

**FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO POOR ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN TVET COLLEGES: A CASE STUDY**

by

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DECLARATION

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

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.


SIGNATURE

25-02-2020
DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Maria Patricia Mohudi and my two sons, Onkgopotse and Kgomotso Ngwato.

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Re Mafolo a molemo, re ba Bontlatlabala a Selete sa Tlabe,

A ntlatlala ge a feta le tlala moreneng,

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Matumo o tumile ko koa moshate,

O tumile ko koa Mabyana Masoana,

Re ba bo Gapile Poo, Mogatsa oa Gopane,

O a Hlaola, re ba bo sengalla Matebeleng,

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E tsoe e le leka bomo ba masogana,

Thantsi ngoana Ramalemane,

Nna Ramalemane a kopa.

Asiao, Kgabo!

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EIC	Electrical Infrastructure and Construction
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of department
L	Lecturer
N	Nated
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NSFAS	National Student Fund Scheme
R	Researcher
SL	Senior Lecturer
S	Student
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

KEY-WORDS

Academic Performance or Academic Achievement

Student-Related factors

Teacher-Related factors

Family-Related factors

Failure or Success

Drop-outs

Attitudes

Mainstream schools

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges in the North West Province. A qualitative method of one-on-one interviews was utilised to collect data from participants. The study revealed that poor funding or late payment of NSFAS constitutes the demotivation of students, which results to poor performance. On the other hand, the lecturers also blame the poor results on students' lack of motivation. The quality of students that register for NC(V) programmes do not match the curriculum as the mainstream schools do not adequately prepare them for the college curriculum. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the top achieving students be awarded with incentives to motivate them. The NSFAS Bursaries ought to pay-out early in the year so that students may have enough funds for their transport and other college related needs. The students' support services ought to be made available for the low performing students.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the past years, the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges has undergone significant curricular and institutional changes. These changes have to an extent affected the academic results of TVET Colleges. This research project explores factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges. Background information is provided. A problem statement will follow the aim of the study and the research question. The theoretical framework and method of research will also be presented then followed by the programme of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, previously known as Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges, provide theoretical and practical training in the fields of study. TVET Colleges provide opportunities for students who leave school at Grade 9 to enrol for the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)). Those who leave at Grade 12 are eligible to enrol for the Report 191 earlier known as Nated (N) programmes.

The main objective of the TVET Colleges is to provide training for careers in a range of areas that include, among others, Office Administration, Tourism and Hospitality to Primary Agriculture, Primary Health, Transport and Logistics, Information Technology and Computer Science. Some TVET Colleges also offer Engineering programmes such as Electrical Engineering, Motor Mechanics, Industrial and Mechanical Engineering.

My focus is on the National Certificate Vocational NC(V) programme, which is a three-year programme that takes one from Level 2 to Level 4. Students get a certificate upon

completing each level and receive the National Certificate Vocational NC(V) after completing Level 4. This level is the equivalent of a matric certificate.

Since the inception of the National Certificate Vocational NC(V) programme, there have been a very high student dropout and a very low pass rate. With this study, the root cause of the low pass rates is identified and measures that can improve and better the results are recommended.

The current situation is that a campus would register 400 students in Level 2 across all the programmes (Finance, Office Administration, Management, Civil and Electrical Engineering). Of the 400 students, 120 would drop out from the course and only 280 would sit for the examination.

From the 280 students, only 45 of these students will pass all seven subjects. This means that the Level 3 classes will be less and the students will be registering the subjects on different levels. When these students reach Level 4, they do not make a full class.

An example is the Finance Economics and Accounting programme. In 2016, 95 students were registered in Level 2, 7 students in Level 3 and of the seven students, one was registered for all seven subjects. Level 4 had eight students and five of them were registered for all seven subjects. This is a clear indication that the NC(V) programme has a challenge with the pass and retention rates. This is an indication that there might be reasons why the objectives of the programme are not met. To address this problem, it is essential to investigate the factors that contribute to the high failure rate in the National Certificate Vocational NC(V) programmes in the TVET Colleges in the North West Province. The study sought to investigate the factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges. The study was conducted at a TVET College campus that is situated in a semi-urban area, in a small town that is surrounded by a mining industry and farms.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many students from the mainstream schools are enrolled at different TVET Colleges in South Africa for different programmes. Their aim of enrolling at the TVET Colleges is to complete a qualification and pursue employment or entrepreneurship. Recorded evidence indicates that since the inception of NCV programmes, there has been poor academic achievement or performance of NCV students in TVET Colleges. There is, however, no empirically recorded evidence of the causes thereof. This then constitutes the problem statement of this study. It is against this background that this study was undertaken to explore the factors that constitute poor academic achievement of students in TVET Colleges.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question was:

What factors contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges?

Sub-questions:

- Which factors contribute to poor academic achievement of students at TVET Colleges?
- When do those factors contribute to poor academic performance of students at TVET Colleges?
- How do these factors contribute to the poor academic performance of students at TVET Colleges?
- Why are these factors contributing to the poor academic performance of students at

TVET Colleges?

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a research project aligns itself with (Grant & Osanloo 2014: 12). Further, it is a framework that facilitates and around which all knowledge is built in a research study (ibid). The social critical theory constitutes the theoretical framework of this study. Although it is defined and described differently, various authors such as Green (1990: 30); Popkewitz (1990: 80) and Lebeloane (1998), respectively concur that people use it to expose their respective ideological bases by reflecting on their social world and analysing historical conditions, as well as thinking and developing ideas then emancipating them by using language to tie them (ibid). That is, it emphasises in reflecting on culture, history and people's social world to conceptualise what they regard as truth and move forward by presenting it through a language. This theory is relevant for this study in that the latter explores factors that lead to poor academic achievement of students at a TVET College. Participants reflect on their culture and history within their social world to conceptualise what they regard as truth or factors that lead to poor academic achievement of students at a TVET College.

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

According to Viswambharan and Priya (2016), the qualitative method of research is exploratory; hence this study aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to poor students' achievement at a TVET College. It is on the other basis that data were collected by responding to the "what", "when", "which" and "why" questions. The study also described literature on TVET Colleges. Lastly, it followed a qualitative research approach. Using a qualitative research method assisted in describing and interpreting data by giving meaning to them. That is, participants were interviewed on the issues at hand.

1.7 PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY

Literature is reviewed in chapter two. It focuses on exploring factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges globally, in Africa and South Africa. It explores these factors regarding personal factors, socio-cultural factors, institutional factors, teaching and learning factors, motivation, attitude by students and lecturers. Other factors discussed include attendance of lectures by students and lecturers as well as student workload. Lastly, conclusions are drawn.

The study's research methodology and design are presented in chapter three. Firstly, an outline of the research design, approach and strategy are presented. That is followed by a description of the population, sample and the process of gathering data and analysis as well as ethical considerations. Lastly, conclusions are drawn. Chapter four focuses on data analysis, interpretation and presentation. A summary of findings, recommendations and conclusions are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

TVET Colleges have a history and were formed after the 1994 national elections in South Africa. TVET Colleges exist in other parts of the world and are called differently. They fall under the post-school sector of the South African education system. The transition from school to post-school level is a challenge to many students globally. Those challenges include, among others, academic achievement and adapting to the new environment. Many factors lead to these challenges.

This chapter reviews the literature of identified factors contributing towards the poor academic achievement of first-year students in TVET Colleges. These factors were identified as contributing towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa. Of those factors, the following were identified as relevant to this study: personal factors, socio-cultural factors, institutional factors, teaching and learning factors, motivation, attitude by students and lecturers. Other factors discussed included attendance of lectures by students and lecturers as well as student workload. Lastly, conclusions are drawn.

2.2. PERSONAL FACTORS

This section discusses identified personal factors that contribute towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.2.1. Personal Factors Around the World

Leopold, Ratcheva, Zahidi and Samans (2017: 10), note that some of the personal factors affecting the students' results were mainly the lack of essential soft skills, when

reporting the concerns and prospects of TVET Colleges in the Middle East. These skills include creative and independent thinking. Students lack the problem-solving and functional skills to enable them to cope with the NC(V) programmes and attain better results.

Almuammria (2015: 13), when conducting research on students in Beirut, states that the adolescence stage of the students may have an impact on their academic achievement. He continues to indicate that most of the teachers overlook the behaviours of these students where there should be direct contact between parents and teachers to report these behaviours. Specialist or social workers may have to be involved in improving the situation.

Lamb (2011: 61) states, in a study conducted in Australia, that the students from the economically challenged, disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to complete their qualifications. They have personal needs that result in low achievement and weak literacy and numeracy skills. This group of students are disadvantaged due to poverty and require effective interventions and funds to support them.

2.2.2. Personal factors in Africa

According to Mbugua, Reche, Bundi, Kareanki & Riungu (2012: 131), in a study conducted in Kenya, the students' use of language has a massive effect on the academic achievement. A majority of students communicate among themselves in Kiswahili which is their mother tongue. The research indicated that the students who communicate in English, which is the examination language, have a better chance of performing better in their examinations.

Murgor (2013: 182) reports that the female students in TVET Colleges in Kenya experience more poverty than male students. There is an argument that these female students rate themselves poorly in numeracy, computer skills and self-esteem. Moreover, the male students are more skilful and confident. Eradicating poverty will assist in improving the academic performance of female students in Kenya.

According to Morris (2015), students from Botswana TVET Colleges living in isolated areas experience the worse kind of poverty. Therefore, their academic performance is negatively affected. These students depend on government welfare for survival.

2.2.3. Personal factors in South Africa

It emerged, from the research conducted by Matsolo et al. (2018: 75), that 92% of the TVET College students in Gauteng province do not receive the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) financial assistance and that only 8% of the students receive it. The majority of these students stay far from TVET Colleges and cannot afford to pay for their transport to travel to and from the college. Furthermore, these students pay tuition fees from their pockets. The lack of sufficient funds often results in many of them performing poorly and or dropping out of college.

According to Mphale and Mhlauli (2014: 117), language barrier is one of the factors that contribute to poor academic performance. Students understand the concepts in their mother tongue and not the language used in the examination, which is English. This language problem results in low performers in TVET Colleges. Another factor that adds to the poor academic performance is poor parenting styles. The parents become more strict thus not allowing the students to have freedom of choice in their studies. Some parents give the students total control of their studies. These parents do not assist their children in terms of their homework. Further, they do not assist them in personal problems or even give them emotional support.

According to Matsolo et. al. (2016: 69), South African student drop-outs studying in the TVET sector are due to the students being academically ill-prepared to study at tertiary institutions after completing their school qualifications.

2.3. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

This section discusses identified socio-cultural factors that contribute towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.3.1. Socio-cultural factors around the world

According to Al-Zoubi and Younes (2015: 2264), the socio-cultural norms of some Arab countries lead to many parents exerting pressure on their children to obtain high marks in examinations. The parental pressure leads many students to be nervous, tense and not concentrate on their school work. Many end up performing poorly in their academic work. The fear of students failing examinations is another factor that causes student anxiety. This state of mind affects the students' performance as it hinders a student from concentrating or paying attention, which may result in a student not remembering the work done in class. Psychological disorders such as depression are a significant contributor to students not succeeding in their studies. With this disorder, the student loses concentration and fails to pass the examinations.

2.3.2. Socio-cultural factors in Africa

Getachew (2019) asserts that Ethiopia set out an Ethiopian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) national strategic plan. This was aimed at creating a competent and adaptable workforce that was meant for the economic and social development of the country in 2008. It aimed at absorbing at least 80% of the students who completed their secondary education into the TVET system. That plan was not realised. One of the primary reasons for this was poor students' academic achievement in the TVET Colleges. Another reason was the discouraging mismatch between the skills needed in the workplace and the programmes that were offered in the TVET Colleges. That is, some socio-cultural factors such as gender led to females not enrolling for programmes that were regarded as male suited programmes. It led to a high unemployment rate because many graduates were qualified in areas the labour market did not need.

2.3.3. Socio-cultural factors in South Africa

According to Ngoveni (2018: 86), students who come from the individual schools and register for the NC(V) programmes find it difficult to succeed in their studies. The main reason for this is that the lecturers are not well equipped to teach students with special needs.

Chetty and Pather (2015: 5) discovered that the first-year students give up their studies due to the anxieties and fears they experience as individuals coming from the rural or peri-urban to the urban campuses. They conclude that the DST (Digital Story Telling) could be a therapeutic intervention to heal the Black students' injustices from the past and to make them fit comfortably into the system.

2.4. INSTITUTION-BASED FACTORS

This section discusses identified institution-based factors, namely, staffing, that contribute towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.4.1. Staffing around the world

According to Alami (2016: 133), in a study conducted for Omani students at Salalah College of Technology (SCT), special attention needs to be paid to the staffing of educational institutions where professional qualifications are to be considered as crucial in education. He further mentions that a qualified teacher is an essential component for the student's academic success.

2.4.2. Staffing in Africa

Geda (2016: 46) maintains that there are few appropriately qualified teaching staff members or lecturers at TVET Colleges in many countries in Africa. Among those who are teaching, many of them are not performing their duties as expected. They lack in preparation and presentation skills of the curriculum (2016: 46).

2.4.3. Staffing in South Africa

Badenhorst and Radile (2018: 95-96), investigating distributed leadership and student learning, discovered that there is a link between distributed leadership and outcomes. There was also a conclusion that when leadership is evenly distributed, this may result in better and improved students' academic results.

2.5. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIAL

This section discusses identified teaching and learning material factors that contribute towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.5.1. Teaching and learning material around the world

According to Aldowah et al. (2015: 4), challenges facing Higher Education in Yemen are teaching and learning materials. The universities in Yemen still use notes and pen, which is a traditional method of learning that is inappropriate for the e-learning classes. The infrastructure is also not conducive enough to offer e-learning. The availability of high-quality software is also one of the main challenges.

2.5.2. Teaching and learning material in Africa

According to the research conducted by Ayonmike (2014: 95), on the implementation of TVET curriculum in technical colleges in South Nigeria, material resources are of poor quality and quantity. This results in poor quality preparation of lessons by TVET lecturers. If proper funding could be achieved, resources could be improved in TVET curriculum implementation and results.

Maclean and Fien (2017: 199) contend that lack of resources emanates from over enrolment of students. Geda (2016: 47) blames the lack of resources on the lack of funding by the Ethiopian government.

2.5.3. Teaching and learning material in South Africa

A study on student dropout at a TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal, Amajuba District by Mdluli (2017: 25), reveals that student dropout is caused by a lack of or insufficient infrastructure and resources. The NC(V) programme is vibrant and relevant to the work environment. Students in Business programmes such as Office Administration and Hospitality study theory only because of lack of resources. Students are not exposed to practical work, which results in employers regarding the TVET Colleges as insufficiently equipping the students.

According to Buthelezi (2018: 12), looking at the college challenges in the post-apartheid era in South Africa found out that the TVET Colleges still have a challenge of resources, which makes it difficult for the students to perform well in their studies. These are resources such as furniture, textbooks, computers and equipment that are vital for teaching and learning. This is because of the mismanagement of funds allocated by the government. Students who fail to adapt to the new college environment cause tension to the lecturers who may be of the impression that the students have adapted to the new environment. This also has a very negative impact on the students' results (Buthelezi 2018: 13).

2.6. LACK OF MOTIVATION

This section discusses lack of motivation as an identified contributory factor towards the poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.6.1. Lack of motivation in TVET Colleges around the world

Alami (2016: 2), in investigating the causes of poor academic results among the Omani students, realised that students lack motivation because they are not interested in participating in classroom discussions. In addition, they find the subject or course boring. On the other hand, Workineh (2018: 19) discovered that the international challenges of TVET Colleges included lack of motivation from students. Most of the students were unsure about their future after completing the courses in TVET Colleges. Most students felt that they would not get employed after completing the TVET courses.

2.6.2. Lack of motivation in TVET Colleges in Africa

Al-Zoubi and Younes (2015: 2264), in their introduction to research on Low Academic Achievement: causes and results in the Arabic countries, state that for the students to experience success, they must experience the bitterness of failure to learn from their errors. They further mention that failure does not mean giving up but rather is a motivation for achieving one's goals and objectives. The problem is that failure is associated with frustration and punishment in the form of disrespect, beatings and

neglect. Failure according to Al-Zoubi and Younes (2015) is a fear of failure or committing mistakes. Examination anxiety is noted as the cause of the poor academic performance of students. This emotional condition that a student feels during examination results is from the fear of failing in the examination. This fear further causes the students not to achieve the required level and affects the student's motivation.

2.6.3. Lack of motivation in TVET Colleges in South Africa

Lecturers in TVET Colleges strongly believe that lack of motivation by students leads to the unwillingness to learn. Lecturers also believe that the students are not yet ready to face the world and to take responsibility for themselves. This they blame on the students being immature. However, a significant problem with student readiness is the fact that the students admitted to the NC(V) programme are not academically ready. The NC(V) programmes are not sufficiently equipped to make the transition from school to college a success. The difficult level of the NC(V) Programmes are consequences of poor performance (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018: 11-12).

2.7. ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

This section discusses how students and lecturers' attitudes contribute towards poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.7.1. Attitudes of students and lecturers around the world

In a study conducted by Alami (2016: 5) at Salalah College of Technology students in Oman, it emerged that students and lecturers displayed different attitudes towards their studies and teaching responsibilities respectively. That contributed towards students' poor academic performance. Tables 1 on students and 2 on lecturers respectively show how each group felt with their studies and teaching responsibilities.

Table 1: Student-related causes:

Cause	Percentage
Not studying	16.50%
Not focusing while the teacher teaches	6.31%
Leaving classroom when feeling bored	0.48%
Having a problem with teacher/Dislike teacher	2.42%
Not caring for education	1.45%

Table 2: Teacher-related causes:

Cause	Percentage
Boring teacher	6.89%
Not strong enough to manage a classroom	3.44%

2.7.2. Attitudes of students and lecturers in Africa

The attitude of students towards TVET in Ethiopia revealed that students perceived a need for change in the current vocational education of programmes. This resulted from the students' observations and personal experiences. Students believed that the quality of vocational education needed to be improved to match the current labour needs (Workineh, 2018: 21).

2.7.3. Attitudes of students and lecturers in South Africa

According to Buthelezi (2018: 10), mixed-ability classrooms in South African TVET Colleges are one of the primary reasons for poor attitude by lecturers and students. TVET NC(V) classes are full of students who have passed Grade 9 and some who have

dropped out of Grade 10, 11 and those who failed Grade 12. Lecturers find it challenging to teach students with different grades in a class. Some students may find work manageable while some find it difficult to understand. The content of NC(V) programmes is pitched at a higher level for the Grade 9 students.

Similarly, Ngoveni (2018: 86) found that fear and negative attitude towards Mathematics was a contributor to the failure rate of the students in the TVET sector. Students were expected to do mathematical literature instead of Mathematics, as they had been doing mathematical literature at school. The students perceived the subject as complicated and that instilled a fear of the subject. This then resulted in a negative attitude towards the subject thus affecting the pass rate.

2.8. ABSENTEEISM BY BOTH LECTURERS AND STUDENTS

This section discusses absenteeism by both lecturers and students as a contributory factor towards poor academic achievement in various TVET Colleges around the world, in Africa and South Africa.

2.8.1. Absenteeism by both lecturers and students around the world

A study conducted by Bowers (2001: 146) in Europe and North America, on the relationship between absenteeism of students and teachers, reveals that it is easy to find the correlation between teacher absenteeism and the students' academic outcomes. Areas that reveal a low performance by students is often a result of high teacher absenteeism as the two affect each other.

A study conducted in the North eastern United States by Snyder, Lee-Partridge, Jarmoszko, Petkova & D'Onofrio (2014: 437) on "what is the influence of a compulsory attendance policy on absenteeism and performance" also revealed that there is a connection between the class attendance and the class performance. Students who attend classes are more likely to achieve better results. The enforcement of the attendance policy betters the academic results as students are compelled to attend.

According to Snyder et al. (2014), class attendance was improved by the attendance policy as it affected the performance of the students. Snyder et al. (ibid) further mentioned that the fewer classes the students missed, the better the performance.

2.8.2. Absenteeism by both lecturers and students in Africa

Reche et al. (2012: 131-132) views late coming and absenteeism by students as a significant contributor to academic achievement by Kenyan students. According to a study conducted by Geda (2016: 46) at TVET Colleges in Oromia, the students absent themselves continuously from classes, and some come to classes very late. Therefore, this negatively affects the pass rate.

2.8.3. Absenteeism by both lecturers and students in South Africa

Absenteeism and late coming are seen as one of the significant challenges faced by the NC(V) programme in TVET Colleges. This information was gathered from the interviews with students and lecturers. The average percentage was reported as 21% for the week ending 01.09.2017. These factors are contributors to the students performing poorly in the Mathematics subject which is one of the fundamental subjects in the NC(V) programme (Ngoveni, 2018: 87).

Buthelezi (2018: 373-374) emphasises the workload of the NC(V) programme. This programme runs for three years for levels two to four. Students are expected to do seven subjects. Three subjects are fundamentals where the other four comprise of the vocational subjects. The findings proved that the reasons for poor academic performances are due to the heavy subject loads and the level of readiness of the students coming from the mainstream schools. Students may be promoted to the next level when they have passed three subjects. They carry some of the failed subjects to the next level. The students may spend much time doing the NC(V) programme as they do not focus on the subjects they learn due to the repeating subjects. This is one of the reasons for the low retention and pass rates.

2.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the different views from different authors, educational specialists, documentation and students about the effects and implications of the high failure rate of TVET College students. There are enormous challenges when it comes to the pass rate of first-year students at TVET Colleges. The literature review was conducted to investigate the factors that contribute to the high failure rate. In this study, the researcher linked the previous studies with new ones to gather rich information about this study's topic.

Lastly, there was a gap developed whereby the researcher wanted to assess all the factors leading to poor academic performance by TVET College students for which the findings were generalised to other colleges globally, in Africa, in South Africa and lastly at Orbit TVET College, Brits campus. All the authors, educational specialists and students cite various factors that lead to the poor performance of students in TVET Colleges. In the following chapter, three, the researcher presents the methodology used in this study for data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 reviewed literature on factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges. These were discussed with a focus on students' poor academic achievement in other countries and out of Africa. The same was discussed in some countries in Africa and other TVET Colleges in South Africa rather than those that constitute the case of this study.

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and design regarding factors that contribute to poor academic achievement of students at Orbit TVET College. Firstly, the research design is outlined. It is followed by a description of the population and the sample of the study. Data were gathered and analysed for this study. Ethical considerations, among others, include reliability and validity and these are presented. Lastly, conclusions are drawn.

In-depth one-on-one interviews with several students, lecturers, senior lecturers and Head of Departments were held to determine reasons why students move from the mainstream schools to the TVET Colleges and the reasons for poor performance in the NCV Programme in TVET Colleges. When posing questions, the researcher kept in mind that all participants ought not to feel threatened by the questions. A tool with a set of questions was utilised to gain information from the participants. A tape recorder was used to record the interviews. Notes were also taken during the interviews.

Results of individual, students, lecturers, senior lecturer and heads of departments, were analysed to compare the variables.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN, PARADIGM AND APPROACH

This section discusses the research design, paradigm and approach. Each of these is defined, described and contextualised for this study.

3.2.1 Research Design

A research design is a distinct plan that can be thought of as an appropriate procedure or guideline on how the research will be conducted (Duff, Walker & Omari, 2011: 27). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) describe it as a plan on how the researcher will systematically craft, collect and analyse data that are needed to answer the research question. As a plan of action, it includes the research paradigm, research approach and research type or strategy. These are discussed hereunder.

Akhtar (2016: 68) defines a research design as a structure of research that glues or holds together all elements in a research project. It is a plan for the proposed research work.

Mohajan and Haradhan (2018: 2), consider qualitative research as a form of social action that stresses on people's interpretation and makes sense of their experiences and relies on the participants' real-life situations. The interview method was utilised to examine the phenomenon. These questions were structured in such a way that they were easy to understand so that a correct answer would be reflected.

The research design used in the study involves non-empirical methods. Non-empirical research is research that deals with conceptual problems, for example, scientific concepts or notions, scientific methods and techniques, the body of scientific knowledge or literature, scientific theories and models, different schools of thought, scientific data, worldviews and philosophies (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 52).

3.2.2 Research Paradigm

This study borrowed from the constructivist paradigm to explore factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges by gathering data, analysing and interpreting data as well as giving meaning to them. Students, lecturers, senior lecturers and Heads of Departments were respectively interviewed in this study. The study also made use of Ethnography to gather relevant information in identifying the factors that contribute to poor academic performances at a TVET College. This is because the researcher, who is an employee of the TVET College, spends time daily with the participants.

3.2.3 Research Approach

This study applied a qualitative approach in exploring factors that contribute to poor academic achievement at a TVET College. Khan (2014: 225) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process that understands the methodological traditions when enquiring and explores human problems. The researcher used the qualitative method because it assists in understanding the experiences of participants in their perceptions. Qualitative researchers gather information in natural settings such as campuses and classrooms to have a clear understanding of the students and staff at TVET Colleges (Creswell, 2014: 90).

Furthermore, qualitative research is mainly focused on the opinions and beliefs of individuals. When the research topic is sensitive, a qualitative study is deemed more appropriate to provide insight into the experiences and perspectives of the students (Jameel, Shaneen & Majid, 2018: 2). The qualitative method of research was utilised in this exploratory study because of the study's sensitive nature. Furthermore, it sought to gather the experiences and perspectives of the participants (Heads of Departments, senior lecturers, lecturers and students) by gathering their opinions and beliefs.

3.3. RESEARCH TYPE OR STRATEGY

The study adopted a qualitative research approach that made use of semi-structured interviews which were held with the internal members of the college, namely, students and staff members. Qualitative research involves an enquiry during which the researcher collects data in a face-to-face situation interacting with selected persons in their settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 315). The study used face-to-face interviews. Since the study sought to establish the factors that contribute to the poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges from the viewpoint of the Head of Departments, the lecturers and the students, the qualitative research design was deemed as a suitable approach. Berg (2004: 7) confirms this by stating that qualitative research enables a researcher to share the views and perspectives of others and to explore how people give meaning to their daily lives.

The interviews aim to uncover additional concrete information about the topic under study and to strengthen and supplement the observations and literature review. The qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings which people have constructed in their making sense of the world and their experiences in that world (Merriam, 1998: 6). During interviews, a tape recorder was used to record the information obtained during observations and interviews.

3.4. THE PURPOSE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The general purpose of qualitative research is to understand, describe and analyse issues from the individuals or population being studied and give meaning to it. Qualitative research is also used to generate new concepts and theories (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016: 2). In qualitative research, the researchers' main interests is in people's beliefs, experiences, meaning and perspectives (Mohajan & Haradhan, 2018: 8)

3.5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The qualitative research method could be used to facilitate research that takes various forms. Herein are some examples of various forms it could take. Added thereto is the form this study undertook.

- **Case Study Research**

This strategy involves identifying the phenomenon, decoding it as a problem or problem statement within a specific context, describing, explaining and elaborating on it to identify the issues and lessons learned (Creswell, 2014: 99).

- **Ethnography**

This method includes identifying, describing and interpreting the patterns and trends that create themes to understand the behaviour, interactions and perceptions within a particular group of people or culture that shares the same norms and values (Creswell, 2014: 90; Jameel et al., 2018: 3)

- **Grounded Theory**

According to Khan (2014: 1), grounded theory refers to the systematic development from data that are received from the subject that being studied. This method uses data rather than emerging data from theory. On the other hand, Jameel et al. (2018: 3) agree that grounded theory involves a process based on data that are grounded.

- **Narrative Theory**

Lenberg et al. (2017: 18), assert that narrative theory is derived from narratives. The latter is based on research whose data are collected through accessing artefacts, diaries, interviews, observations and photographs. Jameel et al. (2018: 3) describe the narrative theory method as a method in which the researcher identifies a phenomenon that may be an event or life experience, analyses and interpret it then narrates it by presenting it in a logical and sequentially easy to understand manner. The narrative theory focuses on the stories as told by the participants.

- **Participatory Action or Community-Based Research**

The Participatory Action or Community-Based research method is solution-focused. This type of research is also action based, as it is based on and involves the community or group of people who take action to improve their well-being through action and knowledge production (Jameel et al., 2018: 3).

- **Phenomenology**

According to Jameel et al. (2018: 3), phenomenology method of research involves the active participation of the researcher in the exercise. That is, the latter put themselves in the shoes of the participants by observing and interacting with them as they gather data. That helps researchers to analyse, interpret and give meaning to participants' responses from a better-informed position.

Creswell (2014: 90) and Jameel et al. (2018: 3) respectively endorse the relevance of Ethnography in this study because it involves personally identifying, describing and interpreting the patterns and trends that create themes to understand the behaviors, interactions and perceptions within a particular group of people or culture that shares the same norms and values. The researcher shared the same norms and values as the participants. The researcher further used this approach to be more objective and to understand the behaviours of the participants. The participants were interacting with the researcher to give rich data on the factors that contribute to poor academic performances in TVET Colleges.

3.6. METHODS OF GATHERING QUALITATIVE DATA

According to Mohajan and Haradhan (2018: 7), data could be gathered for qualitative research through various ways. These methods include interviews, observations, case studies, surveys and historical and document analysis. Primary or secondary data were collected for the study. The researcher also interrogated the available documents. When using interviews, the researcher must understand that there are three fundamental types of research interviews. These include, structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are those in which data are gathered

through verbally administered questionnaires. That means a list of prepared questions are asked. There is little or no variation and or scope for follow up or probing questions.

3.7. FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Badenhorst and Radile (2018: 7-8) explain that the validity and reliability of the study should link the explanations of the phenomena which are studied and the realities of the world the participants live in. They further give examples of strategies to increase and enhance the validity and reliability during the data collection and data analysis in the study as follows:

For data collection, the researcher should consider the following:

The participant's language and the mechanically recorded data where the digital recorders were utilised. For data analysis, the researcher should consider avoiding the subjective interpretation, selective use and unfair segregation of data. This was attended to in this study.

3.8. THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The qualitative study design was deemed more appropriate for this study because it provides the researcher with information in the following ways:

- It uses the most effective source of information (i.e. TVET College participants);
- It occurs in a real-life situation (i.e. At the Orbit TVET College, Brits campus);
- It assists in answering the research question(s);
- The process is interactive and participant-driven; and
- The participants express themselves freely and are not restricted in their answers.

For this study, the researcher used various types of resources for the literature review. These resources included books, research articles, research reports, theses,

dissertations, circulars, newspaper articles and the internet. This method of enquiry was used because it is the most interactive method of enquiry during which a researcher collects data in face-to-face situations by interacting with the persons selected (McMilan & Schumacher, 2006: 315). Face-to-face interviews were held with participants, Heads of Departments, lecturers, senior lecturers and students. The questions were self-administered.

3.9. POPULATION

The population is defined as the entire group of persons who meet the criteria that the researcher is interested in studying (Brink, Van der Walt & Van Rensburg: 2012). Van Zyl (2014: 95) on the other hand, considers a population in research as a group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to gather data, analyse and interpret it then draw findings and recommendations. These may either be generalised in quantitative research or peculiar to a qualitative research study.

Fifty (50) TVET Colleges are registered and spread throughout the nine provinces of South Africa. Of those 50 TVET Colleges, the North West province has one Orbit TVET College with three (3) campuses that are spread in three different locations, namely, Brits town, Mankwe district and Rustenburg city. This study is based on the North West province. That makes the Orbit TVET College in the province the population of the study. It is from this Orbit TVET College that a sample of the study was selected through an acceptable research technique or process. With the campus in question registering more than 4 000 students in total every year for various programmes, the campus potentially offers a wealth of data. From this campus, classes were identified and selected.

3.10. SAMPLING

According to Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole (2013: 395), sampling is a representative of a selected population in research. In research, a sample is a part or fraction of a population or whole that is selected by the researcher using a specific technique or

process to participate in a research study (Brink et al., 2012: 131). The researcher uses a sampling process to select a sample from a population to obtain information regarding a phenomenon in a way that represents the population of interest (ibid). The sample selected by the researcher helps in concluding the research (ibid). In this study, the Orbit Brits campus TVET College, in the North West province was selected purposively to facilitate the completion of the study. It was selected deliberately because it is within the proximity of the researcher. Besides, it is one of the three Orbit TVET Colleges that are in the North West province. That makes it a sample of 33 per cent (33%) of the TVET population Colleges that are in the North West province; where the researcher lives and is located.

A purposeful sampling technique was followed to select participants for this study. The sample included members of the TVET College management, namely, two Heads of Departments and senior lecturers. Other participants included identified lecturers and NCV students. A total of twelve (12) participants were interviewed from the Electrical and Office Administration departments, namely, two (2) Heads of Departments, two (2) senior lecturers, two (2) lecturers and six (6) students. The Heads of Departments provided the researcher with the names of the participants, namely, senior lecturers, lecturers and students. The researcher accepted the Heads of Departments' advice as people with a clear overview of the NC(V) programmes.

The researcher ensured that there was gender equity among all participants. These were randomly selected (Welman et al., 2011: 69) from the randomly and equitably selected departments of Engineering and Business Studies respectively. The participants were selected from Orbit TVET College campus in the North West province.

The following table illustrates the composition of the sample:

Table 3: Sample of the study

NO OF PARTICIPANTS	EMPLOYEES	STUDENTS	AGE GROUP	GENDER	
				MALE	FEMALE
2	2 (HODs)	0	30 – 45	1	1
2	2(SNR) LECTURERS)	0	25 - 40	1	1
2	2 (LECTURERS	0	30 – 50	1	1
6		6	20 – 35	3	3
TOTAL				6	6

3.10.1. Sampling Procedure

There are two types of sampling techniques, the probability and the non-probability sampling techniques.

3.10.2. Probability Sampling

Probability sampling is a sampling technique in which a researcher's sample from a larger population is chosen using a method based on the theory of probability (Welman et al., 2011: 69; Petten & Newhart, 2018: 56). In probability sampling, a participant is selected using a random selection. In probability sampling, everyone has an equal chance of being selected. The examples of probability sampling include simple random sampling. The latter is sampling in which numbers are assigned to individuals (sample) and they (the latter) are randomly chosen from those numbers through an automated

process. This technique works in a big group. Some identified examples of random sampling that are discussed hereunder include the stratified random sampling; cluster stratified random sampling and systematic sampling (Welman et al., 2011: 6; Petten & Newhart, 2018: 56).

3.10.3. Stratified Random Sampling

A larger group is divided into smaller groups. These groups get to be organised, and a sample is chosen from each group. Members of each group should be distinct in terms of, for example, age, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status, so that every member of each group gets an equal opportunity to be selected using simple probability (Welman et al., 2011: 69).

3.10.4. Cluster Random Sampling

Cluster random sampling is used when a researcher selects participants when they are geographically dispersed. This may be used when, for example, the researcher wants to choose 200 participants from the entire population in South Africa. The researcher can instead randomly select areas (rural, semi-rural, cities). Clusters are selected by dividing the greater population into various smaller sections (Welman, et al., 2011: 69; Petten & Newhart, 2018: 56).

3.10.5. Systematic Sampling

Systematic sampling is an extended implementation of the same old probability sampling method in which each member of the group is selected at regular periods to form a sample. Here, there is an equal opportunity for every member of the population to be selected using this sampling technique (Welman et al., 2011: 69; Petten & Newhart, 2018: 56).

3.10.6. Non-probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling technique refers to random sampling techniques in which each element of the population has equal chances of being selected into the sample (Petten & Newhart, 2018: 89). A non-probability sample is used for generalisation because it

seeks the representativeness of the broader population. Non-probability sample deliberately avoids representing the broader population. The researcher only targets a group in full knowledge that it does not represent the broader population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011: 153).

The main advantage of this procedure is that it is very economical, convenient, and the judgement relies on the researcher (Brink et al., 2012: 139 - 140). The examples of non-probability sampling are purposive or judgemental sampling, convenience sampling, and quota sampling (Struwig & Stead, 2001). In this study, purposive sampling was used whereby two campus managers, two HODs, two senior lecturers, two lecturers and six students were selected because they were regarded as having knowledge, experience and insight on the factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges.

3.10.7. Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher relies on the selected people to be part of the sample. The key informants are selected purposively because they are perceived to be knowledgeable about the topic at hand by the researcher (Welman et al., 2011: 69). The informants cannot be selected randomly owing to the unavailability of a complete sampling frame to warrant any form of probability selection from the study population (Welman et al., 2011: 67). Purposive sampling is a technique that is based on the researcher's judgement regarding the participants (Brink et al., 2012). It is further explained as objects that are typical or representative of the study phenomenon or people who are knowledgeable about the question at hand.

Maree (2014) states that the meaning of purposive sampling means that the participants are selected because of some distinctive characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study. Sampling decisions are made to obtain the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions. Purposive sampling decisions also involve the settings, incidents, events and activities to be included in data collection (ibid). Having mentioned that, the participants in this study were purposefully

selected based on their direct or indirect experience and insight about the challenge at hand; the factors that contribute to the poor academic achievements in TVET Colleges. This was done to obtain a bigger picture of the causes of low performance in TVET Colleges.

Heads of Departments, senior lecturers and lecturers were selected because they were exposed to most of the challenges experienced by students. The students were also able to deliberate on the challenges they experience, which have an effect on their academic achievements. It is against the above discussion that the purposive sampling technique was utilised as a technique for gathering data in this study. That is, this study used the non-probability purposive technique for gathering data.

3.11. INVITATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher wrote a letter to Mr S Sefamela (Not real name), the principal of the Orbit TVET College, to request permission to conduct this research at the Orbit TVET College, Brits Campus (refer to Appendix A). She wrote another letter to Ms S Bodibe(Not real name), the Campus Manager at the Orbit TVET College, Brits Campus(refer to Appendix B), requesting permission to interview two (2) Head of Departments, two (2) senior lecturers, two (2) lecturers and six (6) level two (2) students from each of the two departments, namely, the Department of Electrical Engineering and Department of Office Administration.

The researcher personally met and briefed the participants about the ground rules of the interview before the actual interview sessions. That included, among others, participants signing consent forms after expressing their interest to participate in the study: Heads of Departments (HODs), senior lecturers, lecturers and the students (Refer to Appendix C).

3.12. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Data collection procedure allows a researcher to collect information about the study participants. A qualitative method of research was used to collect data. Cooper and Schindler (2006: 96) state that data could be gathered from a variety of sources in qualitative research. These sources include, among others, the following:

- Events and happenings (textual/visual/virtual material);
- Organisations or institutions;
- People (individuals or groups);
- Texts (published texts which include virtual texts);
- Setting environments (visual/sensory and virtual materials); and
- Objects, artefacts and media products (textual/visual/sensory/virtual material).

Data were gathered, for the purposes of this study, from participants through interviewing them, observing and requesting them to respond to set questions. Texts, such as peer and non-peer reviewed scientific articles, prescribed, and non-prescribed textbooks, unpublished theses as well as dissertations were also used in this study.

3.12.1. Ethnographical Research

The Ethnography method of qualitative research was used to gather data. According to Mohajan and Haradhan (2018: 13), this method involves the researcher's participation and in-depth observational approach of participants to describe their behaviour; that is, the researcher interacts face-to-face with the participants. It also reflects an accurate view of the participants' perspective and uses culture to interpret results. With this approach, the researcher is able to get first-hand information of the people who are directly affected by the poor results. These are the Heads of departments, the senior lecturers, lecturers and students. All the participants were requested to respond to sets of questions: Heads of Departments (HODs) (Refer to Appendix D), senior lecturers (Refer to Appendix E), lecturers (Refer to Appendix F) and the students (Refer to Appendix G).

3.12.2. Semi-structured Interviews (One-on-one)

An interview is a two-way conversation where the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and the behaviour of the participants. Brink et al. (2012: 36) state that an interview is a method of data collection in which the interviewer obtains responses from a participant in a face-to-face encounter, through a telephone call or by electronic means. Furthermore, a qualitative interview occurs when the researcher asks one or more participants general, open-ended questions to ensure that participants can voice their opinions (Creswell, 2014). In gathering data, this study used face-to-face semi-structured interviews to ensure that participants were free to express their views and opinions about the factors that contribute to poor academic achievements in TVET Colleges.

3.12.3. Questions

The research questions focused on the following: Heads of Departments (HODs) (Refer to Appendix D), senior lecturers (Refer to Appendix E), lecturers (Refer to Appendix F) and the students (Refer to Appendix G).

Challenges faced by the students, lecturers, senior lecturers and Heads of Departments about the NC(V) programmes are the:

- ✓ Alignment and relevance of the curriculum content to the industry;
- ✓ Absenteeism and late coming;
- ✓ Academic results;
- ✓ Intervention strategies;
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation;
- ✓ Students' socio-economic low-income family background; and
- ✓ Students' relationships with lecturers.

3.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues such as getting written consent or permission from participants, confidentiality, voluntary participation, reliability and validity are some of the critical imperatives that ought to be considered when conducting research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 76). They play an essential part in identifying the population and sample of the study, data collection, analysis and interpretation and dissemination of the findings thereof. Ethical issues help in ensuring that the good image of the research enterprise is maintained in the world (Duff et al., 2011: 23).

Written consent or permission by participants, confidentiality, voluntary participation, reliability and validity are some of the ethical issues that were considered in this study. That is, each participant voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview through written consent. Their anonymity and the confidential retention of their responses was guaranteed. The researcher adhered to the University of South Africa's research policies that give guidance on ethical issues in research.

The following ethical issues were adhered to in this study:

3.13.1. Permission

Before data collection, permission was sought in advance from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to conduct this research (Refer to Appendix H). This was because all public TVET Colleges in South Africa are under the management of the DHET. Written permission was also sought from the Orbit TVET College principal (Refer to Appendix A) as well as the campus manager of the Orbit TVET College, Brits campus (Refer to Appendix B): where data were gathered. Other participants from whom written consent was sought to provide information for the research were Heads of Departments (HODs) (Refer to Appendix D), senior lecturers (Refer to Appendix E), lecturers (Refer to Appendix F) and the students (Refer to Appendix G).

3.13.2. Informed Consent

According to Creswell (2014), informed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate in an exercise of choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation. The participants were consulted about the study and aims of the study were communicated. Informed consent letters were distributed to the participants giving them a description of how data were to be collected. The informed participants include the Orbit TVET College principal (Refer to Appendix A), the campus manager of Orbit TVET College, Brits campus (Refer to Appendix B), Heads of Departments (HODs), senior lecturers, lecturers and the students (Refer to Appendix C). Each of these received a consent letter outlining the information of the research. That included the estimated duration (time) of the interview per participant, the role of the researcher as non-infering and non-judgemental was discussed with the participants as well as the venue of the interviews. The researcher further reiterated in each letter addressed to all those involved that this was a voluntary exercise and that they could withdraw, with the use of a letter, whenever they wished to.

3.13.3. Confidentiality

According to Babbie (2001: 22), confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members of his or her staff should be aware of the identity of participants and that the staff should also have a commitment to confidentiality. Some participants may also be concerned with confidentiality issues by participating in a research study. To promote confidentiality, the anonymity of the participants in the study was maintained by ensuring that the questionnaires were not marked in any particular way to identify them. Their names were also not used anywhere in the research report. The researcher also ensured that privileged information given by participants was not presented in a way that easily led to the identification of the source of information.

Further to that, the research was carried out with strict adherence to the ethical standards as enshrined by the University of South Africa Research Ethics Committee.

Lastly, any anticipated risk that could have occurred was recorded and reported in writing to the CEDU Ethics Committee and my supervisor.

3.13.4. Harm to Participants

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 57) and Bryman and Bell (2011: 37) respectively concur that research participants can be harmed either physically and emotionally. For example, participants could be harmed emotionally by revealing information that they provided. This can be embarrassing to them and a danger to their lives, friendships and jobs (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 57). Before the study is conducted, the participants should be informed about the potential impact of the investigation to allow them to withdraw from the inquiry if they wish to do so (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011: 115). In case of any harm to the participants due to their involvement in the study, the researcher made an undertaking to record the incident and report to relevant stakeholders, including the CEDU Ethics Committee and supervisor in writing.

3.13.5. Privacy

Privacy, in research, refers to keeping to oneself that which is usually not intended for other people to observe even to analyse (de Vos et al., 2011: 119). Every individual has the right to privacy. That means every individual has the right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her information that includes and not limited to their attitudes, beliefs, behaviour and utterances is revealed. The privacy of participants may be compromised when their information is revealed to people not intended for it or unauthorised individuals accessing someone's confidential information. The privacy of all participants as well that of their information was guaranteed before they participated in the data gathering process.

3.14. CONCLUSION

The chapter focused on the research methodology and design, focusing on the factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges. The chapter has sequentially outlined the areas of study, research design, the population of the study, sample size, data collection techniques, data analysis procedures and consideration of ethical issues. The North West province was selected as a representative of the provinces in the country. The population of the study was made up of students, lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of departments and campus managers. The research tool of questions for the interviews was used to collect data from the field. In the next chapter, the data that were collected are presented and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

A discussion on research methodology and design regarding factors contributing to poor students' academic achievement at the Orbit TVET College, Brits campus, was presented in chapter three. This was done by describing the population, sample of the study, the process of gathering data with the consideration of relevant ethical issues.

Data were analysed, interpreted and presented on the factors contributing to poor student achievement in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the North West Province in this chapter. To analyse and interpret the data on factors that contribute to poor student achievement in Technical and Vocational colleges in the North West, qualitative research was conducted. According to Mohajan and Haradhan (2018: 16), qualitative research involves fieldwork where the researcher is the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis processes. The researcher goes to the identified participants in their natural setting to gather information. That is done by reporting on the reactions and responses of participants in the TVET NC(V) programmes.

An overview of qualitative research, research design and data analysis and interpretation are presented in this chapter. This chapter also presents an overview of the participants derived from the interviews with the Heads of Departments, senior lecturers, lecturers and students concerning the factors contributing to poor student achievement in TVET Colleges in the North West Province. Lastly, conclusions are drawn.

4.2. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data that were collected using developed questions were analysed and interpreted in this section. Interviews with students, lecturers, senior lecturers and Heads of Departments revealed factors that could be linked to poor student achievement in TVET Colleges in the North West Province.

The researcher also reports on the attitudes and enthusiasm of the participants and general impressions gained during the interviews. The statements by participants are written verbatim and were not edited to reflect the actual opinions and retain the meaning that the participants assigned to the research questions. The researcher did not edit the transcripts because she did not want to influence the interviewees' views.

The process of analysis and interpretation of data was categorised in accordance with those of Heads of Departments, senior lecturers, lecturers and students. Heads of departments, senior lecturers and lecturers were requested to respond to similar questions except for one question on monitoring and evaluation. The latter was asked of senior lecturers and Heads of Departments only. Students were requested to respond to a different set of questions. Each of these two sets of questions were further categorised in terms of critical factors that emerged from the responses.

4.2.1 Organising and Familiarising

The recordings of interviews were labelled on the researcher's laptop and USB as H₁ and H₂ (HoDs), SL₁ and SL₂ (senior lecturers), L₁ and L₂ (Lecturers), S₁-S₆ (Students). The researcher transcribed the recorded data. The researcher went through the scripts and recordings several times to ensure that all labels were recorded correctly as the appropriate data.

4.2.2 Labelling and Data Coding

According to Creswell (2015: 156), coding is the fundamental aspect of the analytical process used by the researchers to break down data and make something new. Creswell (2015: 152) further states that coding is essential as it assists any researcher to go through dense data and make sense of them. Coding is indexing or mapping data.

A researcher may be able to identify places in an interview where the participant has said something relevant to a specific question rather than merely looking at the answer given chronologically (Elliotte, 2018: 2851).

All participants were coded and labelled thematically and numerically. For instance, students who participated in the interviews were labelled $S_1 - S_6$.

Lecturers were referred to as L_1 for lecturer participant number one and L_2 for the second and last lecturer participant.

Senior lecturer participants were labelled SL_1 and SL_2 , which refers to senior lecturer one and two respectively.

H_1 and H_2 identify the HoD₁ and HoD₂ who participated in the research. The researcher is referred to as R. These codes were used in the interviews.

The interviews assisted in the triangulation of the analysis of different views from different participants at different levels.

4.2.3 Key Factors That Emerged from the Responses of Heads of Departments, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers

Different views of Heads of Departments (H_1), senior Lecturers (SL_1) and lecturers (L_1) are given below under every factor that emerged.

- Challenges faced by the lecturers about NC (V) programmes;
 - Alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry;
 - Challenges to effect changes to the curriculum;
 - Academic results;
 - Intervention strategies to improve students' results; and
 - Monitoring and evaluation were asked of senior lecturers and Heads of Departments.
- (i) Challenges faced by the lecturers about the National Certificate Vocational (NC (V)) programmes

A few examples of the participants' views about the NC(V) programmes were the following:

H₁ *“Thee challenges that are faced by lecturers in the NCV Programme are quite a number. The first one as I have said in the previous question, thee level of Grade 9, is pitched at a lower level than our NQF level 2. So the application from Grade 9 to level 2 is is a challenge as students come in with a lower level, they come with a Grade 9 for them to understand the level of level 2 is a challenge. The second challenge is that a at level 2 we introduce the vocational subjects that are are not there in most of a mainstream schools that are not technical for example, we introduce the electronics, we introduce electrical Principles and Practices, we introduce workshop practice which are not there err in the mainstream so lecturers face challenges because it will be the students first time to see those subjects. The other challenge is that when students find that the subjects are pitched at a higher level than Grade 9, most of the times they will just absent themselves and do not come to school err and that will give lecturers a problem because most of the time they will have to go back and redo the work that they err have already done. The other challenges that the other challenge that is faces by lecturers is that, when they come to practicals, it's a serious challenge because it will be the first for those err Grade 9 learners to do a practicals then they won't be able to cope. So those are some of the of the challenges and they also face this other challenge when it comes to mathematical manipulation, mathematical calculations. Thank you, thank you”*

H₂ *“Hmmm, the challenges that are faced by our lecturers is lack of interest from our students. Err, they are not so motivated, maybe because when they finish their studies they usually don't get no work immediately but that is one of the challenges that we are facing and secondly the issue of absenteeism. Our students are really are struggling in terms of travelling to the college in terms of transport. When they are supposed to receive their monies from NSFAS, it takes*

time for them to give the students the money hence the fact that they are not present in class gives them challenges“

SL₁ *“Ok, I would think number one its that we have a lot of admin. I think if staff have less admin they could have more time to spend for example on their own research on their own emm subjects that they offer how to improve also the teaching skills and perhaps have more time also to spend time on individual students with individual pro problems.”*

L₁ *“Ok the challenges are, problems, my biggest problem is attendance and like I said before, err err the background they don’t have the background for for the subjects that I am teaching so I have to start I don’t know back Grade 1.”*

L₂ *“HHHH, we we we do experience a lot of administration and administrative work which at times takes away the times where we have to be in contact with our students sooo ya I can say if if the administration can be minimised then we would be able to produce more for our learners.”*

(ii) Alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry

A few examples of the respondents’ views about the alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry are presented below:

H₁ *“I think it’s it’s more relevant to the needs of the students because err there is an application of electrical err which they have to do from the background of Mathematics, so it’s more relevant.”*

H₂ *“Hmm, I think that the content is very much relevant because it prepares our students in terms of the skills, knowledge and attitude required to be a successful administrative secretarial of personal assistance and the subjects that are being offered in terms of this curriculum they cover err different areas that are needed for them to prepare for the world of work.”*

- SL₁ *“I think it is relevant. Err the students need to type fast and accurate and they need to have skills in certain or relevant computer software programmes that is offered by this curriculum to them.”*
- L₂ *“Very relevant because in today’s world if a person doesn’t have computer necessary computer training they find it difficult to to do their work in today’s world business environment.”*
- H₁ *“Yaa, the curriculum aligns very well with the industry requirements or expectations. Thee only challenge that is there is that a thee equipment that we use at colleges might be of low quality compared to what the industry or workplace is normally have and this is technology and it changes from time to time so students need to work with technology that is updated. Thank you.”*
- H₂ *“Err, I believe that the subjects that are so vast in terms of preparing our students for the world of work because we have got subjects like Business Practice which deals with preparing our students in terms of the business err environment, the subject focuses on skills, values and attitudes in relation to the context of the experience of the world of work.”*
- SL₁ *“I think it is well aligned I would however reduce the curriculum content for example with one topic and spend more time and in detail on some of the topics and programmes.”*
- L₂ *“Err, it it really does align because err our students like in our Office Data Processing subject, we teach them about how to prepare letters, how to prepare the official correspondence, how to conduct research, how to prepare different types of documents that are needed so for that reason it is very much err relevant.”*
- H₁ *“Umm I would say the curriculum content is from main stream schools is not necessarily at the level that prepares the students for the NC(V) programmes because our minimum requirement is Grade 9 but the level at which our NQF*

Level 2 is pitched it's a little bit higher than the the Grade 9 level that is the minimum requirement. Thank you"

H₂ *"Errr, I can say yes, and no because the students who have just passed Grade 9, they are not fit to to cope with the curriculum that we are having for our NCVs which is the entrance that is required by the department but the students who probably they have passed Grade 11 or they failed Grade 12 are the ones that are able to cope with the curriculum that we are offering presently in Office Admin which makes it difficult for our students who are are have passed Grade 9 only to cope with the err relevant curriculum."*

SL₁ *"No, I think it could be improved. There is for me as if there are a bit of a gap from coming from a school and into a skills programme."*

L₁ *"No they are not err because now err I am only speaking for Electrical we need Maths and Physical Science so we are only taking I think Grade 9 Grade 10. They don't have that that background or Mathematics or physical science so it becomes very much difficult to teach them more especially Electronic subjects."*

L₂ *"Noo, I like to say no because our students when they come first first time first time to us they haven't been exposed to to technology that that much so we have to start from from from training them basics which is wasting more more of the time because we should be teaching our students the relevant material that is in the subject so it is not in line. So what is what is coming from basic education has needs be aligned to what we are doing this side."*

(iii) Challenges to effect changes to the curriculum

Listed below are the views of different participants on the challenges to effect changes to the curriculum:

H₁ *"Emm the changes that needs to be put in place it's err more of the work work based experience must be done on a yearly basis as compared to what they are currently doing to a minimum of five days. It has to be prolonged. Thank you."*

H₂ *“Err, I believe that probably in the industry there might have been changes we realise that for example the curriculum content we are covering thing like faxes which are now out-dated which I believe that it would be relevant for those who are drawing the curriculum to add things which are going to assist our students in terms of when they go into the industry.”*

SL₁ *“Err, as I already said, I think it is too comprehensive. Err I would suggest removing one of the topics that is the Database topic and place more emphasis on electronic communication and internet skills. This is the current the more current and I want them to be able to have more experience in email and electronic communication.”*

L₁ *“Ok, I think they must get more practical than the theoretical part because electrical they need to be physical they need to to touch and the theoretical subjects must be err the time must be divided such as they get half the time doing practical and half the time doing theoretical because I see now it’s theory theory theory only maybe practical once a week which is not fair.”*

L₂ *“Eemm, I think we need to to to have the practical aspect where our students go out into the into the industry to to apply on a continuous basis what we teach them in our classes so if we can find that component being part of the subject that we are teaching, then I think it will really improve the err quality of the students that we want to produce for the curriculum.”*

(iv) Academic results

A few examples of the participants’ views about the academic results are presented below:

H₁ *“Err for when it comes to results, I’m not satisfied err with the results that we produce, the results are very low aaand err in most of the cases you find that some the majority of the students do not even get results they get the MQs, which means that minimum requirements not met because of the students do not*

err err write all their assessments that are required err for them to get the sub-minimum for the ICASS requirement as per DHET err requirement soo the results currently are very low.”

H₂ *“The results of my department they are good so far because we have students who obtain distinctions who who perform very well but if we compare with the students that we are having this year, when we look at our level 4s looks like there will be a deterioration in terms of the results because we have seen our students not attending, we have seen our students not being committed to their work. We are looking forward to better results but we may be surprised this year due to the results that we have seen mam.”*

SL₁ *“I will think it is moderate and I can I can have better results I feel that the effort that they are putting in does not the outcome that I get.”*

L₁ *“Ok eemm, I’m I teach three subjects, I’m very happy with the workshop practice, I think every year its above 80% so I want to achieve that 80% for the rest of the subjects so I’m not yet there but I want. The other subjects, the problem with that is calculations. The students find it very difficult to do calculations.”*

L₂ *“Emm, there results really they fluctuate from different groups of students that we recruit but err generally I’m I’m quite satisfied with the with the results in the subjects.”*

(v) Intervention strategies to improve students’ results

A few examples of the participants’ views about the intervention strategies to improve students’ results are revealed below:

H₁ *“Ok, the intervention that we are putting in place, number one is the extra classes we try to put in place, errrr at the end of their classes at half past two, from half past two to half past three, they have to attend extra classes mostly in the poor performing subjects which are Electronic control and digital electronics, Electrical Principles and Practice err Mathematics. The other intervention strategy that we put in place is that we have got the peer academic err leaders they also offer err*

classes during the week and sometimes weekends to try to assist their peers. The other intervention strategy is that we we try to print the err past examination question papers and then we get the best lecturers to assist the learners in class err the other intervention strategy also that we put in place is when they write the assessments, and their marks are too low, we try err to revise in class during their normal periods we revise in class and after we revise in the class with the lecturers they are given a second chance to write but a version two which is not the same as the one they have written. Err the other intervention strategy that we put in place but at the end of our towards the end before the internal examination, we look at the marks of the students that are below the sub-minimum, like from 45 to 50, and then we try to give them version two of one the assessment so that they can improve their sub-minimum to 50% so that they are able to write the final. Thank you.”

H₁ “Ok, this to ensure better results,(laughed), to better results, it’s almost like err what I have explained but the first one to improve the results is err to improve the minimum admission requirements to engineering programmes, because with a Grade 9 yes, we can do that but err I’m thinking that if we can look at students that are coming from technical schools, where they do vocational subjects in their schools, if they come with Grade 9, I think they will be will be able to improve with our results err there’s second one that it is not in my power to do, but I think if the bursaries err can be disbursed earlier in the year err in January, err to all the students that are registered then it will improve our results because err one of the challenges is that students complain about transport money if we can have early disbursement of bursaries, I think in a way we can improve our our results. Err the other one again that I think we can improve our results, is too get lecturers that are adequately you know skilled in terms of Engineering that have engineering skills for example, the ones that have done practicals wat work places or some that are are qualified artisans that have worked in industry for quite some time they will be able to deliver these practical you know err subjects with the with their expertise. Eem the other one is to have students that are prepared in terms of career the careers that they have to do because what we

are having currently students come and if we say the programme is full, they can simply ask to say "which other one is not full?" then if we say that we still need students in Engineering, then they say yes I can do it. So if we can have students that are better you know err place in terms of which career they want to take I think that we can improve our results, I think ya that is all I can think of now."

H₂ *"We are presently using the PAL students who give the lessons in the afternoon more especially for the students who are struggling. We don't only use PAL also our lecturers are open to assist our students and we have advised our students to say there are lecturers who might not be teaching them a particular subject but but have an idea in terms of that particular subject so they can consult other lecturers so that they can be assisted. One other thing is we make sure that our students who are struggling are given activities extra activities that will assist them to cope with the with the content."*

SL₁ *"I offer them some extra classes during breaks most of the time individual assistance if I know about a student who is really struggling to understand, some extra exercises. We also have our peer leaders that assist us in that regard."*

SL₁ *"I think our NCV students are often not motivated I think of a motivation or a type of an incentive to motivate them to come to class every single day and also to give more more attention and more time to individual students who struggle and to try to identify those students at the beginning of the year already and take them through because especially with the computer related programme you can easily and quickly see if the student struggles you can from day one try to assist that student and I am sure that at the end of time that student will probably do much better."*

L₁ *"Ok what we are doing here like me and Mr X, I think Mr Y is doing the same, err everyday from half past two we are having extra classes. From half past two to half past three and then we give them previous question papers and then what I I'm doing now, is just to prepare them for the internal exam. We are giving them test almost everyday for the past two weeks."*

L₁ *“Emmm, what we are trying to do here like Mr Y is teaching the same subject as I am the other one I am sharing with Mr X, so so what we normally do is during the day I take my students and they attend Mr Y the same subject and then vice versa. So if they don’t understand a certain topic they go to Mr Y and then the same thing.”*

L₂ *“Err, we identify them and then after identifying these students that they are struggling we try to use peer academic peer academic leaders that we have identified that we are are stronger in the subjects we then guide the peer academic leaders in terms of how to assist the students that are having learning difficulties. So, through peer academic leaders we are trying to assist those students to to improve the subject.”*

L₂ *“Emm, honestly emm, the the issue of best practice from colleagues who are working at other campuses who are producing better results err they need to be tapped into or I always er do that I always do that communicate with peers who are working at other sites to ask them how are they managing to get the results that they do and by so doing, it also assists me to ensure that I always produce the good results that are expected in the subject.”*

(vi) Monitoring and evaluation that was asked of senior lecturers and Heads of Departments

A few examples of the senior lecturers’ and Heads of Departments’ views about monitoring and evaluation are disseminated below:

H₁ *“Err we monitor on a weekly basis, err we monitor sometimes if I have time from period to period that is to monitor the attendance of lecturers in lass but for monitoring err of class visits, files it’s err it’s one in a quarter. Ok thank you.”*

H₂ *“Hmmm, as an HoD I do daily visits to our classes in the morning and around period four to check the attendance of our students and to check whether is there any teaching and learning that is taking place in the classes and usually also do*

class visits to check as well whether teaching and learning is it perform correctly which will be done plus minus three times a year with our lecturers.”

SL₁ *“Twice a year class visits and three times a year the admin like the files the assessment files, subject files.”*

4.2.4 Key Factors That Emerged from the Responses of Students

Examples of the views of students (S₁ to S₆) are provided below under every factor that emerged.

- Socio-economic low-income family background or challenges;
- Travelling the extended distance from home and late arrival at the college;
- Relationship with lecturers;
- Absenteeism; and
- Poor academic performance due to missed assessment.

(i) Socio-economic low-income family background or challenges

A few examples of the students' views about socio-economic low-income family background or challenges are the following:

S₁ *“I come from a family of three siblings. A mother who is a single parent. Err, We reside in Letlhabile. In my family, err, I could say we are simple family which none of us is working. So, we survive on let's say if my parent find some work or my sister you know, that money we combine the money and we focus on essential needs of the house.”*

S₂ *“Emm, We are five. My dad is working, my mom is not working. My brother is not working, then there's me I'm schooling here. Then, there's my little sister, she is she does not stay with us all the week. She goes to Meerhof for the disabled kids and she comes back on Friday. So yaa, I think that covers almost everything.”*

- S₂ *“Yoo, I’m the challenges that we face at home are many. Emm, (she cried) I, I have a little sister. She, she got attacked by stroke last year she was only 16. So it’s it’s very hard to adjust everything cos it happened so sudden like we did not expect it and so yaa, and my mom is not working. My mom is not working so, we depend only on my dad. Yaa, and they are fighting mom and dad and it’s a lot.”*
- S₃ *“Err, I live with my mom and my little brother. It’s only the three of us. Err, My mom isn’t working so my little brother is the one that is working. Yeah, It’s only the three of us at home.”*
- S₄ *“I am from a family of four. My mother is employed and I’m from an a an urban city. Yes and we are Christians.”*
- S₅ *“Ok, I’m from a family of four whereby I’m staying with my grandmother and my my grandfather and my younger brother and we are a family of a cultural family, a venda family.”*
- S₆ *“Err, my family home background, we are a family of five and we live with our single mother who is working.”*

(ii) Travelling the extended distance from home and late arrival at the college

A few examples of the students’ views about travelling a long distance from home and late arrival at the college are presented below:

- S₁ *“I’m from Letlhabile, so, I could say it’s between 30, 35 and 20, I mean between 25 And 32 kilometres away.”*
- S₂ *“Wow, I would say maybe about 50 to 60 kilometres because I stay in Ga-Rankuwa and there it’s my real home I’m not renting I’m not renting I’m living with my parents.”*
- S₃ *“It like, when you drive it can take 15 minutes to come here. It’s in Letlhabile.”*
- S₅ *“Err, 25 kilometres away.”*

S₆ *“About 40 kilometres.”*

(iii) Relationship with lecturers

A few examples of the students' views about relationship with lecturers are disseminated below:

S₁ *“Could, I could describe it in two ways, we have a good professional relationship, with some lectures but some you find that they come in the morning angry with their personal matters and you try to greet them or try to crack a joke to put a smile in class everyone can be comfortable then you find that they will attack you with words that will have you like losing your self esteem in class not able to answer but some ya some they they give us a good good professional relationship. You end up taking them as your parent. You can be able to talk to them with anything anything you are struggling with. You can share or exchange ideas as sometimes they give you a platform you ask for a platform to teach the class so that others can understand further you know you find out that I for one understand electronics better than others my method can be effective than the lectures maybe the lectures method takes longer period but with my method I could simply change the game so that others can understand.”*

S₂ *“Emmm, it's very professional. Whenever I have any problems regarding school work, I get helped. So, ya I would say it's very professional it's very calm very, just the way it should be I guess.”*

S₅ *“Oh, my relationship is very good as a because we are having err a good relationship. Lecturer and a student err, because I do participate a lot in my lecturers and I I respect them so I don't have any we have a good relationship mam.”*

S₆ *“My relationship with the lecturers is very good because I participate in classes and I do my school works.”*

(iv) Absenteeism

A few examples of the students' views about absenteeism are presented below:

S₁ *"Most of the time, I'm late after lunch. The first period after lunch."*

S₃ *"Emm, maybe twice a week."*

S₅ *"Ahhh, once a week."*

S₆ *"Ohhh, maybe once or twice a week"*

S₃ *"I miss the first class. Emm, Workshop, it's the first class the whole week, so I'm normally late on the first class."*

(v) Poor academic performance due to missed assessment

A few examples of the students' views about poor academic performance due to missed assessment are the following:

S₁ *"Yes, sometimes sometime I do. The reason for that is I will be swamped with school work. The other reason is personal matters. Of which sometimes you find that at home there is no food or sometime I come home late there is no electricity to write the homework and it's dark and there's no candles. Or you find that there's serious noise that you can't focus on writing them so I will end up writing them on at school maybe on the last day or a day before last."*

S₅ *"No"*

S₆ *"No"*

4.5. OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The researcher assured the interviewees that their inputs would be kept confidential and would not be shared with anyone except if permission is granted to do so by themselves. That is in accordance to Babbie (2001). The participants understood the questions and responded well. There were instances where the respondents were not free to answer some questions. These were some students and some lecturers. The

Heads of departments, senior lecturers and some lecturers were excited when answering a question on the challenges they face. They felt more open to discussing their challenges. The positive reactions from both lecturers and students pleased the researcher as Buthelezi's (2018: 14) study revealed that the lecturers were having biggest challenges that were brought by a range of their reactions which included fear and frustration. Lecturers were frustrated because they never included the students in their planning thus crippling the education in the TVET sector which the government aspired.

The researcher observed that most students were emotional when responding to questions about their socioeconomic factors. The emotional factor seemed to stem from their poverty-stricken social and economic family background. On the question of the relationship between students and lecturers, the researcher observed that many students were not open when answering this question. The researcher received the impression that they were either afraid or reluctant to tell the truth about what was happening in the classes.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed, interpreted and presented data collected through semi-structured interviews from the Head of Departments, senior lecturers, lecturers and students on the factors contributing to poor student achievement at the Orbit TVET College, Brits Campus. It articulated to the preceding chapters one, two and three. Several factors emerged from the discussions. A summary of findings and recommendations are presented in chapter five (5).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study. Relevant literature from different sources was reviewed in chapter two. Chapter three presented the research methodology that was found relevant for this study. Data were analysed, interpreted and presented in chapter four.

The summary of findings and recommendations in chapter five are derived from the interviews with heads of departments, senior lecturers, lecturers and students. These participants are in the NC(V) programme at Orbit TVET College, Brits campus, North West Province. They were based on the factors that could be linked to the poor performance of first-year students (Level 2s). This was an attempt to answer the main research question: What are the factors that contribute to poor academic performance in TVET Colleges?

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings from the research conducted focused on the main themes from the interviews and reading of the verbatim transcripts.

5.2.1. The voice of management (heads of departments and senior lecturers), lecturers and students

5.2.1.1. Heads of Departments and Senior Lecturers

Summary of findings from the Heads of Department' and Senior Lecturers:

5.2.1.1.1 Challenges faced by Heads of Departments and Senior Lecturers about NC(V) Programmes

The quality of the students that are admitted for the NC(V) programmes is a significant concern for the Head of Departments when admitting the students. Some of the reports students come with to apply are questionable. The NC(V) programme is pitched at a high level. Because of the difficulty of the programme, some students absent themselves from college or even drop out. That was also confirmed by Matsolo et. al. (2016: 69). The retention rate suffers due to the demotivated students. They are uncertain of employment after the completing of the NC(V) programme.

5.2.1.1.2 Alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry

The curriculum is perceived to be relevant as it prepares the students for the world of work. Practical experience given to students, Work Based Exposure (WBE) enables the students to cope when employed.

5.2.1.1.3 Challenges to effect changes to the curriculum

More practical work may be introduced than theory to motivate and prepare students well for the industry. Students are sent to industry for more exposure.

5.2.1.1.4 Academic results

There were mixed feelings among the Heads of Departments and senior lecturers. In general, the results are moderated and may be improved if more effort can be placed. Gerda (2016: 46) blames the poor academic results on the quality of lecturing staff the colleges have. She states that few lecturers are appropriately qualified to teach at the college.

5.2.1.1.5 Intervention strategies to improve students' results

Management spoke firmly about the intervention strategies. Throughout the year, the marks are monitored and students are supported. The peer academic leaders assist low performing students. Previous question papers are given to students for revision. Extra classes' time tables are drawn for the students who need assistance with certain subjects. Adequately skilled lecturers may also assist in getting better results. Lecturers who are in the Engineering Department should have an artisanship certificate. Heads of

Departments need the admission requirements for the NC(V) programme to be looked into. They believe that Grade 9 students are not well prepared for the NC(V) programme. Senior lecturers feel that if students who have learning difficulties can be given personal attention, this may improve their marks.

5.2.1.1.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Heads of Departments conduct daily monitoring of classes, have a schedule for class visits and do visits when the need arises. Senior lecturers monitor classes according to the schedule as they also have attended to their classes. All these monitoring and evaluations are recorded for support if needed.

5.2.1.2. Lecturers

Summary of findings from lecturers' responses:

5.2.1.2.1 Challenges faced by lecturers about NC(V) programmes

The level of difficulty of the NC(V) programme is of concern to the lecturers as the students from the mainstream schools do not cope with the NC(V) curriculum.

Students admitted for NC(V) do not come with the background of Mathematics, Science and Computer subjects. The mathematical manipulation is also a challenge for the NC(V) Level 2 students. These students find it very difficult to cope with the NC(V) curriculum. Most of the students have learning difficulties. Some have failed several times in the mainstream schools and opt for the TVET Colleges as their last option only to find that the curriculum is challenging. Students are unable to cope with the workshop practicals for Engineering programmes as they see them for the first time. The complexity of the NC(V) programme may be a contributing factor for the students and lecturers to have an attitude towards their studies as mentioned by Alami (2016: 5). Lecturers also have significant challenges with a lot of administrative work that they must do daily. This takes much of their teaching and learning time.

5.2.1.2.2 Alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry

Lecturers believe that students are afforded a lot of practical experience in workshops, simulation rooms and computer labs. Students who do Office Administration have more exposure in working in an office as their curriculum content has more practical work. Lecturers also feel that their curriculum could be decreased to concentrate more on practical work than theory.

5.2.1.2.3 Challenges to effect changes to the curriculum

Lecturers want the curriculum to be reviewed to match the current trends. For example, Database topic can be replaced by Electronic Communication and Internet Skills. In Engineering, the fourth industrial revolution equipment could be introduced than the traditional tools being used in the workshop.

5.2.1.2.4 Academic results

Lecturers are satisfied with the results as they view them as moderate and believe that they have the potential to improve. The challenging subject is Mathematics that is mostly failed by students.

5.2.1.2.5 Intervention strategies to improve students' results

Lecturers who give the same subjects do exchange students for best practice. They give classes after hours. More question papers are made available to students for revision. If more than one lecturer offers the same subject and the lecturer cannot cope with a particular module, another lecturer assists that lecturer by teaching that module or advising the lecturer on how to handle the module. Lecturers also refer the students to student support, where the peer academic leaders assist those students.

5.2.1.3. Students

Summary of findings from students' responses:

5.2.1.3.1 Socio-economic low-income family background or challenges

The students generally come from a family of four or five. Some families are headed by a single parent or even a grand-parent. In most families, there is no member employed or there is only one who has to take care of the whole family. All the students experience financial challenges. A high level of drop out is also due to the financial stress experienced by students. Lamb (2011: 61) in his study conducted in Australia, states that students who come from financially disadvantaged background constitute a higher percentage of drop outs. The low socioeconomic statuses of the students have a very negative impact on their results.

5.2.1.3.2 Travelling long distances from home and late arrival at the college

All students travel long distances from home to college. They travel 25 to 60 kilometres per day to college. Because of the long-distance, they have to wake up very early to be in time for college. This also has financial implications because the transport expenses must be paid daily. Matsolo et al. (2018: 75) reports that lack of payment or late payment of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is a major contributing factor to students' performance.

5.2.1.3.3 Relationship with lecturers

Most students have an excellent professional relationship with their lecturers. They respond positively in classes even though there may be instances where lecturers are not having a good day and take out their stress on students.

5.2.1.3.4 Absenteeism

Absenteeism is a serious challenge to students in general. Reche et al. (2012: 131-132) agrees with this statement when he mentions that students in Kenya are performing poorly due to absenteeism. Students indicated that they are absent the first period in the morning. That may be because of transport challenges. Others mentioned that they are absent during the first period after lunch. This is because of travelling long distances to get food during lunch breaks. If they are absent every single day in the morning and

after lunch, this has an adverse impact on their classes as they miss out a lot. This means that per week, there may be five to ten hours where they are absent from class.

5.2.1.3.5 Poor academic performance due to missed assessment

Of the students interviewed on poor academic performance due to missed assessment, only one responded negatively. He mentioned that he misses assessments due to family circumstances beyond his control. These include not having food to eat, having no electricity and the noise that may be caused by the neighbours. Transport that arrives late was another factor mentioned as impacting on poor performance due to missed assessment.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study give a clear indication that there are many challenges faced by TVET Colleges when it comes to NC(V) programmes' results. These findings give a clear hint as to why TVET Colleges experience low academic performance in NC(V) programmes for the first-year students.

From the findings listed above, the following are recommended to improve the academic results in the NC(V) programmes.

5.3.1 Heads of Departments, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers

5.3.1.1 Challenges faced by the Heads of Departments, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers about NC (V) programmes

Gewer (2010) states that the problem with student readiness is fuelled by the lack of adequate student support services which offer proper career guidance. Further studies should be conducted to investigate how student support may effectively support students socially and academically throughout their studies. The Student Support Services policy needs to be reviewed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

In the student readiness and the level of difficulty of the NC(V) programmes, policy makers need to review the Guideline to additional admission requirements to Technical and Vocational Education and Training College programmes policy to include the scoring sheet to assess the results of the students before being admitted. There should also be an admission criterion that may include Maths and Science for the students who would like to enrol for the Engineering programmes. It should also be compulsory that all the students take the placement test to weigh their level of readiness. This will also assist in identifying students who ought to be referred to the student support officer for academic support purposes. The Pre Learning Programme (PLP) should be introduced in colleges to assist students who have learning difficulties.

5.3.1.2 Alignment and relevance of curriculum content to the industry

The curriculum can be improved by regular review and best practice to other colleges. The industry should also be invited to the colleges to discuss and give inputs to the colleges about the relevance of the curriculum. Partnerships should be formed with the industry for Work Based Experience (WBE) for the students.

5.3.1.3 Challenges to effect changes to the curriculum

A review of the curriculum will assist in determining the time spent on practical work than theory. Compliance to the subject and assessment guidelines should be emphasised to improve on the results.

5.3.1.4 Academic results

Lecturers offering Engineering subjects should be qualified artisans to be able to cope with the demands of the workshops. The Human Resources policy on recruiting and appointment of Engineering and specialised skills lecturers need to be reviewed in order to appoint the appropriate lecturing staff.

After every assessment, results should be analysed. Follow-ups should be done throughout the year of subjects and students who did not perform well, and students

with learning difficulties should be identified early in the year to offer them appropriate assistance.

Management also concurs with Kiwanuka et al. (2015) who presented evidence that the students from low socioeconomic status families are poor performers as compared to the students coming from the higher socioeconomic statuses. Management and lecturers ought to understand the socio-economic statuses on the students. This may assist in identifying the students who require special attention and those who could be referred to student support.

5.3.1.5 Intervention strategies to improve students' results

Intervention strategies should be encouraged for all programmes and subjects. These should be communicated to all lecturers and ensure compliance. Heads of Departments and senior lecturers should monitor these activities so that they ensure implementation.

5.3.1.6 Monitoring and evaluation for senior lecturers and Heads of Departments.

Monitoring should be seen as a support to all lecturing staff. Monitoring and evaluation should be continuous. The monitoring plans should be communicated at the beginning of every academic year. These plans should be part of the teaching and learning plans for every staff member. Reports ought to be compiled.

5.3.2 Students

5.3.2.1 Socio-economic low-income family background or challenges

Students, during registration, should get communication of the Rules and guidelines for the Administration of Higher Education and Training Technical and Vocational Education and Training Bursary scheme and be encouraged apply for the NSFAS so that their applications are processed in time for them to have funds to assist with their studies. Bursaries (NSFAS) ought to be paid out early in the year for the students to have transport money. Student support should go to the extent of follow up on the

applications of NSFAS bursaries and communicating with all stakeholders. Student support officials, during the student induction, should emphasise on the services offered by students support office. The social support services should know about the student challenges to be able to assist them.

5.3.2.2 Travelling the extended distance from home and late arrival at the college

The Students who reside at places that have TVET Colleges should be advised to apply at those colleges to cut the travelling time and expenses. They should also be advised to catch the first transport so as not to be late for classes. Students ought to be reminded that the college prepares them for the world of work and that late coming will not be allowed at workplaces.

5.3.2.3 Relationship with lecturers

Students should maintain the professional relationship they have with lecturers. They should be encouraged to report, through the right channels, any ill-treatment that they may experience.

5.3.2.4 Absenteeism

The implementation of the Department of Higher Education and Training Recommended Attendance and Punctuality policy for the public TVET colleges will eradicate or minimise the absenteeism experienced by lecturers in their classes. Students should, during the induction, sign a document acknowledging the policy and its consequences.

5.3.2.5 Poor academic performance due to missed assessment

Colleges should ensure that there is a cafeteria service for students on campus. This will assist in students having lunch within the premises of the college. Travelling long distances to get food may result in students being late for classes or missing classes. Students ought to also report the social challenges experienced so that the student support services can assist.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study revealed that numerous factors contribute to poor academic performance in TVET Colleges. The study aimed to identify these challenges and draw conclusions for better results. A qualitative method of gathering information was utilised. Twelve participants were interviewed to gather more information on challenges faced by colleges on poor results. The researcher went through several articles to find more information on the topic and to analyse published articles from other researchers.

Findings revealed that the students coming from mainstream schools are not prepared for the NC(V) programme. Furthermore, the curriculum is too loaded and that more time should be allocated to practice than theory. Absenteeism is still a significant problem for the success of the TVET Colleges. Most of the lecturers are not well-skilled to teach in TVET Colleges. Most of the students experience financial constraints and travel long distances to come to college. All these challenges have an impact on the students' studies.

It is recommended that the curriculum be reviewed. Management ought to look into the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) to prepare the students for the world of work. The admission criteria should also be looked into primarily for the students who would like to enrol for the Engineering programmes. The NSFAS ought to fund students at the beginning of the academic year for funds to be available to students on time. The "Batho Pele" principle should be practised. This will enable us to take the students' social challenges seriously and with our student support services, assist where we can and to give our students a better service to improve their morale.

Lessons learnt from this study present opportunities and potential for further research in the South African TVET colleges with the concentration on NC(V) programmes. Furthermore, when the education system is being transformed, the policy makers need to put the lecturers at the apex (Buthelezi 2018: 16).

With these findings, the researcher believes that this research will make a significant contribution towards improving the results of the TVET Colleges when the factors that contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges are adequately addressed.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: REQUEST PERMISSION LETTER – ORBIT TVET COLLEGE

Request for permission to conduct research at the Orbit TVET College entitled: Factors which contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges

30th June 2019

The Principal
Orbit TVET College
Private Bag X, Fatima Bhayat Street, Rustenburg, 0300
Tel: +27 14 592 7014/+27 14 597 5500
Fax. +27 14 592 7013

Dear Sir,

I, Sarah Ethel Ngwato am doing research under the supervision of **LDM Lebeloane**, a Professor in the Department of Education Studies towards a **M.ED (Education Management)** at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Factors which contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges**.

The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which the factors have contributed to the poor academic achievements in TVET colleges.

Your College has been selected because **it is entrusted with the responsibility of providing College policy direction of the higher education sector..** The study will entail **(1)One campus manger, (2)two head of departments, (2)two senior lecturers, (2)two lecturers and (3)three students from each department to participate in the study by means of a face to face interview as one of the knowledgeable key informants on the topic at hand.** The benefits of this study are that the findings may be used to improve the certificate and pass rate in the college and to better manage the identified challenges that lover the performance of students in the TVET sector.

There are no foreseeable risks for taking part in the study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Key findings of the study will be made available to the Principal of Orbit TVET College through a summary report on the study after its successful completion.

Yours sincerely

E Ngwato

APPENDIX B: REQUEST PERMISSION LETTER – ORBIT TVET COLLEGE, BRITS CAMPUS

Request for permission to conduct research at Orbit TVET College, Brits campus: Factors which contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges

30th June 2019

The Campus Manager
Orbit TVET College
Private Bag X 5060, Brits, 0250
Tel: +27 12 381 5700
Fax. +27 12 381 5708

Dear Ma'am,

I, Sarah Ethel Ngwato am doing research under the supervision of **LDM Lebeloane**, a Professor in the Department of Education Studies towards a **M.ED (Education Management)** at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Factors which contribute to poor academic achievement in TVET Colleges**.

The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which the factors have contributed to the poor academic achievements in TVET colleges.

Your College has been selected because **it is entrusted with the responsibility of providing College policy direction of the higher education sector**. The study will entail **(1)One campus manger, (2)two head of departments, (2)two senior lecturers, (2)two lecturers and (3)three students from each department to participate in the study by means of a face to face interview as one of the knowledgeable key informants on the topic at hand**. The benefits of this study are that the findings may be used to improve the certificate and pass rate in the college and to better manage the identified challenges that lover the performance of students in the TVET sector.

There are no foreseeable risks for taking part in the study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Key findings of the study will be made available to the Principal of Orbit TVET College through a summary report on the study after its successful completion.

Yours sincerely

E Ngwato
Researcher

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

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

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

I agree with the recording of the **interview**.

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

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

DATE

Researcher's Name & Surname

Sarah Ethel Ngwato



30-06-2019

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COLLEGE HOD

College: _____

Number of years in the college: _____

Department: _____

Number of students: _____

Number of lecturers: _____

1. What is/are the current subjects that you teach in the college?
2. What are your thoughts on the relevance of the curriculum content in the subject that you teach towards students' needs?
3. In which ways does the NC(V) curriculum content prepare students adequately for the workplace?
4. What are your thoughts on how the curriculum content aligns with industry requirements or expectations?
5. What is your view concerning the National Certificate Vocational curricula of the subject that you currently teach?
6. What changes need to be made to the curricula contents of the subjects that you teach?
7. Is the curriculum content from the main stream schools at a level that prepares students for the NC(V) programmes?
8. What are the current challenges faced by the lecturers with regard to NC (V) programme?
9. What is your level of satisfaction with the academic results that you produce on a yearly basis.
10. What are the reasons for the state of the academic results being produced?
11. What are the intervention strategies that you are implementing to assist the students who are struggling with the NC (V) curriculum?
12. How often do you monitor teaching and learning?
13. What strategies or practices can you put in place to ensure better results?

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TVET COLLEGE SENIOR LECTURERS

College: _____

Number of years in the college: _____

Department: _____

Number of students: _____

Number of lecturers: _____

1. What is/are the current subjects that you teach in the college?
2. What are your thoughts on the relevance of the curriculum content in the subject that you teach towards students' needs?
3. In which ways does the NC(V) curriculum content prepare students adequately for the workplace?
4. What are your thoughts on how the curriculum content aligns with industry requirements or expectations?
5. What is your view concerning the National Certificate Vocational curricula of the subject that you currently teach?
6. What changes need to be made to the curricula contents of the subjects that you teach?
7. Is the curriculum content from the main stream schools at a level that prepares students for the NC(V) programmes?
8. What are the current challenges faced by the lecturers with regard to NC (V) programme?
9. What is your level of satisfaction with the academic results that you produce on a yearly basis.
10. What are the reasons for the state of the academic results being produced?
11. What are the intervention strategies that you are implementing to assist the students who are struggling with the NC (V) curriculum?
12. How often do you monitor teaching and learning?
1. What strategies or practices can you put in place to ensure better results?

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TVET COLLEGE LECTURERS

College: _____

Number of years in the college: _____

Department: _____

Number of students: _____

Number of lecturers: _____

2. What is/are the current subjects that you teach in the college?
3. What are your thoughts on the relevance of the curriculum content in the subject that you teach towards students' needs?
4. In which ways does the NC(V) curriculum content prepare students adequately for the workplace?
5. What are your thoughts on how the curriculum content aligns with industry requirements or expectations?
6. What is your view concerning the National Certificate Vocational curricula of the subject that you currently teach?
7. What changes need to be made to the curricula contents of the subjects that you teach?
8. Is the curriculum content from the main stream schools at a level that prepares students for the NC(V) programmes?
9. What are the current challenges faced by the lecturers with regard to NC (V) programme?
10. What is your level of satisfaction with the academic results that you produce on a yearly basis.
11. What are the reasons for the state of the academic results being produced?
12. What are the intervention strategies that you are implementing to assist the students who are struggling with the NC (V) curriculum?
13. What strategies or practices can you put in place to ensure better results?

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

College: _____

Programme: _____

1. Explain your family and home background.
2. How far do you stay from the college?
3. How many years have you been a student at the college?
4. How often are you late at the college?
5. Which classes do you normally miss?
6. If you do miss classes, what is the reason for missing those classes?
7. Do you ever miss writing assessments?
8. What challenges do you face at home?
9. Describe the relationship that you have with your lecturers.

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX H: PERMISSION FROM DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

14 No. 39583


GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, 8 JANUARY 2016

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

FOR OFFICIAL USE

DECISION BY HEAD OF COLLEGE

Please tick relevant decision and provide conditions/reasons where applicable

Decision		Please tick relevant option below
1	Application approved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Application approved subject to certain conditions. <i>Specify conditions below</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No conditions.		
3	Application not approved. <i>Provide reasons for non-approval below</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
/		
NAME OF COLLEGE ORBIT TVET COLLEGE		
NAME AND SURNAME OF HEAD OF COLLEGE Dika Mokoena		
SIGNATURE 		
DATE 2019/09/01		

23 February 2020

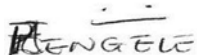
DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

I declare that I have edited and proofread the Master of Education Dissertation entitled: **FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN TVET COLLEGES: A CASE STUDY** by Ms **SE Ngwato**.

My involvement was restricted to language editing: contextual spelling, grammar, punctuation, unclear antecedent, wordiness, vocabulary enhancement, sentence structure and style, proofreading, sentence completeness, sentence rewriting, consistency, referencing style, editing of headings and captions. I did not do structural re-writing of the content. Kindly note that the manuscript was formatted as per agreement with the client.

No responsibility is taken for any occurrences of plagiarism, which may not be obvious to the editor. The client is responsible for ensuring that all sources are listed in the reference list/bibliography. The editor is not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to my edit. The client is responsible for the quality and accuracy of the final submission/publication.

Sincerely,



Pholile Zengele
Associate Member

Membership number: ZEN001
Membership year: March 2019 to February 2020

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