their students a sense of self-confidence for students to succeed academically. As a result, students will feel more confident and it will be simpler for them to accomplish the goals that have been set. Lecturers must make students believe that putting in more effort will result in reaching the desired academic outcomes.

2.4.2.3 *Disruptions during class time*

According to Cosser et al. (2011), disruptions during class time are a prevalent issue in South African higher education institutions, with at least one interruption of classes occurring annually on average. The loss of teaching and learning time as a result of these disruptions can have detrimental effects on students' academic performance. Further note that class disruptions lead to a loss of class time and can make it challenging for students to make up missed assignments or lessons. Cosser et al. (2011) assert that these disruptions harm the image of TVET colleges and some universities, and have a negative impact on student enrolment, behaviour achievement, and retention rates. The precise impact of interruptions on academic performance is impossible to determine, but it is hypothesised that it may be quite high (Cosser et al., 2011).

Furthermore, disruptions in teaching and learning can demotivate both lecturers and students, leading to poor academic performance, high dropout rates, and low retention rates for institutions. As a result, it is crucial to address this issue and consider the impact of disruptions on throughput, dropout, and retention rates at universities and TVET colleges.

2.5 Throughput rate, dropout, and retention rate in universities and TVET colleges

The throughput rate, dropout rate, and retention rate in universities and TVET colleges are of great concern.

2.5.1 *Students throughput rate*

The throughput rate, as defined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2021), is the percentage of a cohort that successfully completes a qualification within the allotted period for that qualification. Khuluvhe and Mathibe (2021, p. 3) state that the throughput rate is the ratio of registered students to those who successfully complete their qualification within expected time frames, and that it is "a critical indicator of performance". Understanding throughput rates is essential for understanding student performance, as well as the retention rate in higher education institutions.

Khuluvhe and Mathibe (2021) further explain that low throughput rates can lead to increased costs for both the student and the institution, as well as a waste of resources, time, and delay in completion or graduation. The delayed transit of students through the system, caused by factors such as repetition of subjects and student dropout, can also lead to lower class numbers at higher levels in the programmes, raising the cost per student. A low throughput rate can also affect the admission of new students, as the number of students repeating courses overlaps with new student enrolments, making it harder for all students to access required courses.

The CIHE report (2017) states that the South African higher education system is often seen as inefficient, as many students are given the chance to pursue an education without succeeding. Therefore, measures must be introduced to ensure a higher education system focused not only on access, but also on student academic performance, retention, and high throughput rates in both TVET colleges and universities.

2.5.2 Retention of students

Student retention, according to Crosling (2017), is defined as the percentage of students who enrol, continue, and complete their academic studies at the same institution. Van Stalk et al. (2007) assert that maintaining student engagement in their studies until completion, as opposed to having them “drop out,” is a key indicator of the effectiveness of academic programmes and procedures. Crosling and Webb (2002) concur, noting that in the past, academic success and study completion were seen as the sole responsibility of the students. However, in recent times, it has been recognised that institutions also bear some responsibility for ensuring that academic programmes and the student experience are designed in ways that give all students the opportunity to succeed in their studies.

Crosling (2017) posits that student retention in higher education is a persistent problem that has recently gained more attention. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) utilises retention and throughput rates to hold higher education institutions accountable and to approve funding. The Treasury Department explains that the current retention rates in higher education institutions need to be improved, as adding more students and funds to a system that is not delivering the desired

outcomes is ineffective (Aljahani, 2016). This is supported by Bosman (2012) who argues that students dropping out of university or TVET college before graduating incurs significant costs for the higher education system, as well as for the individual students, their families, and society as a whole. Therefore, improved throughput and retention rates are a fundamental prerequisite for expanding enrolment and funding such enrolment numbers. Institutions must strive to provide a setting where all students have the best chance for academic achievement and completion, despite these definitional differences, as dropping out before finishing is not the ideal outcome (Heagney, 2008).

It has been established through studies that there are numerous factors that contribute to students' retention (Thomas, 2002). In most instances, a combination of various linked factors plays a role in explaining the phenomenon of student dropout (Crosling, Crosling, & Kostogriz, 2008). Tinto's (2007) model of student retention encompasses psychological, social, organisational, environmental, interpersonal, and economic factors that influence students' decisions to continue or discontinue their studies. Factors that are known to act as precursors to students leaving their study programme include inadequate preparation for higher education, a poor fit between the student and the institution or their chosen study programme, which leads to a clash between the values of the institution and those of the student, lack of commitment to studies, poor academic experience, and inadequate social integration. Financial difficulties and personal situations are also known to play a role (Long et al., 2006).

It is suggested that a student's experiences within an institution can influence their likelihood of retention to a certain extent. Students who have positive interactions and experiences within an institution's formal and informal academic and social systems are more likely to remain enrolled, whereas those who have negative interactions and experiences are more likely to eventually leave the university (Lau, 2003, p. 127). This view is supported by Cuseo (2015, p. 4), who posits that when students improve their academic performance, their retention rate is also likely to improve.

Student retention has emerged as a complex issue for the academic community (Lau, 2003, p. 126). As such, effective student retention strategies must be implemented in order to increase the retention of capable students. Both the institution and the students must share responsibility for making modifications and contributing to new

techniques and procedures aimed at improving retention and enhancing the overall academic experience for all students. Aljahani (2016) notes that increasing student retention is a challenging task. Without an understanding of the causes of student dropout, it is impossible to fully comprehend the complexities of student retention.

2.5.3 Student dropout rate

Student dropout is defined as a student who discontinues their college education without completing their qualification and never returning (Hagedorn, 2006). According to Letseka and Breier (2008), 50% of students in higher education leave their studies before completion, with 30% of these students leaving in their first year. The Department of Education's Institutional Enrolment Planning Report (2005) states that 36 000 (30%) of the 120 000 students who enrolled in higher education institutions in 2000 dropped out during their first year of study. The remaining 60 000 (20%) students graduated within a short period, with another 24 000 (20%) leaving during their second and third years. Reports by Monama (2013) suggest that dropout rates may reach 80% at certain institutions. In 2004, only 30% of students graduated, 56% of students had left their original study programmes or institutions without graduating, and 14% were still enrolled in the system (Moodley & Singh, 2015, p. 94).

Student deficiencies and limitations in attitude, aptitude, or ability are also considered to be contributing factors to student dropout, such as wrong programme choices, poor study attitudes, and poor approach (Aljahani, 2016; Rendon et al., 2004). However, as Thomas (2002) notes, it is incorrect to draw a link between the increased engagement of certain groups in society and falling standards as a result of these students' inadequate preparation or lack of academic aptitude. Mabunda and Ntshoe (2012, p. 42) suggest that student retention, throughput, and dropout are linked to the low levels of student readiness for higher education. Sanchez (2013) argues that institutions should offer high-quality education to encourage retention and, thus, a reduction in the dropout rate. Many students are forced to drop out each year, and those who remain are left with the burden of large debts. As a result, students from certain backgrounds with limited or different societal and family experience of higher education may be less familiar with the academic value systems and procedures that support academic success. Examples of such backgrounds include low-income or economically disadvantaged groups, older students, students who are the first in their

family to enrol in higher education, individuals with disabilities, members of underrepresented groups, and minority groups (Heagney, 2008).

The high rate of student dropout can be attributed to a variety of factors, with a lack of finance being the most prevalent. Crosling et al. (2009, p. 12) identified financial issues as one of the reasons why students withdraw. Moodley and Singh (2015, p. 91) argue that there is often a collection of elements that contribute to students dropping out, and it has been established that a lack of finances, in conjunction with other factors, is a major cause of student dropout. In a study by Sanchez (2013, p. 12), it was discovered that 56% of surveyed students who left the institution cited insufficient financial resources as their primary reason for doing so. Additionally, 55% of students currently enrolled in the institution responded that insufficient financial resources may also be the primary reason they may leave before completing their studies. Institutions are expected to provide assistance to students facing financial difficulties in order to retain them until they complete their studies.

2.6 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in attribution theory, which is widely acknowledged as the most important theory in relation to academic motivation behaviours or actions (Graham & Williams, 2009). According to Mwamwenda (2004, p. 231), the aim of attribution theory is to understand how students' perceptions, motivations, and views influence their performance. In order to fully grasp the concept of attribution, it is essential to first provide a clear definition of the term.

2.6.1 *Defining the concept of attribution*

Harvey and Martinko (2009, p. 147) define attribution as the cause of behaviour, while Weiner (2004, p. 2) states that it is "the way individuals envision the success or failure of their own behaviour or the behaviour of others". McDevitt and Ormrod (2010, p. 491) further explain that in attribution theory, attributions are the justifications that students give for their accomplishments and failures. The theory posits that students' current self-perceptions significantly impact how they evaluate the success or failure of their efforts and, subsequently, their likelihood of repeating similar behaviours in the future (Harvey & Martinko, 2009; McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010). Attribution theory is also

beneficial in comprehending behaviour management (Graham & Williams, 2009), as it helps students understand what led to positive outcomes, allowing them to replicate successful behaviour, but also identify and avoid behaviours and other factors that led to negative outcomes. Bosman (2012) argues that attribution theory holds that attributions of behaviour and outcomes ultimately shape emotional and behavioural responses. It is also important to note that while attributions may or may not be actual causes of results, they do serve to shape an individual's perception of reality (Bosman, 2012).

According to Weiner (2014, p. 148), three categories of traits may be used to assess the three types of explanations that individuals often use to explain success or failure. Firstly, internal or external factors may have contributed to the success or failure. This implies that elements that students feel have their origin within them or because of factors that have their origin in the environment may influence them to succeed or fail as students. Making an internal attribution occurs when a student misses an exam and blames it on carelessness. The student is assigning an external attribution if the same result is attributed to the paper's difficulty and the lecturer's poor instruction. Internalising blame for unpleasant behaviours or occurrences is typically accompanied by negative, self-focused feelings such as guilt and shame. Negative externally oriented emotions such as wrath and resentment are frequently linked to external attributions for the same actions and results.

The second factor to consider is the stability or instability of the source of success or failure. If students act in the same way again, they will probably get the same result because they think the cause is stable. If it is unstable, the result most likely will not be the same the next time in similar occurrences.

Thirdly, the reason for success or failure may be within one's control or out of one's control. A controllable element is one that students feel they can change on their own, if they choose to. They consider a factor to be uncontrolled if they do not think it will be simple to change it. Students can regulate their effort by working harder, but an internal component may be unchangeable (most students cannot easily change their basic intellectual ability or change from being an introvert to being an extrovert). Similarly, an outside influence may be under one's control or out of one's control (for example, a student failing a challenging subject may succeed by enrolling in an easier

course) (if calculus is difficult because it is abstract, it will still be abstract no matter what the student does). Below, the attribution styles are explored to further clarify the fundamental influence of attributions on motivation.

2.6.2 Attribution styles

Attribution styles refer to a tendency to consistently attribute positive and negative events to a particular type of cause.

2.6.2.1 Optimistic attribution style

An optimistic attribution style is often considered self-serving, as it tends to attribute poor results to external, unstable factors and favourable outcomes to internal, stable variables (Weiner, 1982). Students with an optimistic attribution style typically have high self-esteem and believe in their ability to succeed. However, this approach may also leave them vulnerable to future disappointment if their optimism is misplaced.

2.6.2.2 Pessimistic attribution style

A pessimistic attribution style is characterised by the belief that external, unstable factors are responsible for positive outcomes and internal, stable factors are responsible for negative outcomes (Weiner, 1982). Students with this inclination often lack self-confidence and have low expectations for success. Furthermore, this tendency may lead to feelings of sadness and the development of learned helplessness.

2.6.2.3 Hostile attribution style

Similar to the optimistic style, a hostile attribution style involves a tendency to externalise blame for negative events. However, in this case, the external explanations are tied to hostile and stable factors (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). This consistent pattern of attributions may lead to resentment towards the perceived external entity and can result in unproductive and dangerous responses, such as student protests and disruptions in classes.

2.6.3 Attribution and motivational state

Attribution and motivational state will be discussed under the sub-sections that follow.

2.6.3.1 *Learned helplessness*

Learned helplessness refers to a scenario in which students feel that attempting to succeed is futile due to the belief that failure is inevitable (Martinko & Gardner, 1982). This state of mind can develop as a result of repeated penalties and failures, and may persist even after the obstacles to achievement have been removed. Institutions may contribute to the development of learned helplessness through their regulations and norms.

2.6.3.2 *Aggression*

Aggression refers to a heightened state of motivation directed towards an unwanted action or goal. Hostile aggression is defined as actions primarily intended to harm someone or something else, driven by the impulse for revenge and harm. Research has indicated that attributing negative outcomes to external, stable factors may increase the likelihood of violent and hostile responses (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). Additionally, individuals with a hostile attribution style are more likely to engage in hostile violence compared to those without such a style (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). However, it is important to note that such responses may also be driven by perceived injustice and a belief that the negative outcome could have been avoided, leading to feelings of anger and resentment (Weiner, 2004). This can manifest in actions such as organising protests against perceived responsible parties or systems.

2.6.3.3 *Empowerment*

Empowerment refers to a higher level of motivation brought on by positive effort-reward prospects (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). This is characterised by a drive to put in significant effort with the expectation of success and is linked to high levels of innovation and managerial performance (Douglas & Martinko, 2001). In contrast to learned helplessness, empowerment arises from attributing negative experiences to variables that are either internal, stable, and controllable, or external, unstable, and uncontrollable. Students are naturally inclined to attribute positive outcomes to internal

qualities such as intelligence, ability, and effort, leading to feelings of empowerment (Harvey & Martinko, 2009, p. 147). Therefore, individuals with an optimistic attribution style are more likely to exhibit empowerment than those with pessimistic or hostile attribution styles. However, it is important to note that attribution methods may lead students to perceive causation incorrectly, and thus, it is crucial to advise students with an optimistic attribution style to avoid losing confidence in their abilities and feeling in control while having limited skills and talents. Encouraging accurate attributions is more important than promoting optimistic ones.

2.6.3.4 *Resilience*

Resilience is characterised by “a steadfast acceptance of reality, deeply held values, and an impressive ability to improvise and adapt to significant change” (Coutu, 2002, p. 47). Research has shown that resilient students tend to make accurate attributions (Coutu, 2002, p. 47). Specifically, individuals with low levels of resilience tend to excessively attribute negative events to external or internal factors. As a result, these students are more likely to attribute responsibility for their failures to others or themselves, both of which can have demotivating effects. Importantly, resilience involves a “staunch embrace of reality,” which counteracts these negative effects by helping students maintain realistic attributions.

As such, resilience can be seen as a trait that aids students in avoiding attributional errors that may undermine motivation levels. It supports appropriate causal perceptions, keeping students grounded in reality and combating hostile and pessimistic attributional tendencies. Additionally, resilience may also help prevent disillusionment and unwarranted optimism, as well as overly optimistic attributions. The question that arises is, where does resilience originate from and how can it be developed to support motivation through appropriate attributions.

2.7 **Summary**

In this chapter the researcher discussed literature on what is already known on the study problem. The reviewed literature highlighted the factors influencing student protests and the importance of student motivation and its relationship to academic performance and retention rates. Disruptions to learning have a significant impact on

student motivation, which can lead to a decrease in academic performance, dropout rates and retention rates. The theoretical framework of the study, attribution theory, has also been discussed. The next chapter discusses research methodology and design used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: Research methodology and design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and design used to examine the impact of student protests at Nkangala TVET College on motivation, academic performance, and retention rates. The strategies employed for selecting the population and sample are discussed, as well as the methods used for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data, including the research tools, data gathering process, and data analysis. The validity and reliability of the study tools, as well as ethical considerations, are also addressed.

3.2 Research paradigm

Research is grounded in fundamental philosophical beliefs about what constitutes good research and the best methodologies for advancing knowledge in a particular field of inquiry (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). These philosophical presumptions, or the fundamental set of ideas that guide the researcher's work and shape their worldview, are referred to as the research paradigm (Lincoln et al., 2011). According to Creswell (2014, p. 9), conducting research within a specific paradigm provides the framework within which the research takes place and serves as the basis for building variable knowledge. Modern research is structured and organised according to a number of paradigms, including constructivism, transformative, pragmatism, and positivism. Positivism, which is the paradigm used for this study, is explained below.

3.2.1 *Positivist paradigm*

The positivist research paradigm is a more traditional style of social research that is frequently linked to quantitative research techniques that emphasise accuracy, generalisability, dependability, and replicability, and emphasise scientific techniques to investigate social reality (Creswell, 2014, p. 7). According to Collins (2010, p. 35), "Positivism derives from human experience and includes definite, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, defined, and regular manner". The results of the investigation are often observable, quantitative, and measurable. A positivist researcher, according to Creswell (2014, p. 7), formulates certain broad

conclusions that are utilised to identify consequences or outcomes from known causes. According to Collins (2010, p. 35), the positivist viewpoint affects quantitative research and is experimental, manipulative, and hypothetical. The claims of knowledge made by positivist researchers are founded on objectivity, uniformity, deductive reasoning, and control over the research process and they see inquiry as a sequence of logically connected procedures (Creswell, 2012).

The positivist paradigm served as the foundation for this study. In order to completely collect all the pertinent data for the study and address the research questions and objectives, the researcher employed quantitative research approach within the context of a positivist paradigm.

3.3 Research approach

Research approach is described as “the total approach to the research process, from the theoretical aspect to the collection and interpretation of data” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 12). This idea is supported by Creswell (2014) who states that the appropriate research approach is determined by the objectives of the study and the characteristics of the variables being taken into account. In order to achieve the study’s goals as described in chapter 1, a methodical, deliberate, and pertinent research strategy was employed. Researchers can conduct their research using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). In this study, a quantitative research approach was adopted.

3.3.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research, which utilises measurements to record and analyse components of social reality, employs a range of approaches (Majoko, 2013). According to Collins (2010), quantitative research is the study of phenomena using numerical techniques and focuses on quantification in the collection and interpretation of data. The quantitative research method was used in this study for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it was used to answer the study’s research questions and objectives. This is because quantitative studies are carried out in accordance with carefully laid out guidelines (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Additionally, this approach enables the assessment of relevant factors objectively and separate from research participants,

allowing for the development of concepts, variables, and procedures with objectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Furthermore, the quantitative research strategy promotes impartiality in measuring and defining phenomena, as well as making use of data, statistics, structure, and control to maximise objectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The research approach used determines the research design that will be used.

3.4 Research design

The research design refers to the plan that outlines the methods, techniques and processes used to gather data in order to answer the research questions (Henning et al., 2004, p. 30). According to Babbie and Mouton (2010, p. 92), a research design determines who or what will be studied, when, how and for what purpose. It is an overarching strategy for finding solutions to the research issues that shape a study, and it incorporates the junction of philosophical perspectives, investigative techniques, and specific methodologies (Creswell, 2009, p. 5). A research design is essential for achieving accurate and trustworthy results, as it helps to maximise control over elements that can undermine the validity and dependability of the research findings (Majoko, 2013, p. 103).

A research design is determined by the research question and should be chosen to provide the most valid and precise responses possible to the research topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 145). McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 74) state that a successful research design describes the intended objective and ensures that the research questions and the proposed methodologies or approaches are coherent and provide data that is reliable and verifiable. Cooper and Schindler (2006, p. 71) also emphasise that the study design is based on the research strategy and outlines the techniques and processes for data collection and analysis. In this study, a quantitative research methodology using cross-sectional survey research design was employed to collect data.

3.4.1 Cross-sectional survey research design

Cross-sectional survey designs are employed when researchers want to learn about people's attitudes, views, or beliefs at a specific point in time (Creswell, 2012, p. 377). In nursing, medical, and social scientific research, cross-sectional surveys are widely used to gather information on the prevalence of disease, behaviours, intentions, knowledge, attitudes, and respondent opinions (Creswell, 2012, p. 377). Additionally, researchers using cross-sectional surveys frequently examine the connection between variables.

Cross-sectional surveys have a number of benefits. Surveys in general are adaptable, may be utilised with a variety of populations, and can cover a wide range of human behaviour and situations (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000, p. 156). A survey can also be carried out quite quickly when information about what is occurring right now is required. In addition, cross-sectional studies cost less than experimental or other kinds of research. Utilising surveys, questionnaires, and observations, data is gathered in its natural environment (Babbie & Mouton, 2010, p. 249). A cross-sectional survey looks at the current state of a problem and there is no intentional intervention on the part of the researcher that may result in researcher biasness (Neuman, 2006, p. 270). A cross-sectional survey does not require altering or adjusting the circumstances, as Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 179) state. A cross-sectional survey's main objective is to gather information about a large population by surveying a sample of that group (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000, p. 156), this can include giving individuals questionnaires and compiling their answers in order to learn more about one or more groups of people's traits, beliefs, attitudes, or prior experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 183).

The current study, which intended to understand the opinions, attitudes, traits, and experiences of TVET college students and lecturers, in order to gather information on current attitudes, ideas, or beliefs on the effects of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College, was suited for this study and was the most appropriate research design to be used.

3.5 Population and sampling

This section discusses the population and sampling used in this study.

3.5.1 Target population

The target population, as stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 143), refers to a group of individuals who meet a specific set of criteria and whom the researcher intends to use as the basis for generalising the study's findings. It is essential to identify the target population to ensure that a research study's focus is on the specified target group. Understanding the population is crucial for determining if the sample size used for the findings can be generalised (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 143). The target population for this study was students and lecturers from three Nkangala TVET College campuses, specifically the Mpondozankomo campus, the Witbank campus, and the Middelburg campus. Students were selected as the target population as they are the driving force behind most protests and are primarily affected academically by protests. The researcher used NCV level 4 students as the NCV programme is a 3-year programme, and level 4 students have been in college for several years and thus have a good understanding of the activities that take place and were able to provide appropriate information on the topic. As students convey their dissatisfaction and seek answers or clarification from the college, lecturers are often involved. Lecturers were also included as part of the target population as they deal with student issues and they are directly involved in managing protests on campuses. Students and lecturers are relevant individuals to provide information on the impact of protests on student motivation, academic performance and retention rates.

3.5.2 Sampling method

The selection of a sample from a larger population is a common practice in research, as it is often impractical to investigate the entire population (Babbie & Mouton, 2010, p. 164). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 143), a study sample is a subset of respondents drawn from the general population, which is smaller in number than the general population, with the intention of using the data acquired from the subset to draw conclusions about the general population. Creswell (2012, p. 114) agrees and states that a research sample is a subset of the population, but smaller in size, with the expectation that the data acquired from the small group will allow

judgements to be made about the broader group. In this study, a sample size of 175 participants was involved. One hundred and sixty (160) students doing NCV level 4 from the three selected campuses were selected using systematic random sampling, and fifteen (15) lecturers were also selected using the same sampling method. McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 147) explain that when a researcher uses systematic random sampling, the *n*th element in the population is sampled after starting at random with items in the range of A to Z, until the desired sample size is reached. In this study, every member of the population was listed with a number, and participants were chosen from the list at regular intervals. NCV level 4 register student class lists were used and participants were chosen from the lists at regular intervals. A number from 1 to 10 was randomly selected as a starting point, and the study's participants were then chosen at random from every tenth number.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments refer to any tools used to collect data in a given research study. There is a wide range of techniques for collecting data, and as stated by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), there is no single prescription for which data collection instruments to use, as what is important is their "fitness for purpose". According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), research tools include surveys, interviews, observations, and readings. In the current study research instrument used were questionnaires.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are defined as "a series of questions designed to create enough primary raw data for the completion of the information necessary to underpin the study objectives" (Hair et al., 2000, p. 440). They are used to gather information on the topic(s) the researcher is interested in, by asking a group of individuals the same set of thoughtfully created questions (Creswell, 2012, p. 382). Questionnaires are simple to distribute and administer, take little time, encourage anonymity, and cover a substantial sample size (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 211).

In order to gather information from a large number of respondents and ensure that each responder receives the identical questions, questionnaires were utilised for the

study. The researcher created the questionnaires, which were then reviewed and approved by the supervisor. Each section of the questionnaire was aligned with the study objectives stated in chapter one. In order to gather the attitudes and opinions of the participants on the topic under study, questionnaires utilising the Linkert scale were employed. Strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree were all utilised as response categories. According to Hair et al, (2000) in survey research, the Linkert scale is the most popular scale. Since the study is mostly quantitative in nature, the questionnaire is mostly filled with closed-ended questions and very few open-ended questions for additional information that might not be covered in the closed questions. Participants could only choose from predetermined replies in closed-ended questions, whereas open-ended questions allow them to express their opinions without being confined by the researcher's points of view (Creswell, 2012, p. 218).

3.6.2 Data collection procedure

The students received paper-based self-administered questionnaires. The researcher distributed questionnaires to students on allocated time slots and venues, ensuring not to disturb classes or academic activities. The questionnaires were given to the participants with enough time to complete them and return them to the researcher. Email questionnaires were issued to the lecturers by the researcher. The participants returned the surveys to the researcher via the same means they received them.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the techniques used to organise and summarise data in a meaningful way (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 436). In this study, the data collected through the use of questionnaires was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 8. This tool was chosen due to its capability of handling large data sets, its availability of a wide range of statistical techniques, and its ability to present the findings in an easily understandable tabular format (Kabir, 2016). Additionally, the researcher was able to present the data in visual form using tables generated by the SPSS software. Only a small number of open-ended questions were analysed using content analysis. Furthermore, secondary data, which refers to data that have been previously gathered (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 260), was used to support the findings from the survey. In this study, students'

academic records on performance and retention rate kept by the college were used as secondary data and analysed.

3.8 Validity and reliability

The validity and reliability of the data collection and analysis methods were considered in this study. The success of the research depends on the validity and reliability of the instruments used.

3.8.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results when applied to the same specimen repeatedly and delivered by the same or different personnel (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 178). The reliability of the questionnaires used to gauge how well respondents understood the research topic was crucial to the study's success. To improve the instrument's dependability, pre-testing was carried out. According to Hair et al. (2000), pre-testing the data collection instrument helps the researcher to identify problematic areas, such as questions that are difficult to understand, offensive or unpleasant to respondents, or that produce data with low variability. Pre-testing was conducted with a small group of students and one lecturer who were not involved in the main study. The researcher and supervisor then revised the questionnaires based on the feedback received. The data collection questionnaires were deemed reliable and usable.

3.8.2 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure is suitable for drawing certain conclusions, making certain choices, and using certain outcomes as a result of the scores produced (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 178). The validity of the study was influenced by the type of data collection tools used by the researcher. To improve content, internal and external validity, the data and instruments were validated. The questionnaires used in this study were deemed valid as they measured what they were intended to measure. Before finalising the questionnaires, the researcher gave the supervisor a copy of the draft version for feedback to confirm the validity of the instrument. The supervisor reviewed and revised the questionnaires to ensure they were appropriate for gathering the necessary data. To verify the content validity, the researcher asked a statistician to review the items on the questionnaire. The

researcher also checked for biases or unwarranted influences in the questionnaires. In addition, the researcher ensured that the questionnaires were consistent with the research objectives and questions.

3.9 Ethical considerations

When undertaking social scientific research, it is important for researchers to be aware of the common understandings among researchers regarding what is appropriate and inappropriate in carrying out a scientific enquiry. Babbie and Mouton (2010, p. 60) assert that “respecting participants, addressing the needs of vulnerable persons or groups, obtaining permission, and protecting confidentiality are the key ethical challenges that demand attention while designing and conducting research”. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006, p. 117), the main objective of research ethics is to ensure that no one is harmed as a result of the study activity. Furthermore, Majoko (2013) states that researchers are obliged to uphold the respect, privacy, and safety of their study subjects while also conducting ethical, high-quality, and societally valuable research. In this study, the researcher was aware of the importance of ethical guidelines and made sure there was no fabrication or misrepresentation of the study’s findings from the outset to the conclusion.

3.9.1 *Informed consent*

Informed consent is an ethical precept that stipulates that research subjects should be provided with sufficient information about the study to enable them to make an informed decision regarding participation or not. According to Creswell (2014, p. 96), informed consent is obtained by fully disclosing all information about the research to prospective participants that would reasonably affect their decision to participate. In this study, participants gave their informed consent by signing the informed consent form. The researcher explained the study, including the validity of the study, the process used, the participants’ rights, and the extent to which the researcher will maintain the confidentiality of the participant’s information. Participants were informed that they may voluntarily discontinue the study at any moment and that any submitted data could be deleted upon request. Therefore, the participants participated voluntarily.

3.9.2 No harm to participants

According to ethical obligations, the researcher must take reasonable precautions to safeguard the participants from any type of psychological injury or bodily discomfort that may result from the study activity (Creswell, 2014, p. 98). The researcher made every effort during this study to ensure that none of the participants suffered any sort of injury, whether it was physical or psychological.

3.9.3 Deception

Deception of participants, according to Creswell (2014, p. 98), is the withholding of information from or the provision of false information to research participants in such a way that they continue to be unaware of the true objectives of the study in order to secure participation in the study when they would have otherwise declined to do so. McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 178) concur, stating that deception can occur when a researcher intentionally misleads respondents through written or verbal instructions, other people's actions, or specific elements of the environment. In this study, however, no deception was employed as all information pertinent to the research was provided to the participants with no information being withheld.

3.9.4 Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

Mouton (2011, p. 243) states that it is legally required for researchers to keep participant names and personal information private. A participant is considered anonymous, as per Neuman (2006, p. 138), when the researcher cannot connect a particular response to a specific participant. The concept of confidentiality implies that only the study team, and perhaps a small number of other staff members, should be informed of the identities of participants and that these staff members should have taken confidentiality pledges (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, pp. 133-134). In this study, anonymity and confidentiality were upheld, as the research participants' real names were not mentioned, ensuring that after the study, nobody could be identified as a participant, including the researcher.

3.9.5 Professionalism

Researchers have the potential to significantly affect both their study and its conclusions, as stated by Blaxter et al. (2008, p. 83). To prevent the researcher's personal views and opinions from influencing the study and its reporting, every effort must be made to maintain impartiality and objectivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 135). Throughout the present study, the researcher upheld honesty and neutrality and maintained a professional demeanour in adherence to both the TVET college's and Department of Higher Education's professional code of conduct.

3.10 Summary

This chapter outlined the quantitative research approach and a cross-sectional survey design as research methodology used for the study. The population was defined, and a sample was chosen via systematic random sampling. Data collected through questionnaires and were analysed using SPSS descriptive statistics for closed-ended questions and content analysis for open-ended questions. The chapter also covered the study's validity and reliability metrics, as well as ethical considerations. The focus of the next chapter will be on data analysis and presentation.

CHAPTER 4: Data analysis and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the methodology employed in the research, and this chapter focuses on the interpretation and presentation of the data obtained. The data is analysed and interpreted to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College.
- To determine the extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college.
- To determine the extent to which student protests affect retention rate at the college.
- To provide recommendations, if necessary, to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance and retention rate at the college.

4.2 Brief overview of the research process

The research data for this study was provided by 160 students and 15 lecturers from Nkangala TVET College to determine how protests affected students' motivation, academic performance, and percentage of programme retention. To improve understanding, the researcher cleaned and processed each questionnaire to enhance comprehension. The data gathering questionnaires were determined to be reliable for usage, as they measured the data they were intended to measure. A cross-tabulation was conducted to see the impact of protests by the NCV programme students' registered for. Content analysis was employed to categorise participant replies by topic and in accordance with each study question for the open-ended questions. The descriptive statistics of the study participants is shown, followed by the study results which addressed the study objectives and categories of findings from the last objective. The data obtained was presented using tables and figures. Throughout the study procedure, the researcher ensured that there were no biases and unwarranted effects.

4.3 Data analysis

This section will focus on data analysis for this study.

4.3.1 Biographical characteristics of the respondents

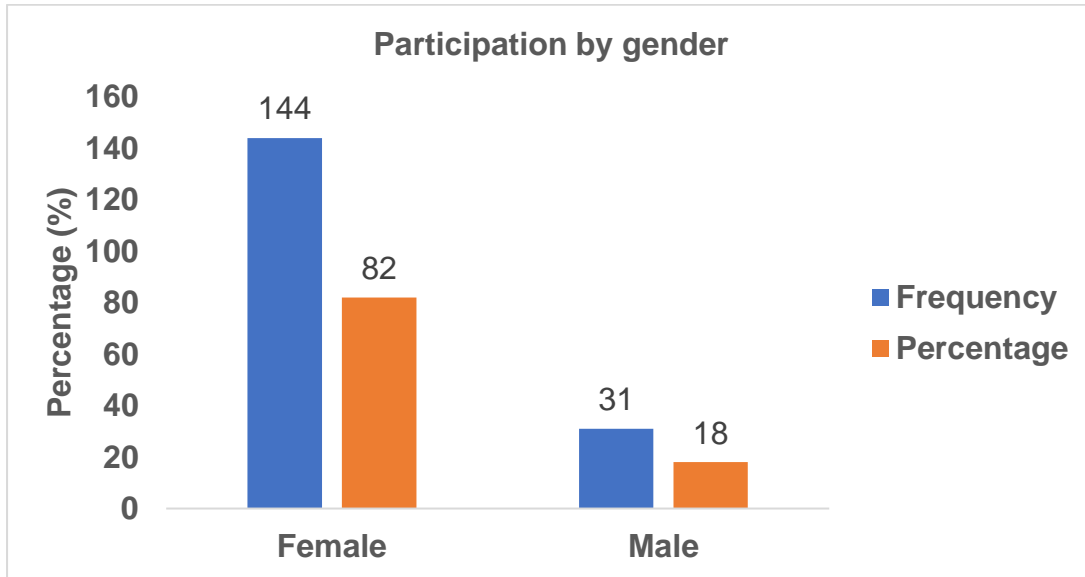


Figure 4.1: Participation by gender

Figure 4.1 illustrates the distribution of participants by gender. As can be observed, the majority of participants (82%) were female, while 18% were male.

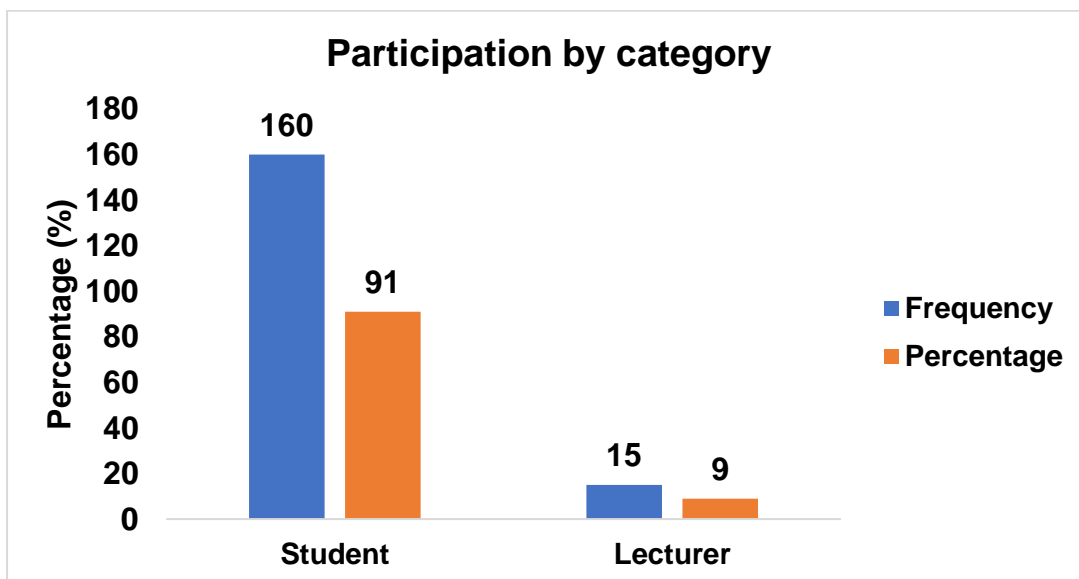


Figure 4.2: Participation by category

Figure 4.2 shows participation by category. The figure shows that 160 (91%) of the participants were students, and 15 (9%) were lecturers at Nkangala TVET College.

Table 4.1: Age of students

Age of students					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age of students	154	20	34	23.22	2.393
Missing data	6				

Table 4.1 illustrates that 154 students disclosed their age, while 6 students did not. The youngest participant in the study was 20 years of age, with the oldest being 34 years. On average, participants in this study were 23 years old.

Table 4.2: Lecturers' years of experience

Years of experience					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of years' experience in TVET	15	3	25	12.73	5.861

Table 4.2 presents the years of experience of academic lecturers within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The minimum experience within TVET was 3 years, with the maximum being 25 years. On average, lecturers at Nkangala College possessed 13 years of experience within TVET.

Table 4.3: Students' number of years registered in NCV

Number of years registered					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of years registered in NCV	151	3	7	3.25	.600
Missing data	9				

Table 4.3 illustrates that 151 students disclosed the number of years they were registered for National Certificate Vocational (NCV) at the college, while 9 students did not. The minimum number of years registered in NCV by participants in this study was 3 years, with the maximum being 7 years. On average, students were registered for 3 years of NCV at the college.

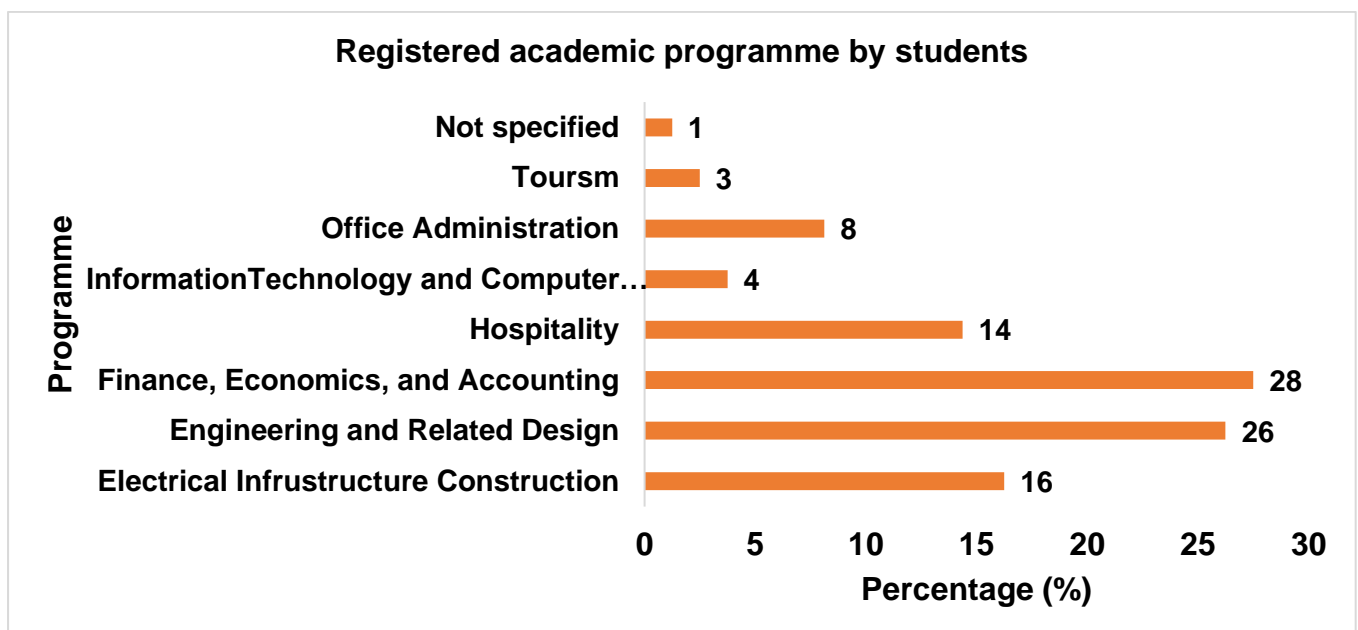


Figure 4.3: Academic programmes registered by students

Figure 4.3 displays the programmes for which students who participated in this study were registered at the college. The majority, comprising 28%, were registered for Finance, Economics, and Accounting. The second highest programme for which

students were registered was Engineering and Related Designs, accounting for 26%. The least programme among participants was Tourism, at 3%.

Table 4.4: NCV exam statistics 2021

Nkangala TVET College NCV exam statistics								
NCV LEVEL	Enrol FT & PT	Written FT & PT	Not Written FT& PT	Pass FT & PT	Pass %	Retain	Male	Female
NCV LEVEL 2 (NQF2)	12140	9680	2460	7072	73	80	4015	8125
NCV LEVEL 3 (NQF3)	7910	7004	906	5041	72	89	2560	5350
NCV LEVEL 4 (NQF4)	5663	5166	497	3643	71	91	1918	3745
TOTAL	25713	21850	3863	15756	72	87	8493	17220

Source: Nkangala TVET College

Table 4.4 presents examination statistics by National Certificate Vocational (NCV) level at Nkangala TVET College. The data illustrates that, of the total number of students who registered (25 713), 85% (21 850) sat for the exams in 2021, while 15% (3 863) did not. Notably, the NCV level 2 cohort had the highest enrolment of students, yet the lowest retention rate.

Table 4.5: Throughput rate

NKANGALA TVET COLLEGE		
THROUGHPUT RATE 2017-2021		
Number of students enrolled for NCV Level 2 in 2017	Number of students who completed NCV Level 4 in 2019	Throughput rate (%)
9494	3058	32
Number of students enrolled for NCV Level 2 in 2018	Number of students who completed NCV Level 4 in 2020	Throughput rate (%)
10269	3043	30
Number of students enrolled for NCV Level 2 in 2019	Number of students who completed NCV Level 4 in 2021	Throughput rate (%)
12418	3643	29
Throughput calculation = number of students enrolled for NCV Level 2 as a percentage of the number of students who completed NCV Level 4 within the expected time frame (3 years)		

Source: Nkangala TVET College

Table 4.5 presents the results of the throughput rate at Nkangala TVET College. It illustrates that, of the 12 418 students who enrolled for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) Level 2 in 2019, only 3 643 (29%) completed their NCV Level 4 in 2021. This indicates that a significant proportion of students at the college do not complete their studies.

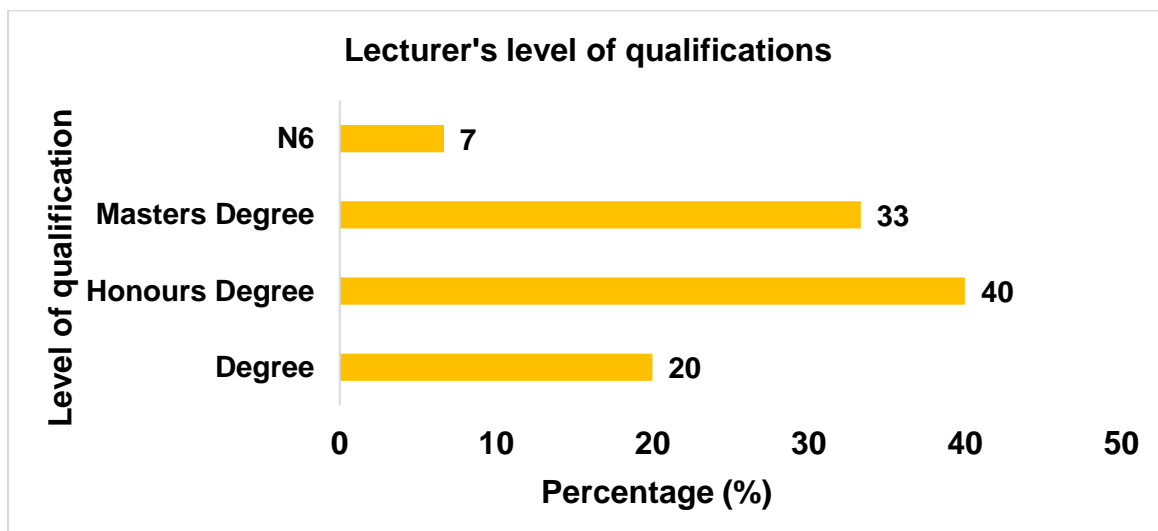


Figure 4.4: Lecturers' level of qualification

Figure 4.4 illustrates the level of qualifications held by the lecturers who participated in this study. The majority of participants, accounting for 40%, held an Honours degree. A further 33% held a Master's degree, while 20% held a degree and 7% held N6 qualifications.

4.3.2 Objective 1: Factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College

This sub-section will consider the first objective relating to factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College.

4.3.2.1 Students' perspectives

Students' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

Table 4.6: Seriousness of college management towards students

Programme registered	College management takes student concerns seriously only when they protest						
	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,6	6,9	0,0	7,5	0,0	1,3	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	1,3	8,8	0,6	9,4	1,3	5,0	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	8,1	0,6	15,6	0,6	2,5	27,5
Hospitality	0,6	6,3	0,0	5,6	0,0	1,9	14,4
Information Technology and Computer Science	0,6	1,9	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	1,9	0,0	5,0	0,6	0,6	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,6	2,5
Total	3,1	35,0	1,3	46,3	2,5	11,9	100,0

Table 4.6 demonstrates that a significant proportion of students believe that their college management only takes their concerns seriously in the event of protests. Of the students surveyed, those registered for Finance, Economics, and Accounting 24% held the belief that college management only responds to their concerns when they protest. This was followed by those registered for Engineering and Related Design 18%, and Electrical Infrastructure Construction 15%. In total, 81% of students who participated in the survey believed that college management only responds to their concerns when protest action is taken. Furthermore, a majority of students across all

academic programmes either strongly agreed 46% or agreed 35% that college management only takes their concerns seriously when they protest

Table 4.7: Non-payment of NSFAS allowance

I can initiate or partake in a student protest if my NSFAS allowance is not paid or delayed							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	3,1	0,6	10,6	0,0	1,9	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	1,3	9,4	0,0	13,8	1,3	0,6	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	7,5	1,3	18,8	0,0	0,0	27,5
Hospitality	0,6	5,0	0,0	6,3	0,0	2,5	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,6	0,6	0,0	1,3	0,6	0,6	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	2,5	0,0	5,6	0,0	0,0	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,6	0,6	1,3	0,0	0,0	2,5
Total	2,5	28,8	2,5	58,8	1,9	5,6	100,0

Table 4.7 illustrates the capability of students to initiate or participate in a protest in the event of non-payment or delay of their National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) allowance. The majority of students who are able to initiate or participate in such a protest are those registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting, accounting for 27% of the total. Additionally, students enrolled in Engineering and Related Design 23% and Electrical Infrastructure Construction 14% also reported being able to initiate or participate in a protest due to non-payment of their allowances. Overall, the results indicate that the majority of students across academic programmes agreed or strongly agreed 59% and 29%, respectively that they would be able to initiate or participate in a student protest in the event of non-payment or delay of their NSFAS allowances.

Table 4.8: Lack of teaching and learning material

I can protest due to the lack of teaching and learning material							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	3,1	0,6	11,3	0,0	1,3	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	1,3	6,9	0,6	13,8	0,6	3,1	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	6,3	1,3	17,5	0,0	2,5	27,5
Hospitality	0,6	3,8	0,0	8,8	0,6	0,6	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,6	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,6	0,0	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	3,8	0,6	3,1	0,0	0,6	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,6	0,6	1,3	0,0	0,0	2,5
Total	2,5	24,4	3,8	59,4	1,9	8,1	100,0

Table 4.8 illustrates the proportion of students who indicate they are able to protest as a result of inadequate teaching and learning materials. The majority of students, registered in the programmes of Finance, Economics, and Accounting 24%, reported that they would be able to protest in such a scenario. Additionally, a substantial number of students in the programmes of Engineering and Related Design 21% and Electrical Infrastructure Construction 14% also stated that they would protest in the absence of adequate teaching and learning materials. Overall, a significant percentage of students across all academic programmes expressed agreement with the statement that they could protest due to a lack of teaching and learning materials, with 59% strongly agreeing and 24% agreeing.

Table 4.9: Lack of student accommodation

The lack of proper student accommodation can be a good enough reason for me to							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,6	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	7,5	1,3	5,0	0,0	2,5	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	1,3	8,1	1,9	10,0	0,6	4,4	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	6,9	0,6	15,6	0,6	3,8	27,5
Hospitality	0,6	4,4	0,6	5,6	1,3	1,9	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,6	1,3	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,3	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	1,9	0,6	5,0	0,0	0,6	8,1
Tourism	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,6	2,5
Total	2,5	31,3	5,0	43,1	2,5	15,6	100,0

Table 4.9 illustrates the extent to which students are able to protest as a result of inadequate accommodation. The majority of students who can protest due to a lack of teaching and learning materials are those registered in the programmes of Finance, Economics, and Accounting 23%. Additionally, students in the programmes of Engineering and Related Design 18%, and Electrical Infrastructure Construction 13%, also indicate that they would protest due to a lack of adequate student accommodation. Overall, across all academic programmes, a significant proportion of students strongly agree 43% and agree 31% that they are able to protest due to the lack of adequate student accommodation.

4.3.2.2 *Lecturers' perspectives*

Lecturers' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

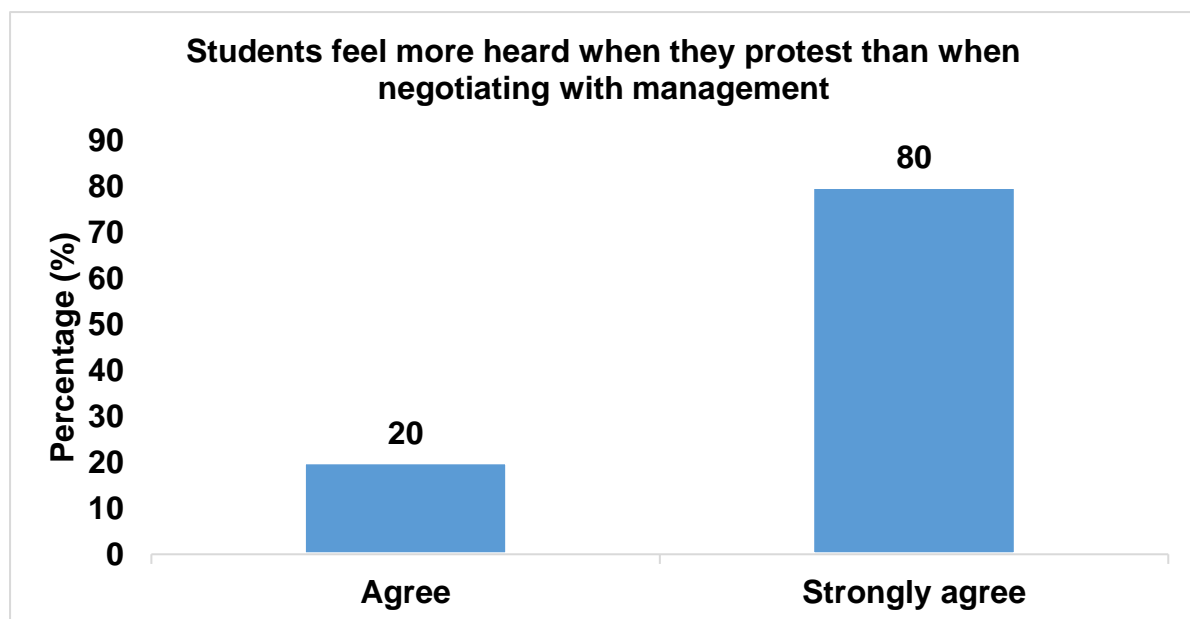


Figure 4.5: Negotiation and student protest

Figure 4.5 illustrates the opinions of lecturers regarding whether students feel more heard when they protest or negotiate. A majority of the lecturers 80% strongly agreed that students feel more heard when they protest than when they negotiate. Furthermore, 20% of the lecturers also agreed with the statement, and there were no

lecturers who disagreed, strongly disagreed, or expressed uncertainty in regards to this statement.

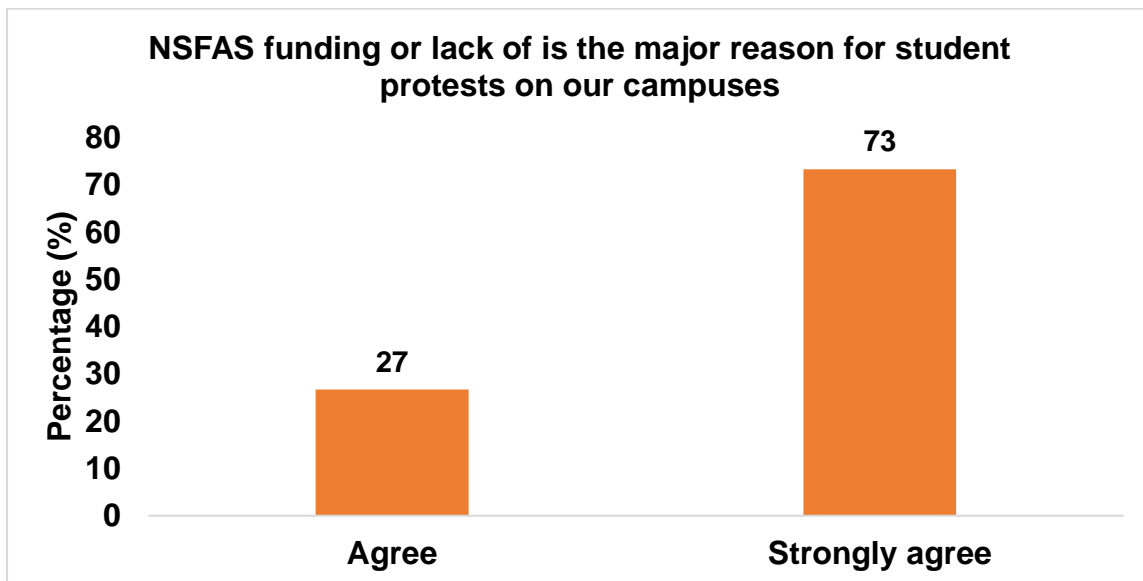


Figure 4.6: Lack of NSFAS funding

Figure 4.6 illustrates the opinions of lecturers regarding the major cause of student protests at Nkangala TVET College. A significant proportion of the lecturers 73% strongly agreed that the lack of NSFAS funding is the primary reason for the protests on campus. Additionally, 27% of the lecturers agreed with this statement, with no lecturers expressing disagreement, strong disagreement, or uncertainty.

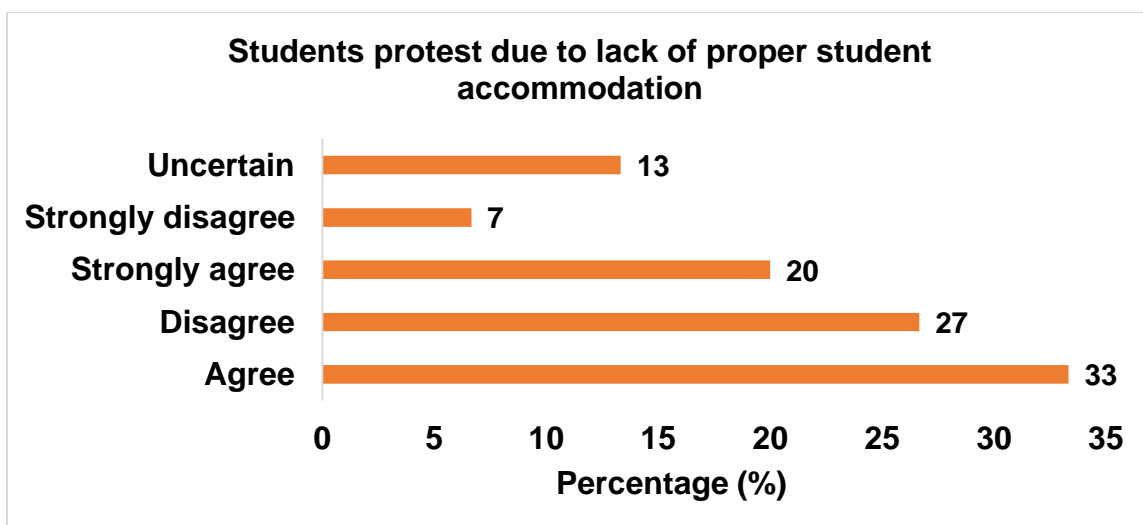


Figure 4.7: Lack of student accommodation

Figure 4.7 presents the views of lecturers on the extent to which protests at the college are caused by inadequate student accommodation. The data depicted in the figure indicates that a majority of the lecturers 33% agreed that the lack of appropriate accommodation is a contributing factor to student protests. Conversely, 27% of lecturers disagreed with this statement, while 20% strongly agreed that inadequate accommodation is a cause of protests. 7% strongly disagreed with 13% of them uncertain.

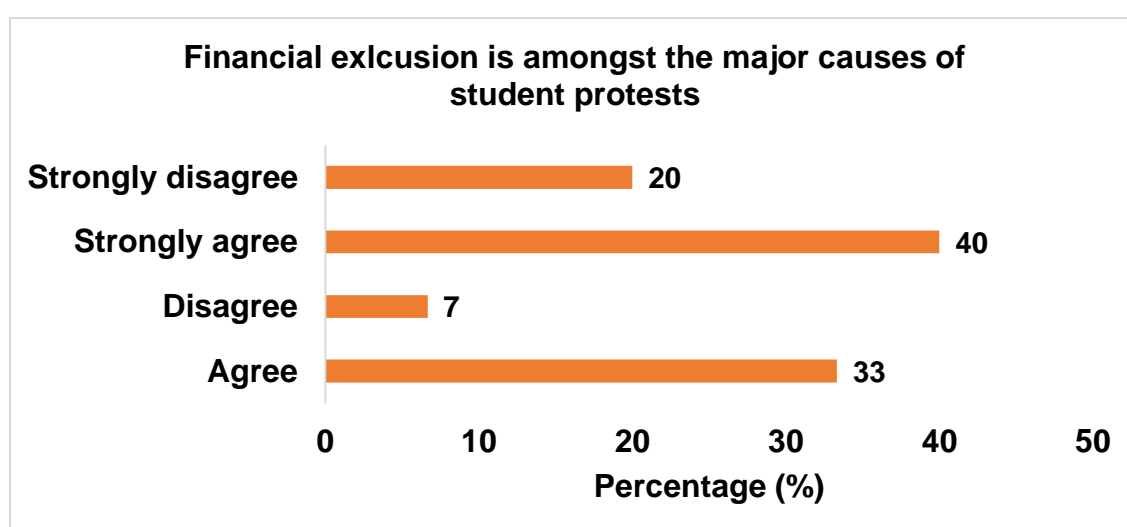


Figure 4.8: Financial exclusion

Figure 4.8 illustrates the perspectives of lecturers on the extent to which financial exclusion at the college is a significant cause of student protests. The data presented in the figure indicates that a majority of the lecturers 40% strongly agreed, and 33% agreed that financial exclusion is a major contributing factor to student protests. In contrast, 20% of the lecturers strongly disagreed that financial exclusion is a significant cause of protests.

4.3.3 Objective 2: The extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college

This sub-section will consider the second objective relating to the extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college.

4.3.3.1 Students' perspectives

Students' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

Table 4.10: Protests and student motivation

Student protests negatively impact my motivation							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	1,9	2,5	3,8	3,1	5,0	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	1,3	7,5	5,0	0,6	3,1	8,8	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,6	10,6	5,0	4,4	1,9	5,0	27,5
Hospitality	1,9	3,1	1,9	3,8	1,3	2,5	14,4
Information Technology and Computer Science	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,0	0,6	1,3	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	5,6	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,9	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,9	0,0	0,0	2,5
Total	4,4	30,6	15,0	15,6	10,0	24,4	100,0

Table 4.10 illustrates the extent to which protests are perceived to have a detrimental effect on the motivation of students at Nkangala TVET College. The majority of students registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting 16% attested to protests having a negative impact on their motivation. Similarly, students in the Engineering and Related Design programme 13% also reported that protests negatively affected their motivation. Overall, 31% of students across all academic programmes agreed that protests had a detrimental effect on their motivation, with 16% strongly agreeing. Conversely, 15% of students disagreed that protests had a negative impact, and 10% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.11: Protests and students' studying interests

I lose interest in my studies once we start having protests							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,6	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	2,5	5,6	2,5	3,8	1,9	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	0,0	8,8	6,3	6,3	4,4	0,6	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	6,9	7,5	4,4	2,5	6,3	27,5
Hospitality	0,6	3,1	3,1	5,6	1,3	0,6	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,6	0,6	1,9	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	1,9	1,3	1,3	0,6	3,1	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,0	0,6	2,5
Total	0,6	23,8	25,6	21,9	13,1	15,0	100,0

Table 4.11 presents data on the extent to which protests are perceived to lead to a loss of interest in studies among students at the college. The majority of students 26% disagreed that protests resulted in a loss of interest in their studies, while 24% agreed and 22% strongly agreed. Conversely, 15% of students were uncertain, and 13% strongly disagreed. A majority of students who disagreed were registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting, while those who agreed were registered in Engineering and Related Design.

Table 4.12: Academic performance

When we have student protests, classroom attendance is disrupted and this negatively affects my academic performance							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	8,1	0,6	6,9	0,0	0,6	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	0,0	6,9	3,8	12,5	1,3	1,9	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	11,3	0,6	11,9	0,6	3,1	27,5
Hospitality	0,0	6,9	0,0	6,9	0,0	0,6	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,0	1,3	0,0	1,3	0,0	1,3	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	2,5	2,5	2,5	0,0	0,6	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,0	0,0	2,5
Total	0,0	36,9	7,5	45,6	1,9	8,1	100,0

Table 4.12 illustrates the extent to which protests are perceived to have a detrimental effect on the academic performance of students at Nkangala TVET College. The majority of students registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting 23% indicated that the disruptions to classes caused by protests had a negative impact on their

academic performance. Similarly, students in the Engineering and Related Design programme 20% also reported that class disruptions caused by protests had a detrimental effect on their academic performance. Overall, 46% of students across all academic programmes strongly agreed that the disruptions to classes caused by protests negatively affected their academic performance, and 37% agreed.

Table 4.13: State of academic performance with fewer protests

If we have fewer protests at our campuses, student academic performance will be higher than it is currently								
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total	Total
Not specified	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0	0	4	5	3	1	3	16
Engineering and Related Design	0	0	6	3	10	3	4	26
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0	1	6	1	16	3	1	28
Hospitality	0	0	6	1	5	2	1	14
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	4
Office Administration	0	0	3	0	4	1	1	8
Tourism	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Total	0	1	25	11	44	9	11	100

Table 4.13 presents data on the extent to which students at the college believe that a decrease in protests would lead to an improvement in their academic performance. The majority of students registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting 22% indicated that a reduction in protests would not result in a significant improvement in their academic performance. Similarly, students in the Engineering and Related Design programme 16% also reported that fewer protests would not lead to a substantial improvement in academic performance. Overall, 44% of students across all academic programmes strongly disagreed that a reduction in protests would result in a significant improvement in their academic performance, and 25% disagreed.

4.3.3.2 Lecturers' perspectives

Lecturers' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

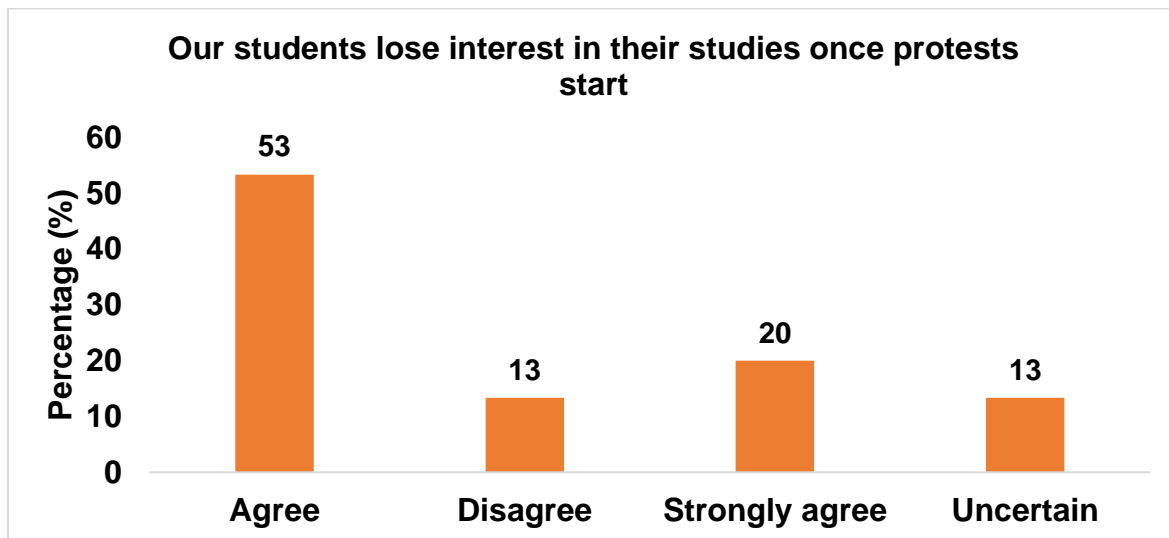


Figure 4.9: Loss of interest in studies

Figure 4.9 illustrates the opinion of lecturers regarding whether the initiation of protests at the college leads to a decline in students' interest in their studies. The figure demonstrates that the majority of lecturers 53% agreed and 20% strongly agreed that the initiation of protests at the college leads to a decline in students' interest in their studies. However, 13% disagreed that the initiation of protests results in a decline in students' interest in their studies.

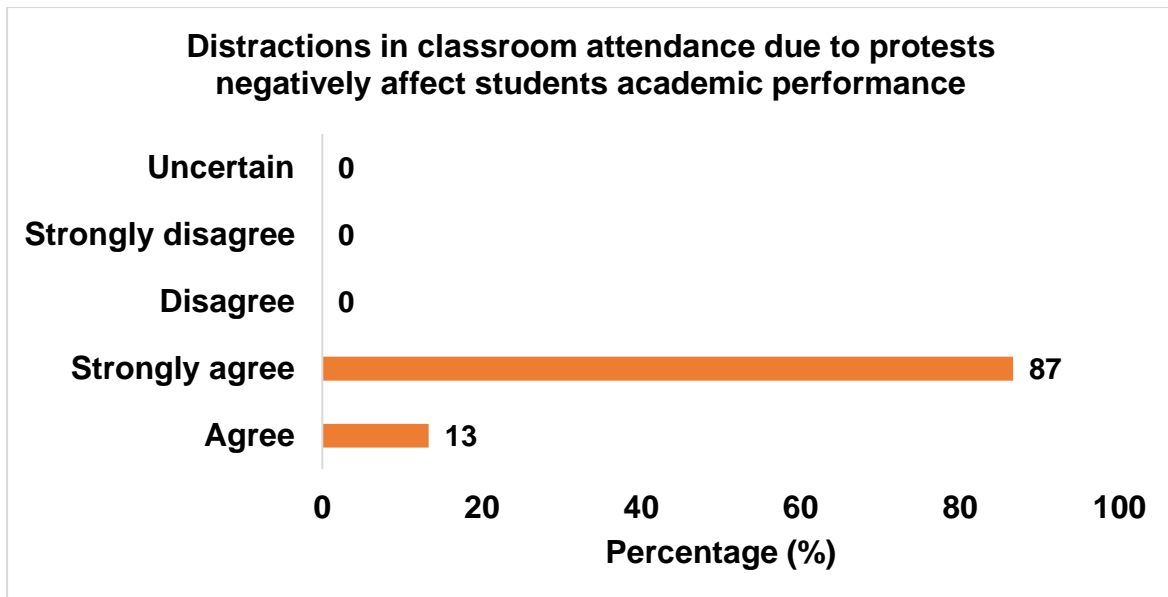


Figure 4.10: Academic performance

Figure 4.10 presents the opinion of lecturers on the extent to which disruptions in classroom attendance due to protests have an adverse impact on students' academic performance. The figure illustrates that the majority of lecturers 87% strongly agreed and 13% agreed that disruptions in classroom attendance due to protests have an adverse impact on students' academic performance.

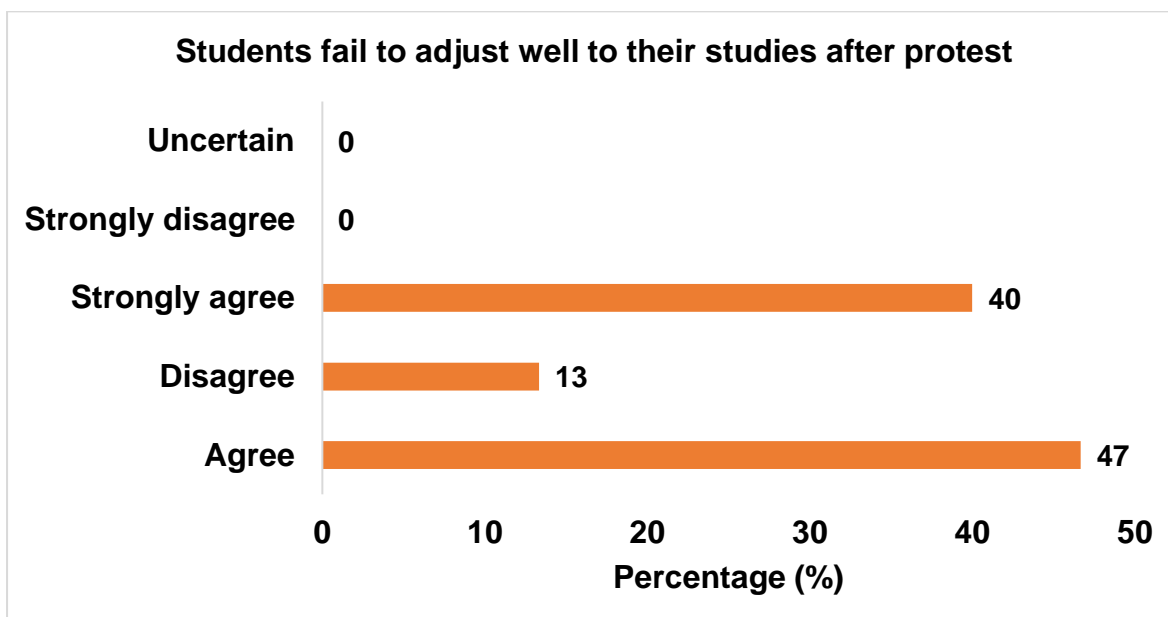


Figure 4.11: Student failure

Figure 4.11 illustrates the opinion of lecturers regarding whether students experience difficulty in adapting to their studies following a protest. The figure demonstrates that the majority of lecturers 47% agreed and 40% strongly agreed that students experience difficulty in adapting to their studies following a protest. However, 13% disagreed that students experience difficulty in adapting to their studies following a protest.

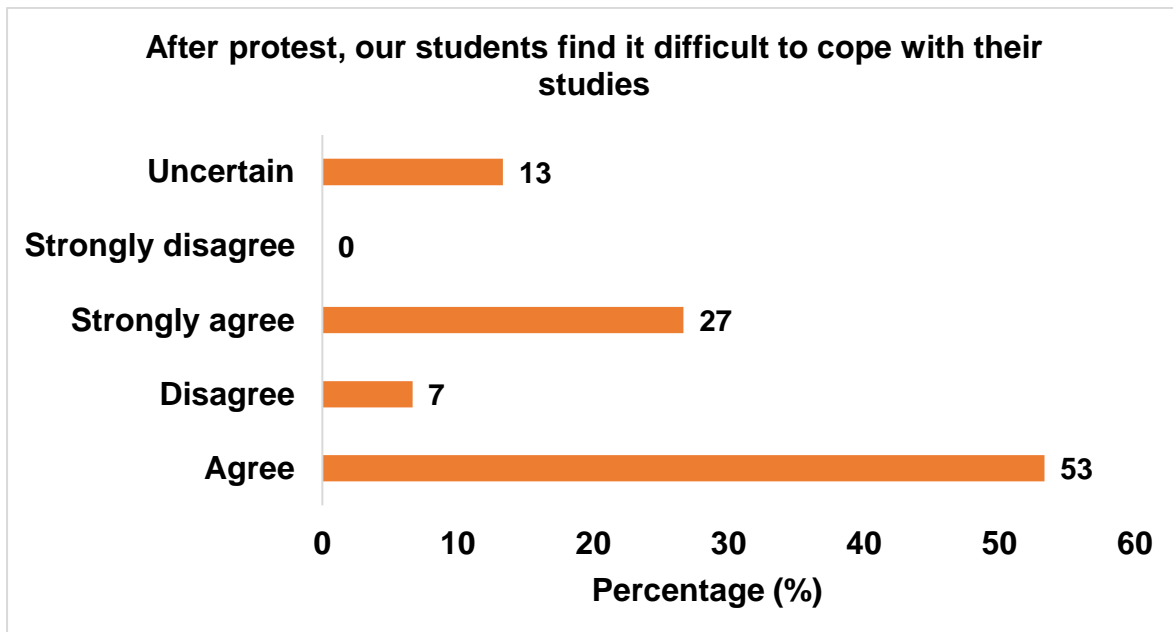


Figure 4.12: Aftermath of student protests

Figure 4.12 presents the opinion of lecturers on the extent to which students experience difficulty in coping with their studies following protests. The figure illustrates that the majority of lecturers 53% agreed and 27% strongly agreed that students experience difficulty in coping with their studies following protests. However, 13% were uncertain and 7% disagreed that students experience difficulty in coping with their studies following protests.

4.3.4 Objective 3: The extent to which student protests affect retention rate at the college

This sub-section will consider the third objective relating to the extent to which student protests affect retention rate at the college.

4.3.4.1 Students' perspectives

Students' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

Table 4.14: Dropout consideration

I have considered dropping out of the programme							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,6	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	1,9	2,5	0,6	10,0	1,3	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	0,0	3,1	6,3	3,1	13,1	0,6	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	2,5	5,0	1,3	16,9	1,9	27,5
Hospitality	0,0	0,6	3,1	0,6	9,4	0,6	14,4
Information Technology and Computer Science	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,0	1,3	0,0	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	0,0	2,5	0,0	5,6	0,0	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,9	0,0	2,5
Total	0,0	8,8	23,1	5,6	58,1	4,4	100,0

Table 4.14 illustrates the proportion of students who have not considered dropping out of the programme in which they are registered. The majority of students registered in Finance, Economics, and Accounting (22%) have not considered dropping out. Similarly, students in Engineering and Related Design (16%) have not considered dropping out. Overall, a majority of students across all academic programmes (58%) strongly disagreed, and 23% disagreed with the notion of dropping out of their respective programmes

Table 4.15: Completion of studies in record time

It is taking me longer to complete my study than the expected minimum (3 years) duration.							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,0	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	4,4	4,4	0,6	3,8	3,1	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	0,0	8,8	5,6	3,8	3,8	4,4	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	8,1	6,3	3,1	9,4	0,6	27,5
Hospitality	0,0	3,1	1,3	2,5	5,6	1,9	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,0	0,0	1,9	0,0	0,6	1,3	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	0,6	1,9	0,0	4,4	1,3	8,1
Tourism	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,6	1,3	0,6	2,5
Total	0,0	25,6	21,3	10,6	29,4	13,1	100,0

Table 4.15 illustrates the proportion of students who have exceeded the expected minimum duration for completion of their studies. The majority of students 29% strongly disagreed that it has taken longer to complete their studies than the expected minimum duration. However, a significant proportion 26% agreed that it has taken longer to complete their studies than the expected minimum duration. The majority of these students were registered in the programmes of Engineering and Related Design, as well as Finance, Economics, and Accounting.

Table 4.16: Financial burden

The financial burden is sometimes just too much and I want to quit college altogether							
Programme registered	No answer (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Uncertain (%)	Total
Not specified	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,0	0,0	0,6	1,3
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	0,0	5,0	2,5	2,5	4,4	1,9	16,3
Engineering and Related Design	0,0	5,0	5,0	8,1	6,9	1,3	26,3
Finance, Economics, and Accounting	0,0	8,1	5,6	3,8	8,8	1,3	27,5
Hospitality	0,0	3,1	3,8	5,6	0,6	1,3	14,4
InformationTechnology and Computer Science	0,0	0,6	1,3	0,6	0,6	0,6	3,8
Office Administration	0,0	1,3	1,3	1,3	3,8	0,6	8,1
Tourism	0,0	1,3	0,0	1,3	0,0	0,0	2,5
Total	0,0	24,4	20,0	23,1	25,0	7,5	100,0

Table 4.16 illustrates the proportion of students who believe that financial burden can lead to their withdrawal from college. A majority of students 25% strongly disagreed that financial burden can lead them to quit college, while 20% agreed with this

statement. Additionally, 24% agreed and 23% strongly agreed that financial burden can lead them to quit college. The majority of these students 8% were registered in the programme of Finance, Economics, and Accounting.

4.3.4.2 Lecturers' perspectives

Lecturers' perspectives are presented in this sub-section.

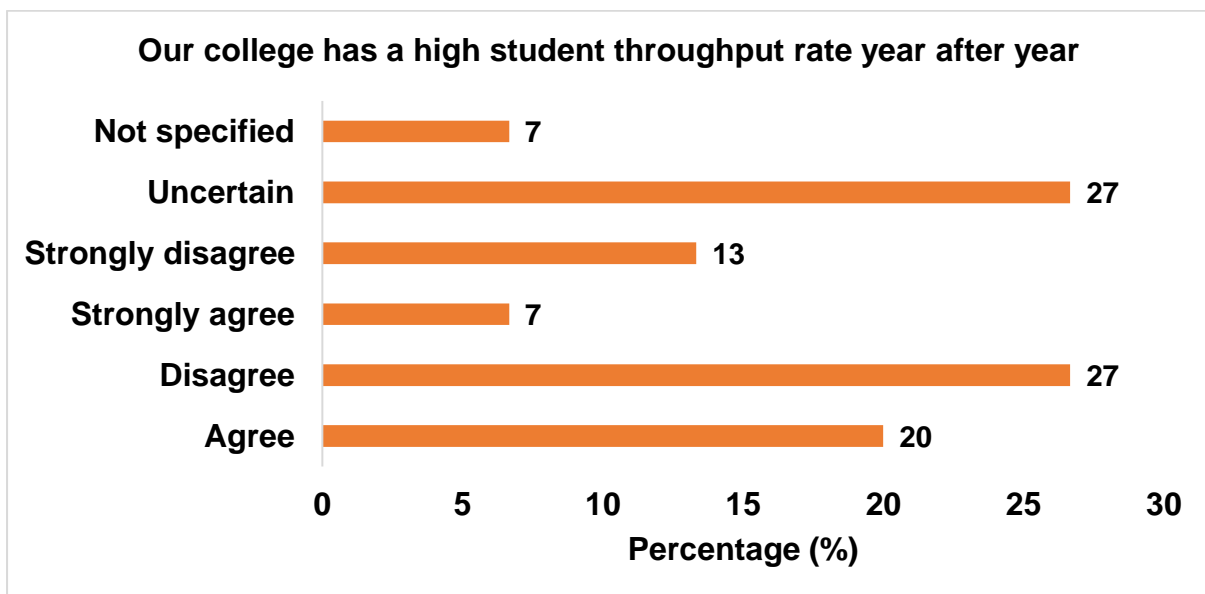


Figure 4.13: Student throughput rate

Figure 4.13 presents the opinion of lecturers regarding whether the college has a high student throughput rate year after year. The majority of lecturers 27% disagreed with the statement, and an equal proportion 27% were uncertain. However, 20% agreed that the college has a high student throughput rate year after year.

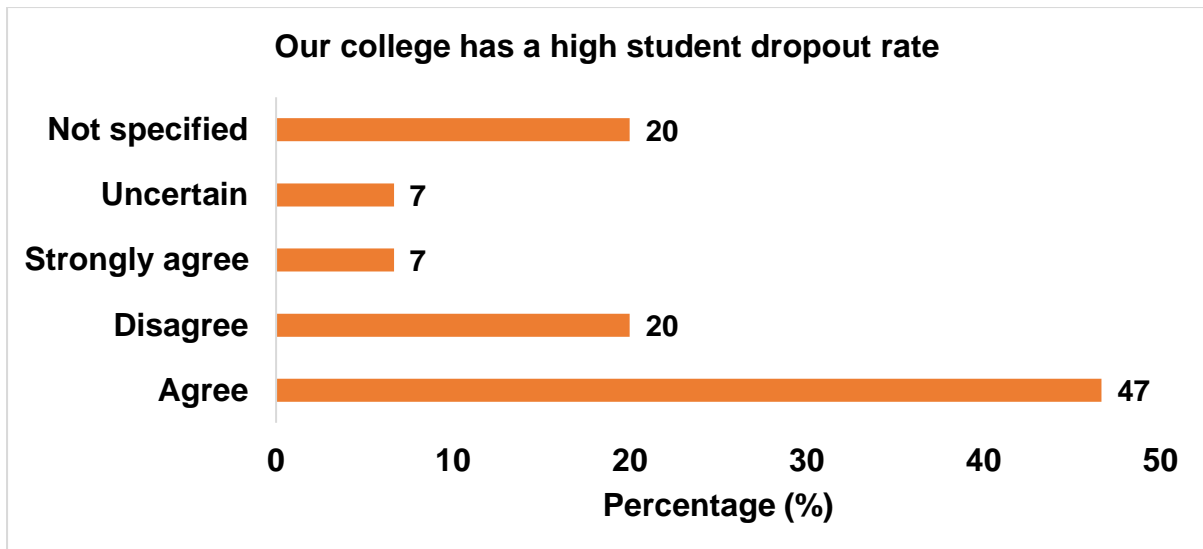


Figure 4.14: Student throughput rate

Figure 4.14 illustrates the opinions of lecturers regarding whether the college under investigation has a high rate of student dropout. As depicted in the figure, a majority of 47% of lecturers concur that the institution in question does indeed have a high rate of student dropout. Conversely, 20% of the surveyed lecturers disagreed that there is a high student dropout rate at the college.

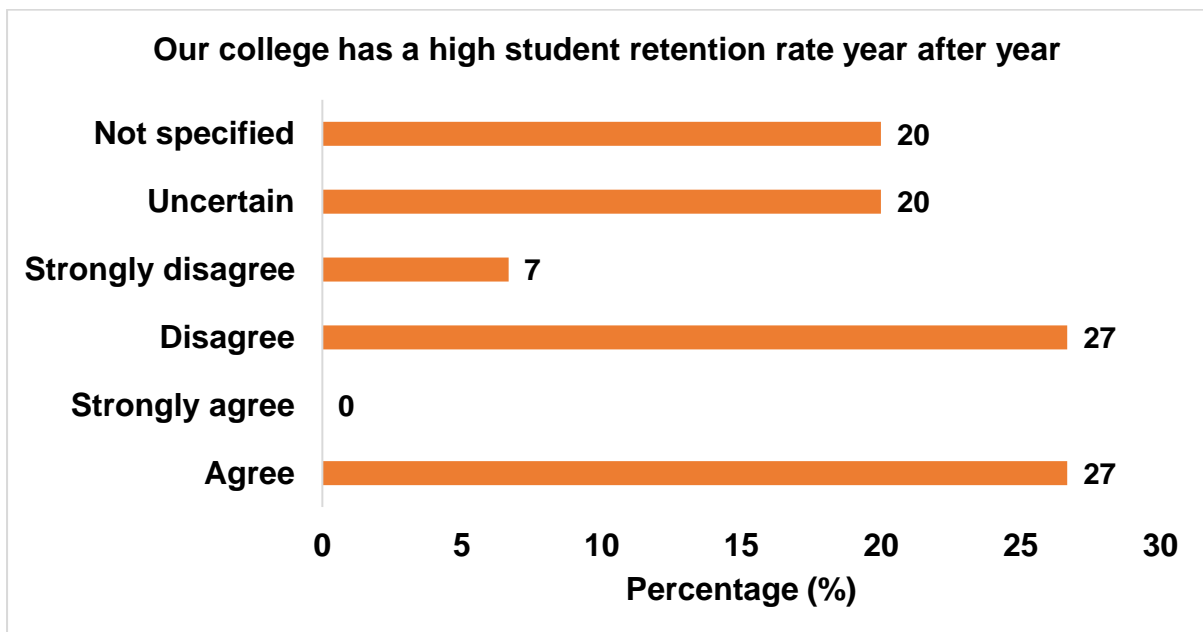


Figure 4.15: Student retention rate

Figure 4.15 illustrates the opinions of lecturers regarding whether the college in question possesses a high student retention rate. As demonstrated by the figure, 27% of the lecturers agreed and 27% disagreed that the college has a high student retention rate.

4.3.5 Objective 4: Recommendations to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college

This sub-section will consider the fourth objective relating to recommendations to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college.

4.3.5.1 Results of content analysis

The open-ended questions were examined in order to achieve objective four (4) of the study. This objective aimed to offer solutions for the avoidance of student protests and for the enhancement of motivation, academic performance, and retention rates at the college. Thematic content analysis was employed, and direct quotations from participants were included to enhance the rigour of the study, as well as to provide support and substantiation for the themes identified from the participants’ responses. Four themes were identified during the analysis process, and the results are detailed below.

Table 4.17: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

Main themes	Sub-themes
1. Theme 1: Financial assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late payment of NSFAS
2. Theme 2: Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Platforms
3. Theme 3: Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protest policies
4. Theme 4: Learning and teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor infrastructure and resources

1. Theme 1: Financial assistance

- **Sub-theme: Late payment of NSFAS**

The findings indicate that late payment of NSFAS is a significant factor contributing to student protests at the college. In order to mitigate or prevent such protests, it is crucial that financial assistance is provided in a timely manner. The study reveals that a lack of financial assistance can lead to students dropping out of their studies. The delay in receiving financial assistance can negatively impact students' performance and motivation, as they are unable to pay for their fees, purchase food, and secure accommodation. Quotes from participants in the study illustrate the importance of timely financial assistance in avoiding student protests, enhancing motivation, increasing retention rates, and improving academic performance.

“Late payment of NSFAS or non-payment.” [Student]

“Late payments of Accommodation and transport allowances” [Student]

“NSFAS is the major cause of protests at campuses. Lack of cooperation between DHET and colleges causes problems. The central office also causes problems as things takes time to be approved and students protests out of frustration. Lack of cooperation and communication between DHET, central office and campus lead to protests as well” [Student]

“NSFAS. Lecturers shortage and misunderstanding issues.” [Student]

“By giving students NSFAS on time. Lecturers must work together with students’ front desk at student support is rude when we want to do our research. NSFAS office must help students instead of giving them attitude because many students dropped out because of financial issues.” [Student]

“Find ways to assist students who don’t have money to pay for accommodation. NSFAS is a main problem the management must always be prepared and always have ways to assist the following academic year. Management must have strategies for assisting students on time.” [Student]

“Give all students NSFAS money on time, make sure that all students do their assignments and test to avoid the pending results.” [Student]

“Nkangala TVET College should make sure that all students who applied for NSFAS receive their allowances that way they will be less protests. They should also make sure that skills campus has all the needed equipment’s for practical.” [Student]

2. Theme 2: Communication

- **Sub-theme: Platforms**

The findings of this study indicate that effective communication from the college is necessary to prevent student protests. The study revealed that students at the college protest due to a lack of communication from the college, which leads to frustration. The participants, particularly the students, recommended that the college engage with them in a timely manner to ensure mutual understanding. The participants suggested various platforms for expressing their needs, such as suggestion boxes, quarterly mass meetings, and surveys. The following quotes from the participants demonstrate the importance of communication in preventing protests:

“According to my opinion the management must give students surveys or questions for them to know the student’s needs, and they must act accordingly to meet all the needs.” [Lecturer]

“According to my perspective, I think management is also trying by all means to meet student’s needs. I also think management should compile a survey for students so that they can find out more about students’ needs and the satisfaction of the current things that management has done already. They can also call a mass meeting with SRC as our leaders to hear from them what is it they can do together to meet student’s needs. [Student]

“According to my point of view the management does not take students seriously. I think there must be a suggestion box or a grievance or suggestion. Then the management must act according to the students need.” [Student]

“Check with the SRC what do students lack. Give students time to express their feeling. Should have suggestion boxes for students. The lecturers should communicate with students.” [Student]

“Have suggestion boxes around the campuses where students will write what difficulties do they face. Have meetings / mass meetings to engage with students.

Have a college bursary where it helps other students financially?” [Student]

“I think that the manager (campus manager) should have a strong communication with the students of Nkangala TVET College so that there will be less protests in the school. The school should meet students’ requirements on time before it gets to a point of protesting.” [Student]

“I think the college should have a good communication with the NSFAS office and deliver students finances at time. The lecturer must attend classes every day.” [Student]

“They must update their students about everything e.g. like NSFAS issues.” [Lecturer]

“To give students what they need on time. To avoid protests, they must communicate with students. They must update all students.” [Lecturer]

“To minimise protest Nkangala TVET College should be honest and communicate with student in every way they can. Communication is the best key to success.” [Student]

3. Theme 3: Legislation

- **Sub-theme: Protest policies**

The results of this study indicate that, in order to prevent disruptions to the academic programme caused by student protests, clear policies must be established. It was found that negotiations between the college and students should take place in order to establish rules governing protests on campus. Furthermore, it was determined that these policies should clearly outline the consequences for disruptive protests to the academic programme. The following quotes from participants highlight the importance of implementing policies as a means of preventing protests:

“Clear policies. thorough planning. staff involvement” [Lecturer]

“College administrators should certainly learn to negotiate rules governing protests action with student’s leadership and have this in place.” [Student]

“Deal with the perpetrators. Students who close gates for other students not to enter the premises are known and nothing is happening to them. Let them follow a correct disciplinary procedure. SRC members must be known and introduced to staff and students. There must be a guideline indicating the duration of years a student can spend at the college. This should be communicated on the student code of conduct or be communicated to them on registration or induction.” [Student]

4. Theme 4: Learning and teaching

- **Sub-theme: Poor infrastructure and resources**

The results of this study indicate that there is a need for the college to improve its learning and teaching facilities. It was found that students’ motivation and academic performance are negatively impacted by a lack of resources, such as poor infrastructure, limited access to the internet, and inadequate staffing. The participants in this study recommended that the college take steps to improve its learning and teaching facilities. The following quotes from participants support these findings:

“Inadequate teaching and learning resources.” [Student]

“Poor infrastructure and availability of learning and teaching resources.” [Student]

“Deliver everything that they promise to student in time. Try to help student who are in need. Provide enough lecturers.” [Student]

“Provide PPEs and ingredients for hospitality on time” [Student]

“Provide student needs. They should put students first. They must prioritise students first. They must get more lecturers.” [Student]

“The Nkangala TVET College should have volunteering lecturers who can assist the students in other subjects because we don’t understand the other lecturer. If not, we will have the higher failure in our studies. I think for the NCV like welding, fitting we must do practical on our school premise.” [Student]

“To provide all students with learning equipment and allowance and to provide fibre for all students.” [Student]

“To supply students with all equipment especially us at skills. To supply students with free WiFi. To give student a plan stays (live) accommodation. To supply students with transport. To allow student to come in the library in weekend to study.” [Student]

“Use the budget for what it is given for e.g. equipment’s. Communicate with the students. Listen to what the students are saying and give a proper and well-reasoned feedback.” [Student]

“They must have enough material to give students and have enough computer rooms for students the class must be very big to carry big number of learners. They must give students NSFAS so that they can have money for transport.” [Student]

“The college needs to at least ask the students if they are still okay with everything and even ask if they need equipment’s, ensure it is delivered in time to avoid protests unnecessary.” [Student]

“They must try to meet the student halfway in helping them in their academics. They should also make it easy for students to register and get textbook on time.” [Student]

“To ensure that lecturers are teaching students every day.” [Student]

4.4 Discussion of findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College. Empirical evidence and insight were provided into factors that contribute to protests and the consequences thereof, as well as recommendations for avoiding student protests and improving motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college. This section discusses the key findings of the study.

4.4.1 Factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College

The findings of this study indicate that there are various factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College. These factors include poor communication, late NSFAS payments, lack of accommodation, and financial exclusions. A study conducted in higher education institutions found that poor communication between students and management creates space for protest

expressions (Morwe et al., 2018). Furthermore, a lack of communication by management can lead to frustration among students, resulting in protests. In South Africa, protests have been used in schools as early as the 1970s to communicate grievances when students felt their needs were not being addressed (Ntshoe, 2002).

Financial assistance is also a significant contributor to protests in higher education institutions. This study found that late NSFAS payments by the college resulted in protests. This is likely due to the fact that the majority of students at the college come from poor family backgrounds and rely solely on NSFAS for financial support. This finding is consistent with the work of Hamid and Singaram (2016), who found that funding is one of the main reasons for protests in institutions of teaching and learning.

Additionally, this study found that student protests are intensified by the response of college management when it comes to student accommodation. A study has found that due to the historic nature of protests in South Africa, students perceive protesting as a solution to any problem they face at the college (Badat, 2016). This study found that students at Nkangala TVET College perceive protesting as a solution to any problem they face at the college.

4.4.2 The extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance

The extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance was investigated in this study. The findings indicate that protests at the Nkangala TVET College have a negative impact on teaching and learning. In 2021, the college had a 29% throughput rate, which can be attributed to the disruptions caused by student protests. Both student and lecturer participants reported that protests affected class attendance, student motivation, and academic performance.

Ferguson (2017) detailed how academic activities are halted and time for teaching and learning is lost during protests. This is consistent with the findings of this study, as participants expressed that class attendance is greatly affected during protests. Students who are not protesting are also prevented from attending lectures by those who are protesting.

According to Broussard and Garrison (2004), high levels of motivation and involvement in the classroom are associated with lower dropout rates, low failure rates, and higher levels of student academic success. Participants in this study also reported that they knew of other students who had left the college due to a lack of motivation brought on by the continued protests. Furthermore, Broussard and Garrison (2004) found that a student's passion for learning is typically recognised as one of the most crucial variables, if not the primary predictor, for their academic success in any academic context.

The students who took part in this survey also mentioned that they perform worse during campus protests. This result is in line with the findings of Bosman (2012), who demonstrated that learning and motivation have a close relationship and that motivation is an internal condition that motivates, guides, and maintains behaviour. However, Pintrich and Schunk (2002) observed that students' performance is influenced by what they do and learn as well as by their motivation.

In conclusion, the low academic performance at the Nkangala TVET College is attributed to disruptions in academic activity and a lack of enthusiasm, both of which have an impact on academic performance at the college (Bosman, 2012, p. 45; Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Ferguson, 2017; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

4.4.3 *The extent to which student protests affect retention rate at the college*

This study found that 15% of the students enrolled did not write their exams in 2021. Furthermore, it was discovered that the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) level 2 had the highest enrolment of students, but with few remaining to repeat level 2 or progress to level 3. The study also revealed that the majority of students across all NCV levels were not completing their studies. The disruption in academic activities was found to negatively affect student motivation and willingness to remain at the college and finish their studies, resulting in high dropout rates and low retention rates. Additionally, the study found that student protests at the college were linked to low class attendance and a lack of motivation to continue attending college, having an impact on student retention rates. 58% of the students who participated in the study indicated that they had at one point considered dropping out of college, with 44% citing financial burden as a factor in their consideration. The lecturer participants in the study

also reported that a majority of their students were dropping out of college, resulting in low retention rates for the institution.

4.4.4 Recommendations to avoid student protest and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college

The study found that there is a need to establish communication channels between students and college management. These communication channels, recommended by students, include mass meetings, suggestion boxes, and surveys which will allow management and students to engage on issues that affect the students at the college. Furthermore, the study found that protest policies can help manage protests at the college effectively and prevent them from affecting academic activities.

Research conducted by Muhamedi and Ariffin (2017) found that communication channels have a substantial impact on how higher education institution executives communicate and act to advance the organisation. They also discovered that senior management, lecturers, and students all have a dynamic relationship thanks to communication. If used effectively, these communication methods also increase staff and student happiness, which is crucial for the institution's performance and helps maintain motivation for achieving long-term quality objectives.

The results of this study were supported by research conducted at higher education institutions, which concluded that institutional rules are essential for controlling behaviour (Cooper et al., 2009). Behaviours such as protests, particularly in institutions of higher learning, need to be regulated due to their nature of disrupting academic activities and resulting in poor academic performance. This study found that there are applicable solutions to student protests, including establishing effective communication channels that will give students a platform to communicate their concerns and address issues in a constructive manner.

4.5 Relevance of the theoretical framework to the study

The theoretical framework employed in this research was the attribution theory, as it has implications for academic motivation. According to Mwamwenda (2004, p. 231), attribution theory outlines perceptions, motives and opinions of students, which affect

their performance. The fundamental tenet of attribution theory as it relates to academic motivation, as stated by Mwamwenda (2004, p. 231), is that students' own judgements or attributions for success or failure impact the amount of effort they will put forth on the activity in the future. Mwamwenda (2004, p. 231) further asserts that such students force themselves to pay attentively, reflect deeply, and recall techniques that have previously worked for them. Alternatively, students may adopt a powerless viewpoint in which they emphasise their own shortcomings, frequently blame their difficulties on their incapability, and exhibit boredom and anxiousness. Their performance is hampered by these inclinations.

If failure is attributed to a consistent factor (such as low ability), students will believe that the same result will occur again in the future. Conversely, students will think that a different result is likely to happen the following time if failure is linked to an unstable factor (such as low effort). As a result, these students will be able to find the drive to put in the effort necessary to rectify the situation (O'Donnell et al., 2005, pp. 148-151). The attribution theory is pertinent to this study, as it suggests that students' perceptions of their learning environment will influence their behaviour. It should be an aim of college administration to make and encourage correct and impartial attributions, so that students' successes may be replicated and faults can be fixed at their root. Violence and protests in colleges are usually committed by students with hostile and pessimistic attribution styles. These students might have learned to be helpless as institutional policies and rules as well as leader's behaviour can make students feel that success is unattainable and they become demotivated. Students should be encouraged to be resilient even when things are difficult. Students who have a history of regularly attributing external, stable causes for the unfortunate occurrences in their lives tend to be the ones that carry out student protests.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the survey data obtained from the students and lecturers. The SPSS version 8 was used to analyse the data and tables and figures were used to display the results. Using content analysis, open-ended questions were analysed and the results presented as themes and sub-themes. The findings were interpreted and discussed to answer the research questions and fulfil the research objectives. The

study's summary, conclusion, and recommendations are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of student protests on retention rates, academic performance, and student motivation at Nkangala TVET College. The objective of this chapter is to examine the research problem and provide a summary of the findings. Furthermore, the study's contributions and recommendations are presented in this chapter, along with an examination of the study's limitations.

5.2 A brief review of the research problem

In recent years, there has been a discernible increase in student protests at TVET colleges in South Africa. Such protests often result in the disruption of academic activities, which can have significant negative consequences for students. As Akpanke (2016, p. 56) notes, interruptions to academic activities can lead to severe setbacks in students' studies, as well as difficulties in extending their study lengths. Students who are unable to attend college for extended periods due to protests may have difficulty adjusting upon their return, with some opting to drop out and others struggling to succeed in final examinations. This study was undertaken to establish the extent to which student protests at Nkangala TVET College affect motivation, academic performance, and retention rates.

5.3 Summary of the research findings

The findings of this study are summarised in this section.

5.3.1 Key literature review findings

The findings from the literature review indicate that higher education institutions experience student protests year after year, with a history dating back to the times of apartheid (Noyoo, 2018, p. 2). The literature suggests that the causes of student protests include issues such as students' inability to pay tuition fees, lack of access to financial aid or delayed payment of allowances, and infrastructure and accommodation

needs. Financial support is the major factor identified in the literature as a cause of student protests. Cosser et al. (2011, p. 39) also identified other causes of student protests such as poor management of institutions, poor administration and record keeping, and dissatisfaction with lecturers or other staff members. Additionally, the literature suggests that student protests are a result of the lack of transformation of higher education institutions due to issues of governance and management. The CIHE report (2017, p. 79) indicates that institution governance and management, as well as institutional culture and climate, can contribute to the causes of student protests. The beliefs, attitudes, values and norms that underlie institutional climate have an impact on institutional practices and operations. When the institutional climate and culture are positive, students tend to feel safe and believe that all stakeholders are working together for their well-being and are more cooperative. However, if the climate and culture of the institution are hostile, students tend to respond in a hostile way, such as through protests or demonstrations.

The literature clearly indicates that student protests have an impact on students' motivation, academic performance, and institutions' retention rates. Motivation is a driving force behind any behaviour or action, and Kusrkar et al. (2013, p. 13) indicate that performance is a function of motivation, with motivation enhancing performance. Factors that determine individual students' motivation levels include their self-concept, as students who view themselves as capable tend to be more motivated and achieve academically, unlike students who do not have a positive view of their abilities and are viewed as internally unmotivated, which can negatively impact their academic performance. To stay motivated and achieve acceptable performance standards, students should set goals or follow those set by their lecturers or institutions. Lecturers' motivational state and how they interact with students are also identified as important motivational factors, which also have an impact on students' academic performance. The statistics on throughput rates, dropout rates, and institutions' low retention rates in the literature are alarming.

5.3.2 Key empirical findings

This section discussed the key empirical findings of this study.

5.3.2.1 Factors contributing to student protests at Nkangala TVET College

The study results revealed that a lack of responsiveness by college management to student grievances is a major contributor to student protests at Nkangala TVET College. Other factors identified as contributing to protests at the college include late or non-payment of NSFAS allowances (see Table 7) and a lack of teaching and learning materials (see Table 8). Furthermore, students participating in the study reported that a lack of student accommodation (see Table 8) also contributes to protests at the college. Lecturers participating in the study also identified the above factors as contributors to protests (see Figure 6 and 7). These findings are supported by previous studies, such as Samuels (2020), who highlights that while the ideology behind free higher education in public institutions is admirable, the problem is that NSFAS allowances are not paid on time. Due to students' poor backgrounds, which was one of the main reasons for the demand for free higher education, students cannot afford food or accommodation, leading them to resort to protesting.

5.3.2.2 The impact of student protests on motivation and academic performance at the college

The findings of the study revealed that protests at the college have a negative impact on student motivation (see Table 10) and academic performance (see Table 12). This finding is supported by statistics obtained from the college (see Table 5) which show that fewer students are completing their NCV level 4 compared to those who were registered for their NCV level 2. This is in line with the DHET report (2018) which states that the national academic performance of TVET colleges is low and the statistics in the report also show a large difference in the number of students completing NCV level 4 compared to those who registered 3 years ago for NCV level 2. The study shows that protests at the college, due to disruptions in teaching and learning time, negatively affect academic processes, student motivation, student academic performance and throughput rate.

5.3.2.3 *The impact of student protests on retention rates at the college*

According to college statistics, while more students are being enrolled, a significant number (see Table 4) are not even writing exams, suggesting that they may have dropped out of college as a result of a lack of motivation. The study found that students at the college dropout due to a lack of financial assistance. The DHET (2018) report on TVET college registration numbers, comparing them with those who wrote exams and completed qualifications in the given year, revealed alarming results showing poor academic performance and a reduction in the number of students moving to higher levels. This can be an indication of high failure rates, high dropout rates, and low retention of students by the institutions.

5.3.2.4 *Recommendations to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rates at the college*

Both students and lecturers highlighted that improving communication channels between the college management and students would help to reduce the number of protests. Additionally, fast-tracking the payment of allowances was seen as a solution to protests by students and lecturers who participated in the study. Lastly, both participants mentioned that having policies in place to regulate protests at the college would be the ultimate solution in ensuring that academic processes are not affected. This will ensure that students are motivated and improve academic performance.

5.4 Conclusions

The literature and data gathered constitute the foundation for the study's conclusions. The first objective of this study sought to establish factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College. The study has revealed that factors such as delay or late payment of NSFAS contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College. The late or delayed financial pay-out from NSFAS experienced by the students has been at the centre of protests at the college. This conclusion is based on the literature and the study's findings. The study found that students opt to protest because they feel that management is not communicating with them when it comes to addressing the problems they put forward. It is therefore recommended that management, administrators, and lecturers work together to establish effective communication

channels with the students to ensure that their needs are heard and attended to. Furthermore, administration rules around the payment of NSFAS need to be established in order to promote accountability from all stakeholders. This would help to alleviate protests as there will be a turnaround time on NSFAS payments, which would be a point of reference in addressing students' queries. It is intended that this study would help to build strategic approaches that establish efficient communication channels and identify strategies that can avoid delays in the delivery of NSFAS allowances. The management of the institution and other stakeholders are also expected to benefit greatly from this study in order to ensure that the college has resources such as WIFI and suitable accommodation, which were also mentioned as contributing factors to student protests.

The second objective of the study sought to establish the extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college. The lack of student motivation was found to be due to unaccepted student protests at any given time, which cause class disruptions. Thus, this study revealed that protests have a negative impact on student motivation and academic performance. The study revealed the significance of promoting intrinsic motivation in students, in conjunction with extrinsic factors, to enhance students' motivation. Lecturers should understand the role they play in motivating students and maximise individual students' motivating factors such as positive self-concept and goal setting. The institution and the lecturers should understand the effects of protests on student motivation and academic performance and try different motivational strategies to motivate students after a break in studies due to protests. A majority of the study participants (students and lecturers) expressed how protests negatively affect student motivation, resulting in poor academic performance and ultimately student dropout and low retention rates.

The third objective of this study sought to establish the extent to which student protests affect retention rates at the college. In determining the extent to which student protests affect retention rates at the college, the findings of the study revealed that the college had less than 30% of the NCV level 2 students enrolled in 2019 who completed their NCV level 4 studies in 2021. Additionally, 15% of the students enrolled did not write their exams in 2021. The lack of policies and procedures to manage student protests contributes to a lower throughput rate at the college and some students not even

writing their exams. To effectively deal with student protests and maximise retention rates, strategies to prevent student protests need to be implemented. As stated in the literature and the findings of the study, most students coming from poor backgrounds drop out once assistance is not received timeously over a period of time.

The fourth objective of the study sought to provide suggestions to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rates at the college. To address the negative impact of protests, it is important that the college establishes measures that can contribute to preventing protests. The college management should engage with the students from time to time and ensure that students have the necessary knowledge of NSFAS processes, as there seems to be a knowledge gap when it comes to what causes delays in payments and what NSFAS and the college are doing to prevent these. The college should also invite NSFAS to come and educate students about their processes and some of the factors that cause delays in their payments. Engagement of this nature would also help NSFAS to understand where the students are coming from, as some solely rely on NSFAS for their studies. Such empowerment would make it possible to avoid student protests, which affect academic proceedings. The improvement of communication channels and establishing procedures for payments would ensure effective academic proceedings at the college. Effective communication between the college management and students is needed to try and minimise protests, which have been found to negatively affect the institution's retention rate, individual student motivation, and academic performance.

5.5 Recommendations made on the basis of the findings of the study

The recommendations that follow are made.

5.5.1 *Recommendation for policy*

The first recommendation of this study suggests that student motivation and academic performance would be improved if student protests were eliminated or minimised. The student protests can be eliminated by implementing the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) guidelines and policies, which should be easily accessible by all stakeholders. If the NSFAS guidelines or policies have flaws, they should be corrected

as a matter of agency to accommodate student demands. NSFAS should have timeframes for allowance payments for each year, and these should be documented or gazetted so that there are clear guidelines on when students can expect payments. This will further ensure accountability between NSFAS and colleges. Moreover, the college and students should draft guidelines or policies that will regulate protests at the college. The students need to know the proper procedures to follow before a protest is initiated. When protests are regulated, the college management will know in advance of attempts to start a protest and will devise strategies to solve the problems and prevent protests.

5.5.2 Recommendation for practice

This research informs the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college staff and other concerned stakeholders on the impact of protests on student motivation, academic performance and retention rates at Nkangala TVET College. The study recommends ways that can be used to minimise protests at colleges. For example, effective communication across the board is very important in dealing with student protests, as most of the time negotiations and service delivery are the only way to stop planned protests.

It is recommended that NSFAS be transparent about how and when payments will be made and adhere to those dates to minimise students' dissatisfaction and protests. Issues of poverty and inequality of students due to their social background need to be recognised and dealt with. As long as there is financial underfunding, the prevalence of student protests may never be dealt with.

The college management should have a clear budget and use the intended budgets effectively. The researcher recommends that aspects such as teaching and learning materials should be prioritised in the budget, followed by long-term budget plans to develop infrastructure and students' accommodation.

5.5.3 Recommendation for further research

Future research: The study revealed the negative impact of protests on student motivation, academic performance and retention rate in a TVET college. The results

can thus be utilised as a starting point for further research, as no study is ever complete on its own; all research studies are meant to suggest new lines of inquiry.

The following topics are suggested for further research:

- The role of student support services (SSS) in enhancing students' motivation and academic performance.
- The effects of motivational strategies on National Certificate Vocational (NCV) students to promote academic achievement.
- The importance of career guidance for students at TVET colleges.
- The impact of the lack of relationship between TVET colleges and industry.
- The challenges and issues in TVET colleges which hinder lecturers' motivation.

5.6 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted at Nkangala TVET College in the Nkangala district of Mpumalanga Province. The limitation of the study is that Nkangala TVET College has five campuses, but only three of the campuses were selected for the study. Only a sample of students from Nkangala TVET College's three campuses, which were Middelburg, Witbank, and Mpondozankomo campus, of all the five campuses participated in the study. This is because of the long distances to travel to the other two campuses, Waterval Boven and CN Mahlangu campus. This study does not purport to have identified all the elements that influence student protests, lack of motivation, low academic performance, and low retention rates in the study's focus region. The results laid the groundwork for further investigation into the study's subject. The study participants were limited to students and lecturers.

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APPENDIX A: Research ethics clearance certificate



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/11/10

Ref: **2021/11/10/50973339/30/AM**

Name: Ms BM Thoka

Student No.: 50973339

Dear Ms BM Thoka

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/11/10 to 2024/11/10

Researcher(s): Name: Ms BM Thoka
E-mail address: 50973339@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0764198838

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr TD Sikhwari
E-mail address: sikhwaritd@gmail.com
Telephone: 0729352666

Title of research:

The impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Nkangala TVET college, Mpumalanga province.

Qualification: MEd Psychology of Education

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 2021/11/10 to 2024/11/10.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/11/10 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.



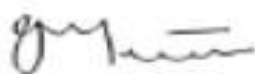
University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA, 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. 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.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/11/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2021/11/10/50973339/30/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 Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



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

APPENDIX B: Permission to carry out the study



higher education
& training
Department
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Central Office

Central & Northey
P.O.Box 2282
WITBANK
1014



☎ 013 690 1430
☎ 013 690 1450
✉ email: info@nkangala.ac.za

Subject: Permission for conducting research

Date: 09 March 2022

Dear. Ms BM Thoka

I am pleased to inform that I give you permission in respect of your research request. Your initiative is appreciated and the college is ready to support this research.

For conducting the research; may you please liaise with the college and ensure that all protocols are followed, and privacy regulations are adhered to before conducting the research.

We wish you all the best in your research.

Mr. JJ Modishane

Acting College Principal

Date

APPENDIX C: Request for permission to conduct research in public TVET college



higher education
& training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1:
APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1.	Title (Dr /Mr /Mrs /Ms)	MS	
1.2	Name and surname	BELLA MMAPATJI THOKA	
1.3	Postal address	P. O BOX 1482 SOVENGA 0727	
1.4	Contact details	Tel	076 41988 38
		Cell	073 024 0403
		Fax	N/A
		Email	thokabella@gmail.com
1.5	Name of institution where enrolled	UNISA	
1.6	Field of study	PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION	
1.7	Qualification registered for	Please tick relevant option:	
		Doctoral Degree (PhD)	
		Master's Degree	X
		Other (please specify)	

2. DETAILS OF THE STUDY

2.1	Title of the study	The impact of student protest on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Ntlangala TVET college, Mpumalanga Province.
-----	--------------------	--

2.2	Purpose of the study	The study seek to investigate the impact of student protest on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Ntlangala TVET college.
-----	----------------------	---

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

3. PARTICIPANTS AND TYPE/S OF ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE COLLEGE

Please indicate the types of research activities you are planning to undertake in the College, as well as the categories of persons who are expected to participate in your study (for example, lecturers, students, College Principals, Deputy Principals, Campus Heads, Support Staff, Heads of Departments), including the number of participants for each activity.

		Expected participants (e.g. students, lecturers, College Principal)	Number of participants
3.1	Complete questionnaires	a) Deputy Principal academic	01
		b) Curriculum Manager	01
		c) Student Support Manager	01
		d) Campus Manager	09
		e) Students	200
3.2	Participate in individual interviews	Expected participants	Number of participants
		a)	
		b)	
		c)	
		d)	
3.3	Participate in focus group discussions/ workshops	Expected participants	Number of participants
		a)	
		b)	
		c)	
		d)	
3.4	Complete standardised tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)	Expected participants	Number of participants
		a)	
		b)	
		c)	
		d)	
3.5	Undertake observations Please specify		
3.6	Other Please specify		

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

4. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM THE COLLEGE

<i>Please indicate the type of support required from the College (Please tick relevant option/s)</i>		
Type of support	Yes	No
4.1		X
4.2		X
4.3	✓	
<i>Please specify the documents required below</i> Academic performance of students records Retention rate records		
4.4		X
<i>Please specify the data fields required, below</i>		
4.5		X
<i>Other, please specify below</i>		

5. DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION


<i>The following 2 (two) documents must be attached as a prerequisite for approval to undertake research in the College</i>	
5.1	Ethics Clearance Certificate issued by a University Ethics Committee
5.2	Research proposal approved by a University

6. DECLARATION BY THE APPLICANT

I undertake to use the information that I acquire through my research, in a balanced and a responsible manner. I furthermore take note of, and agree to adhere to the following conditions:

- a) I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the said College/s and participants in order not to interrupt the programme of the said College/s.
- b) I agree that involvement by participants in my research study is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate in my research study.
- c) I will obtain signed consent forms from participants prior to any engagement with them.
- d) I will obtain written parental consent of students under 18 years of age, if they are expected to participate in my research.
- e) I will inform participants about the use of recording devices such as tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.
- f) I will honour the right of participants to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and respect for human dignity at all times. Participants will not be identifiable in any way from the results of my research, unless written consent is obtained otherwise.
- g) I will not include the names of the said College/s or research participants in my research report, without the written consent of each of the said individuals and/or College/s.
- h) I will send the draft research report to research participants before finalisation, in order to validate the accuracy of the information in the report.
- i) I will not use the resources of the said College/s in which I am conducting research (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones), for my research study.
- j) Should I require data for this study, I will first request data directly from the Department of Higher Education and Training. I will request data from the College/s only if the DHET does not have the required data.
- k) I will include a disclaimer in any report, publication or presentation arising from my research, that the findings and recommendations of the study do not represent the views of the said College/s or the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- l) I will provide a summary of my research report to the Head of the College/s in which I undertook my research, for information purposes.

I declare that all statements made in this application are true and accurate. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.

SIGNATURE	
DATE	19/10/2021

APPENDIX D: Request for permission to conduct research at Nkangala TVET College

The Principal
Nkangala TVET College
Private Bag X 7215
Witbank
1035
Tel: +27136584700
Cell: 0829404803

Dear Sir

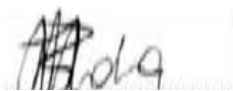
I, Bella Mmapatji Thoka currently enrolled at UNISA for a Master of Education degree; I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Sikhwari T.D., humbly request permission to conduct a research study at Nkangala TVET College in Mpondozankomo campus, Witbank campus, and Middelburg campus. The study is entitled: THE IMPACT OF STUDENT PROTESTS ON MOTIVATION, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION RATE AT NKANGALA TVET COLLEGE, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

The study aims to investigate the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Nkangala TVET college. The research will involve the deputy principal academic, curriculum manager, and student support manager from the central office. 3-campus managers and 6 HOD's from the 3 selected campuses. Also, 200 students doing NCV level 4 from the 3 selected campuses. Findings from the study will assist in revealing factors that lead to student protests and help in understanding the extent to which student protests can hinder Nkangala TVET college students' motivation, academic performance, and retention rate. The study will also help Nkangala TVET college management and the DHET with strategies that can be put in place to reduce or control student protests. The study will help to minimise student protests, high dropout rates and optimise academic performance and high retention rates.

There is no anticipated risk of physical harm, psychological distress, and discomfort, social disadvantages, harm to financial status, exploitation, or any form of coercion to participants in this study. There will be no form of compensation or incentives for participating in the study. A report on the key findings of the study will be sent to the Nkangala College Principal on successful completion.

For any questions relating to the study, I can be contacted on 0730240403/0764198838 or email to thokabella@gmail.com. My supervisor DR TD Sikhwari on 0729352666 or email on sikhwaritd@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely



Thoka B.M
Researcher

APPENDIX E: Consent form for participants

Research title:

The impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Nkangala TVET college, Mpumalanga province.

Researcher: Thoka B M (UNISA) MEd student

Supervisor: Sikhwari T D

Dear prospective participant

You are being asked to participate in a research study that aims to find out how student protests impact on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Nkangala TVET college, Mpumalanga province. You are selected as a possible participant as you are a student or management at the institution. A request is sought that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out the factors that contribute to student protests at Nkangala TVET College and to determine the extent to which student protests affect motivation and academic performance at the college. To also determine the extent to which student protests affect the retention rate at the college and provide recommendations, if needed, to avoid student protests and improve motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at the college.

Description of the study procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a questionnaire that is used as a survey to collect data for the study.

Risks or discomfort

There are no foreseeable or expected risks associated with this study.

Benefits of being in the study

There are no monetary benefits to be gained from the study

Confidentiality

The participants will fill the questionnaires anonymously and no personal information will be requested from participants. All the research records and electronic information will be kept safely and only used for research purposes.

Right to refuse or withdraw

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher or the institution. You have the right to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the study.

Right to ask questions and report concerns

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by the researcher before, during, or after the study.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to voluntarily participate in the study and you have read and understood the information provided above.

Participant signature ----- Date -----

Researcher signature ----- Date -----

APPENDIX F: Questionnaire for students

Questionnaire No.....

INTRODUCTION:

This questionnaire seeks to gather your views on the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance, and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS	<p>I. This is a questionnaire and not a test, therefore there is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion is what is wanted.</p> <p>II. Make sure that you answer all the questions.</p> <p>III. Provide your choice to each statement honestly. Remember the questionnaire is anonymous and confidential.</p> <p>IV. Do not write your name on the questionnaire.</p>
-----------------------------	--

SECTION 1		Respondent's Biographical Data	
1.1	Gender	Male	Female
		1	2
1.2	How old were you on your last birthday?		
1.3	Which programme are you registered in?		
	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	1	
	Engineering and Related Design	2	
	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	3	
	Hospitality	4	
	Tourism	5	
	Office Administration	6	
	Information Technology and Computer Science	7	
	Finance, Economics, and Accounting	8	
1.4	How many years have you been registered in this NCV programme		

Cross the number on the right, next to the course you registered for

INSTRUCTIONS	<p>Indicate the extent to which you Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree by writing the appropriate number of your choice in the open box on the right. The number indicates your agreement with each item.</p>
---------------------	---

Strongly Agree=5	Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
------------------	---------	-------------	------------	---------------------

Example

1	I am a South African citizen	5
---	------------------------------	---

5 is an indication that you Strongly

SECTION 2		Factors influencing student protests			
Strongly Agree=5		Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
2.1	College management takes student concerns seriously only when they protest				
2.2	We protest because of the bad management of the college				
2.3	I can protest against a lecturer who does not come to class to teach				
2.4	I can protest due to the lack of teaching and learning material				
2.5					
2.6	I can initiate or partake in a student protest if my NFSAS allowance is not paid or delayed				
2.7	I can initiate or partake in a student protest if I can't pay for my tuition fees and don't qualify for NFSAS				
2.8	The lack of proper student accommodation can be a good enough reason for me to protest				
2.9	I can initiate or partake in a protest if most students are not to be registered due to financial exclusion				
2.1	I can protest because the curriculum is too long and difficult to finish on time				
2.1	I think the Nkangala TVET college management is doing everything they can to make the college a good place for learning				

SECTION 3		The impact of student protests on motivation			
Strongly Agree=5		Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
3.1	Students protests negatively impact on my motivation				
3.2	Lack of financial support affects my motivation to continue studying				
3.3	I try my best to study on my own during disruption in class attendance				
3.4	I enjoy the company of my fellow students and learn best in such an environment				
3.5	I feel that students are doing enough in helping each other with academic tasks during protests				
3.6	I am registered at the college just to get the NFSAS money				
3.7	I am an independent learner and I don't wait for lecturers for information				
3.8	I lose interest in my studies once we start having protests				
3.9	I feel that I am responsible and accountable for my academic work				
3.10	I am not afraid to consult lecturers in their offices for clarity on issues that I do not understand				

SECTION 4		The impact of student protests on academic performance			
Strongly Agree=5		Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
4.1	I have completed all my previous year's modules				
4.2	When we have student protests, classroom attendance is disrupted and this negatively affects my academic performance				
4.3	After protests, I find it hard or difficult to cope with my studies.				
4.4	I am satisfied with my academic work with or without student protests				
4.5	I feel that I am not good at all in my academic work				
4.6	I am proud of my academic performance				
4.7	My academic performance does not measure up to the standard of others				
4.8	After protests and normal classes continue, lecturers only teach what is to be assessed due to a lack of time				
4.9	If we have less protests at our campuses, student academic performance will be higher than it is currently.				

SECTION 5		The impact of student protests on student retention rate, throughput, and students' possibility to dropout			
Strongly Agree=5		Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
5.1	I have considered dropping out of the programme				
5.2	It is taking me longer to complete my study than the expected maximum (3 years) duration.				
5.3	I am allowed to register subjects in two different levels.(e.g. level 3 & level 4)				
5.4	I have some subjects registered for in level 2/3				
5.5	The financial burden is sometimes just too much and I want to quit college altogether				
5.6	I feel that I have a sense of purpose and direction as a student				
5.7	I know of my previous classmates that dropped out of college without completing their studies				
5.8	I will not drop out of college no matter how difficult things get				
5.9	I support Nkangala TVET college when talking to strangers (other people)				
5.10	I get disappointed if I go to class and the lecturer is not available				
5.11	Over the years of studying at the college, I have lost interest in my studies				
5.12	I give up on studying when I have to study under pressure				
5.13	With continuous student protests, I am still proud to be a student at Nkangala TVET college				

What strategies can you give Nkangala TVET college on how to minimize student protests

APPENDIX G: Questionnaire for lecturers

Questionnaire No.....

INTRODUCTION:

This questionnaire seeks to gather your views on the impact of student protests on motivation, academic performance and retention rate at Nkangala TVET College.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS	<p>This is a questionnaire and not a test, therefore there is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion is what is wanted.</p> <p>Make sure that you answer all the questions.</p> <p>Provide your choice to each statement honestly. Remember the questionnaire is anonymous and confidential.</p> <p>Do not write your name on the questionnaire.</p>
-----------------------------	--

SECTION 1	Respondent's Biographical Data		
1.1	Gender	Male	Female
		1	2
1.2	Highest academic qualification?		
1.3	Do you possess a teaching qualification: YES/NO		
1.4	Number of years' experience in management		

INSTRUCTIONS	<p>Indicate the extent to which you strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree or strongly disagree by writing the appropriate number of your choice in the open box on the right. The number indicates your agreement with each item.</p>
---------------------	--

Strongly Agree=5	Agree=4	Uncertain=3	Disagree=2	Strongly Disagree=1
------------------	---------	-------------	------------	---------------------

SECTION 2	Factors influencing student protests		
2.1	Students feel more heard when they protest than when negotiating with management		
2.2	NFSAS funding or lack of is the major reason for students protests on our campuses		
2.3	Is it frequent that students protest about a lecturer or staff member who is in-competent in their job?		
2.4	I think the Nkangala TVET college management is doing everything they can to make the college a good place for learning		
2.5	Students protest for lack of proper student accommodation		
2.6	Financial exclusion is amongst the major causes of student protests		
2.7	Some students protest due to curriculum or course content		
2.8	Management try by all means to deal effectively with all students concerns to avoid protects		

Add or comment -----

SECTION 3	The impact of student protests on motivation		
3.1	Lack of financial support affects students motivation to continue studying		
3.2	Most students can study alone when there are distractions in class attendance		
3.3	Most student protests are unreasonable and unnecessary		
3.4	Students learn best in the company of their fellow students		
3.5	I feel that students are doing enough in helping each other with academic tasks during protests		
3.6	Our students are independent learners who do not just wait for lecturers for information		
3.7	Our students feel responsible and accountable for their studies		
3.8	Our students lose interest in their studies once protests start		

3.9	The continuous student protests make students not to be proud to be at Nkangala TVET college.	
3.10	Our lecturers are friendly and helpful	
3.11	There is a good relationship between students and management	
3.12	I support Nkangala TVET college when talking to strangers (other people)	

Add or comment -----

SECTION 4		The impact of student protests on academic performance
4.1	Distractions in classroom attendance due to protests negatively affect students' academic performance	
4.2	Financial problems negatively affect students' academic performance	
4.3	Students fail to adjust well to their studies after a protest	
4.4	We are proud of our college academic performance	
4.5	I am satisfied with my academic work with or without students protest	
4.6	After protests, I find it hard or difficult to cope with my studies	
4.7	Our college academic performance does not measure up to the standard of other colleges	
4.8	When there are distractions in normal class attendance, our students will try to catch up with the work that they missed	

Add or comment -----

SECTION 5		The impact of student protests on retention rate, throughput and possibility to dropout
5.1	Our college has the highest student dropout rate.	
5.2	Most of our students take longer time to complete their studies than the expected maximum (3 years) duration.	
5.3	Students are allowed to renew registration even after failing to complete their studies within the maximum (3 years) duration.	
5.4	Spending longer years of studying at the college, cause students to lose interest in their studies	
5.5	I feel that our students have a sense of purpose and direction	
5.6	The financial burden is sometimes just too much for students and they end up wanting to quit college altogether	
5.7	students attend their classes regularly	
5.8	students get disappointed if they go to class and the lecturer is not available	
5.9	Students give up on their studies when they have to study under pressure	

Add or comment -----

APPENDIX H: Proof of language editing

LET'S EDIT

EDITING CERTIFICATE

27 January 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DECLARATION: Editing of Dissertation

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