LECTURERS' EXPERIENCES IN A TVET FACULTY: CULTURE AND THE EFFECTS ON THEIR WELLBEING

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to understand the experiences TVET college lecturers had of their faculty culture and what affect, if any, these experiences had on their wellbeing. This was a qualitative study and focused on the experiences of six lecturers and their wellness in a faculty of a college. The purpose of the study was to understand how lecturers experienced their work culture, what factors in the culture where integral in their experiences and how these experiences had affected their health. This was an interpretivist study which sought understanding, knowledge and information from real lived experiences and followed a narrative inquiry research design aimed at capturing the stories of lecturers in their natural setting and to chronicle those stories in the study. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants and the semi-structured interview was the data generation instrument used in the study. Antonovsky's theory of sense of coherence (SOC) was used as the theoretical framework to examine and interpret the data. The thematic and content analysis approach was followed to further analyse and evaluate the data meaningfully in accordance with the research objectives and the findings and conclusions are presented in the narrative report to maintain the voices of the lecturers. The findings and conclusions reached from the evaluation of the data offer knowledge and understanding of the research topic to reflect a particular reality through the experiences of the lecturers in their unique cultural setting and therefore cannot be generalised to other faculties within the college or to other similar institutions. However, the stories and findings may resonate with the others within the institution in other college environments or maybe even in other higher education institutions. The study examined the perceptions of six individuals of their faculty and college culture and from these experiences cultural factors were identified which were affecting their sense of coherence, health and wellbeing. The findings and conclusions of the study showed that lecturers found their work culture to be disempowering, stifling and dysfunctional. A number of factors that they identified contributed to mostly unpleasant experiences in the faculty some more significantly than others. The study concluded that college lecturers worked in a highly demanding environment which contributed to their ill-health.

DECLARATION

I, Nirvashini Singh, declare that:

1. The research reported and presented in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree, examination or qualification at any other university.
3. This dissertation does not contain other people's data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as sourced from other people.
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    a) their words have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;

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This dissertation does not contain text, graphs, pictures or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being identified in detail in the dissertation and in the references section.

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Nirvashini Singh
See attached declaration

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Supervisor: Dr Ruth Searle

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ABBREVIATIONS

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
HRM	Human Resource Management
GET	General Education and Training
NCV	National Certificate: Vocational
SMT	Senior Management Team
TVET	Technical, Vocational, Education and Training
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SOC	Sense of Coherence
UMALUSI	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
WSOC	Workplace Sense of Coherence

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study seeks to understand lecturers' experiences of the culture in a Technical, Vocational and Educational Institution (TVET) in the city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The purpose is to establish the extent to which their sense of wellbeing is affected by aspects of their work culture. The aims, rationale, background of the study, objectives and research questions, as well as the methodological approach chosen, are introduced and outlined in this chapter. The chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters that will follow.

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are to understand how factors in a TVET college environment shape lecturers' experiences and perspectives of their workplace as well as to understand how these experiences affect their wellbeing. The purpose of the study is to capture, give meaning to and document accounts of their lived experiences. The aim is to gain knowledge and understanding of lecturers' perceptions of their workplace as influenced by real world experiences through which meaning is constructed. The study aims to uncover descriptions, explanations and perceptions of their faculty culture, which is part of the college culture, and to identify the possible factors within that culture that are negatively or positively affecting lecturers' experiences and their wellbeing. The aim is to capture as entirely as is possible lecturers' experiences of the phenomenon and to give meaning to these experiences within the research objectives and questions set out in the study. The study seeks to understand how lecturers may or may not have to cope with possible challenges that emanate from the work environment and to identify aspects that may enhance or diminish their wellbeing.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The rationale arises from current assertions and assumptions of physically unhealthy and operationally dysfunctional faculty cultures in TVET colleges and some evidence of lecturers experiencing physical and mental stress and low work satisfaction (Buthelezi, 2018). Generally, people spend up to a third of their lives at the workplace and work activities are a meaningful part

of their existence, thus work satisfaction or dissatisfaction affects overall wellbeing (Van Zyl, Deacon, & Rothmann, 2010). Cohen, Jackalas, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) explain that the relationship between positive school climates and improved teacher practices results in better student performance and the attainment of a country's educational goals and therefore negative cultures may result in negative effects. Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, and Coetsee (2005) support the notion that institutional culture and educator wellbeing are key factors that promote the quality of education. The authors describe how supportive, caring and safe educational climates can promote aspects such as ethical behaviour of educators and work satisfaction thus enhancing the quality of education.

These conclusions emanate from studies conducted in schools and universities and few studies in the literature directly address TVET college lecturers, their work cultures or their wellbeing. TVET colleges in South Africa, have seen several changes in recent years, particularly in restructuring, transformation, redress and equity (Aarons & Sawitzky, 2006; Buthelezi, 2016). In addition, recent economic, social and geo-political changes taking place in the broader community as well as global demands for skills development have emphasised the role, function and expectations of the sector. The impact of these demands at college level has, hypothetically, unsettled TVET college cultures in numerous ways and therefore this study seeks further understanding in this elusive area in the literature.

The research problem arises at the faculty level of colleges, where the brunt of changes is directly experienced and felt by lecturers thus shaping their perceptions of the work culture. High staff turnover, low morale, low student throughput and college ineffectiveness are some of the characteristics of TVET colleges (Aarons & Sawitzky, 2006). The research problem, based on anecdotal evidence and some aspects of the research problem mentioned randomly in the literature usually as incidental findings in studies on other topics, is the assumption that TVET college environments are neglected aspects in the governance and management of these organisations and there is little concern for lecturer welfare. The theoretical assumption proposes that the college cultures are lacking in structures that show regard for lecturer wellbeing. What the study is therefore seeking to understand is how a college culture is shaped, what factors are responsible and how lecturers are being affected, from the experiences of the lecturers themselves. The literature confirms that the achievement of goals is only possible in work cultures that are supportive and empowering and consider the needs and welfare of the educators (Bello, Ibrahim, & Bularafa, 2015). If supportive cultures enhance wellbeing and the attainment of organisational goals, what then are the factors that provide support or enhance lecturer wellbeing in TVET

college cultures in order to meet the colleges' goals? The literature is unclear about the extent to which TVET college cultures are empowering or disempowering or the extent to which lecturers are satisfied or dissatisfied.

The research problem, which reflects the unknown aspects mentioned above, is further pondered in the chasm between national goals and the expectations and realities of lecturers in their college faculties (Wedekind, 2010). Despite such suggestions of possible harsh college environments, strategies to enhance TVET college cultures and lecturer wellbeing are often not specifically provided for in national policies or in college mission and vision statements. This could possibly indicate that actual workplace practices and environments are neglected or taken for granted aspects of the workplace culture and this warrants a deeper exploration. Morphew and Hartley (2006) describe the importance of mission statements for creating an institutional identity and setting out a shared vision for all, yet most are merely symbolic representations that essentially reflect institutional ideology and not institutional reality. The study seeks an understanding of this "institutional reality" in light of the schisms between the institution and its faculties as well as between national goals and expectations and faculty realities. The research problem also aims to understand whether institutional or college and faculty cultures are one and the same. The research problem assumes that the faculty's culture is likely to be more significant to lecturers as it represents the immediate work environment where the impact of changes is felt and where lecturers are expected to directly contribute to and participate in (Ramaley, 2002), and it is for these reasons that the study is focused on a faculty and not the college.

The two aspects, faculty culture and lecturer wellbeing, are not separate components of the study as they are interdependent and symbiotic in nature and warrant a deeper understanding than is currently available. The literature will show that the link between one's environment and their wellbeing is firmly established and documented, however studies specifically on the TVET culture and its' effects on the wellbeing of college lecturers are insufficient and the current information can be described as cursory. It is from this elusive and constantly changing educational background, the failure to align national goals with institutional realities, the place where the college and it's lecturers are expected to meet certain aims and the paucity of knowledge on the research phenomenon that the research problem and therefore the rationale for this study arises.

The culture of the college is part of the ecosystem of the community it serves. Culture is therefore a construct embedded in people as they go about their work and lives and is often perceived on

an unconscious level (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). This means that humans' perceptions of their environment take place on a conscious and unconscious level. The term culture is often loosely used to describe a particular state of affairs, yet an agreed understanding of the concept remains somewhat elusive. Sabanci, Sahin, Sönmez, and Yilmaz (2017) agree that the concept of institutional culture is hard to define, because of the wide and diverse use of the term and because most culture is individually perceived consciously and unconsciously. Smircich (1983) explains that culture is a projection of a mind's universal unconscious infrastructure and a system of shared beliefs. The study seeks to explore these views of culture within the social context which is learning from peoples' lived experiences and therefore the study follows a qualitative approach. Communities and organisations comprise of individuals and therefore the study seeks to determine the extent of the individual and shared perceptions by lecturers of the college culture.

Mmako and Shultz (2016) describe the challenges experienced by college lecturers of having to perform a number of complex tasks in an increasingly demanding environment without the necessary resources, and indicate how this can lead to stress, low organisational commitment and poor physical and mental health. In colleges where commitment is low, there is no incentive to innovate and the culture may be such that employees are essentially penalised for suggesting new ways. Over time, prolonged exposure to an unsupportive and neglectful environment can pressure employees towards compliance and passivity and discourages ongoing learning and self-development (Coetzee & Mensele, 2014). Sieberhagen, Pienaar and Els (2011) explain that employers are currently becoming more aware of issues related to wellness and this trend towards creating healthy workplaces affirms the rationale for the study, particularly in an environment where wellness appears not to be a priority. The work environment for lecturers appears to be a place of frustration, lack of motivation, confusion and chaos resulting in physical ailments, mental stress, negativity and depression (Martin & Roodt, 2008). An understanding of the factors in the faculty that contribute to, and those that are detrimental to, lecturer wellbeing is the main reason for undertaking the study that will help provide information to understand and improve college environments.

The study follows a qualitative approach to generate data from interviews with participants narrating their lived experiences of the work culture. The research design follows a narrative inquiry approach to generate data and report the voices of the lecturers. The study will move from the general hypotheses and assumptions mentioned above to real evidence from the actual experiences of lecturers that would authenticate the rationale for further understanding of the

research topic as well as to refute or confirm the anecdotal evidence and hypothetical assumptions that motivate the study. Lecturing was an attractive career choice a few years ago, but now appears to be a stressful profession with lecturers complaining about demanding workloads, physical and mental exhaustion, burnout, lack of motivation and job satisfaction linked to minor and serious health problems (Hancock & Scherff, 2010). Coetzee and Rothmann (2005) agree that historically, working in an educational institution was a reasonably stress free and satisfying career choice, even though lecturers worked long hours and received minimum support, they were still able to receive satisfaction from their jobs and yet many are still attracted to the profession and chose to remain. This study aims to assess the extent to which college lecturers are happy or dissatisfied in their work environment and to identify what factors are responsible, hence the qualitative methodology and interpretivism analytical approach is suitable.

Finally, since there are a limited number of studies on TVET colleges and college lecturers and not specifically on the topic of culture and wellbeing within the South African context, the study hopes to add to the knowledge in this sector on the research phenomenon. The sector, situated between the general education and higher education bands, is often neglected and overlooked in the research arena (Buthelezi, 2018). This further confirms the rationale for the studying the research phenomenon. The next section gives the background of the study.

1.4 Background of the Study

The study is conducted in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, within the metropolitan city of Durban. The college selected, whose identity and actual location is protected, has several campuses in the Durban area and the study is conducted at a faculty of one of the campuses. The college is a public-run institution mandated by the Department of Higher Education (DHET) to provide occupational skills training and industry related education and training to school dropouts and matriculants (Nzembe, 2018). TVET curricula has a strong practical component with the emphasis on short courses aimed to ensure greater and speedier employability into labour market. TVET colleges are also tasked with making tertiary education more accessible to the mass number of high school matriculants who are unable to pursue university education by supposedly offering programmes in response to existing and new labour market demands (Wedekind, 2010). While these are the aims set out in TVET policies, the college has been slow to adapt to technological and economic changes and the challenge to meet these national goals of skill provision seems unrealistic in light of the setting of the study.

The study is located at a campus that has two faculties offering programmes in the respective disciplines. Identifying details of the location of the study are not included to protect the college. The experiences of lecturers within one of these faculties is the focus of the study. The two faculties although situated on one campus function independently of each other, each with their own programmes, student profiles, academic calendar, influences and other distinguishing characteristics. Each campus and some faculties at the college were once separate institutions during the apartheid era and were merged into one institution according to the restructuring policies of 1994 (Nkoe & Bisschoff, 2005). Thus, inherited cultures reinforce the independence of faculties within the college and with time new layers of culture have been added as changes occurred. As mentioned earlier, faculty cultures are sub-cultures of the institutional culture that emerge from disciplines and departments (Umbach, 2007) and can be strengthened or weakened by historical roles. The college culture may set the tone for all lecturers through policies and mission statements, however, faculty cultures represent the specialist based workplaces for lecturers and usually develop their own distinct culture within this. This independent faculty is where the study is located.

Some general features of the location of the study are presented. The faculty is located alongside a major city street. The campus is situated between a dumping site and an informal settlement. Garbage is also dumped on the main access road affecting safety and vehicles face the risk of damage. The campus' buildings are old and in a poor state due to a lack of maintenance. Frequent flooding of the campus occurs due to its location causing unplanned closures. Despite the negative features described, the faculty is one of the best performing faculties of the college, with comparatively better pass rates of students in its programmes nationally.

The faculty organogram profiles a simple line management structure, with overall authority held by the campus manager, followed by the head of the faculty and senior lecturers who form the divisional management responsible for day-to-day operations. Lecturers report directly to the senior lecturers. The study focuses solely on lecturers' experiences. Jackalas, Martins, and Ungerer (2016) highlight that culture is experienced differently by employees at various levels of an institution, mainly because each level is exposed to a different set of factors. Silver (2003) explains that within the institution, there exist faculties and disciplines that form pockets of subcultures which would be a challenge to studying a holistic view of the college in a mini-dissertation. Students, managers and support staffs' experiences may be the same in some respects, but for the most part are perceived differently due to the different role each plays within

the college. The focus of this study is to understand the perspectives and experiences of the lecturers only, and therefore their experiences may not apply to everyone in the college.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the culture in a faculty at a TVET college from the perspective of lecturers.
2. To identify the factors that lecturers feel are influencing and shaping the culture.
3. To investigate how these factors influence the wellbeing of lecturers in their work environment.

1.6 Research Questions

1. How do lecturers describe the culture in their faculty?
2. What factors of the culture do lecturers feel affect their wellbeing?
3. How do lecturers feel about the culture they describe??

The use of Antonovsky's theory of sense of coherence (SOC) is chosen as the theoretical framework to provide the lens through which the data will be analysed and evaluated in order to meaningfully report the lecturers' experiences of their work environment (Antonovsky, 1987). Individuals deal with their environment differently and aspects that may be perceived as challenging by some, may be perceived as opportunities for growth by others due to their SOC. SOC describes an individual's disposition to coping with their environment and thus provides a suitable framework to analyse and evaluate the data on the research phenomenon the study seeks to understand.

The research problem has been set out and the rationale for the study is explained. The research objectives and questions are stated. The setting and background of the location of the study is described. The next section briefly describes the methodological approach that will be used in the study.

1.7 The Methodological Approach of the Study

The study is situated within the interpretive paradigm which guides the ontological and epistemological aspects of the knowledge to be gained in order to develop a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon and to generate an appropriate body of knowledge to address the research objectives. According to Scotland (2012), the ontological position of interpretivism is

relativism which is of the view that reality is subjective, differs from person to person, and is mediated by our senses. As with social realism, knowledge is produced socially by the way people think about the world around them (Archer, 2011). The social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are participating in it and can therefore provide knowledge and understanding about it. The interpretive paradigm is the appropriate fit to approach the aim of the study, which is to give lecturers a voice to tell of their experiences and the narrative inquiry is the method selected to capture and report these meaningfully in order to better understand the research phenomenon. The interpretive paradigm emphasises a humanistic approach (Cresswell & Sheik, 2013), where researchers study participants in their natural setting which is the focus of the study.

The interpretive paradigm uses mainly qualitative research methods to generate and interpret data. Qualitative research as a methodology, speaks to the interpretive paradigm in terms of the type of data needed to create a knowledge base for understanding the research problem. Qualitative research aims to explain a social phenomenon in a natural setting through verbal descriptions and analysis of complex data (Suter, 2012). Golafshani (2003) explains that qualitative research attempts to understand phenomena in context-specific settings and highlights that the researcher does not make an attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest which aids in avoiding researcher bias. This enhances the generation of authentic rich, deep, thick data that enhances understanding of the phenomenon and to develop theories and lines of argument on the research topic during the research process.

Qualitative research is based on grounded theory, which means that the research problems and questions are assumptions regarding the social phenomenon to be studied and the research methods allow for the development of a more consistent theory as data is generated, evaluated and interpreted. Bowen, (2006, p. 2) states, “A grounded theory is derived inductively through the systematic generation and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon”. The use of inductive analysis within the theoretical framework ensures the researcher thoroughly engages with the data during the analysis and evaluation process which is aimed at revealing patterns and common themes that emerge from the data to help interpret and give meaning to the data according to the research objectives.

This section gives a brief description of the methodological approach that the study will follow. The data generation method is the narrative inquiry using the semi-structured interview as the data generating tool in the study. The suitability of the semi-structured interview allows for the

alignment of the research paradigm and research approach to acquire the in-depth data on participants' experiences relating to the research questions. Details on the research design and data generation methods are explained in detail in Chapter Four. The following section provides an outline of the chapters in the study.

1.8 Outline of the Chapters in the Study

Chapter One: The research topic is introduced and aims and of the study are described. The rationale for the study, based on the research problem is provided to motivate the purpose of the study, while the background sets the scene for the basis of the study. The research objectives and questions outline specifically the purpose and focus of the study. A brief description of the methodological approach is given and the outline of the subsequent chapters are highlighted.

Chapter Two: The literature review covers an extensive exploration of existing knowledge and perspectives of TVET college cultures and lecturer wellbeing. Common factors that may influence the culture in college settings are pulled from the literature for discussion that could also be the possible factors for the study in a faculty setting. The concept of employee wellbeing is reviewed and discussed.

Chapter Three: The choice of the theoretical framework is explained and reasons for it suitability is provided. The uses of the theoretical framework in similar studies is shown to justify its suitability as the lens through which the data will be analysed. The meaning of sense of coherence (SOC) is explained and the standards that determine SOC are stated. The three components of SOC, namely; comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness, further show the reasons as the preferred theoretical framework for this study.

Chapter Four: Outlines the methodology and research design used in the study. The qualitative research approach the study follows is explained. The use of the narrative inquiry research design is explained. Descriptions on how the study will be conducted and justification for research decisions made are provided. The data generation tool and its suitability for the study is explained. The sampling method and selection of participants is discussed. A description of the research setting is given. Included in this chapter is an explanation of how the data will be analysed, evaluated and reported. The ethical considerations and the attempts made to ensure trustworthiness of the study is explained.

Chapter Five: A detailed explanation of the data analysis, evaluation and reporting is given. The format of the narrative to report the data is explained. This chapter includes a report on the themes and topics that emerged from the data. A discussion on the implications of the findings and conclusions reached is given. A summary of the findings and conclusions reached is included.

Chapter Six: This chapter presents the discussion on the findings and conclusions of the study. The limitations and strengths of the study are described. Recommendations for future studies are suggested. The study ends with the conclusion to the study as a whole.

1.9 Conclusion

The purpose of the chapter has been to introduce the study, the topic, aims, research problems, objectives, questions and the methodological approach that this study follows. The following chapter explores the literature on the research topic.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to acquire an understanding of lecturers' experiences in their faculty culture and the factors they perceive effect their wellbeing. The review of the literature will explore the current knowledge on the research topic from a variety of perspectives. In addition, the meanings of the concept of "culture" and "wellbeing" are sought from the literature to ground the rest of the study. The views and current knowledge of workplace factors and their possible effects on lecturers in TVET college environments will be explored.

2.2 The Role of the TVET Sector in the South African Education System

The literature describes a variety of views on the role of tertiary education in society and the role of the TVET sector within the South African education system. Trowler (1998) offers a traditional view on the purpose of tertiary education as the giving of instruction to acquire occupational skills to develop the nation's economy, to promote the powers of the mind, the advancement of learning to develop knowledge and the transmission of a common culture and standards of citizenship. This traditional view is contested by authors such as Scott (1997), Ntshoe, Higgs, Higgs, and Wolhuter (2008) and Jackalas et al. (2016) who describe how academic cultures and the role of tertiary education have evolved to conform more to corporate cultures and managerialism. Tertiary education institutions are now faced with the challenge of accommodating the ever-expanding numbers of students with an accompanied decline in resources. Within the South African context educational reform, transformation, redress and equity have had challenging implications for colleges that have driven reactions rather than responsiveness and change (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). Lumby (2012) indicates how tertiary education institutions in England have metamorphosed as a result of having to become more responsive to economic, political, technological, global and social pressures. Thus, the role of tertiary education and, in particular, the TVET sector in South Africa, is also assumed to be changing as the world changes.

TVET colleges in South Africa have had to followed similar trends, mainly due to transformation and reconstruction after the demise of apartheid in 1993 (Nkoe & Bisschoff, 2005). Transformation in the sector is documented in the literature (Akoojee, 2008; Cosser, McGrath &

Badroodien, 2003; Duncan, 2017; Wedekind, 2008, 2010). Post 1994 saw radical changes in government policy, students' profiles and market demands for education and training which caused major upheaval in the sector (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Buthelezi, 2018; Simkins & Lumby, 2002). Restructuring, mergers and policy transformation of the sector came with hope and exhilaration of positive change, but such ideals soon changed to uncertainty, low morale, lacklustre performance, absenteeism and staff turnover (Martin & Roodt, 2008). Equity policies and employment practices drove the transformation agenda and yet little attention was given to TVET curriculum reform which would have been instrumental in the changing economy.

Employment equity policies and affirmative action in the sector has had the effect of certain race groups feeling marginalised and "losers" of the organisation they had dutifully given their services to (Soudien, 2010). Staff are often dissatisfied with the process and affirmative action is viewed as a problematic discord due to its uneven and inconsistent application in colleges with politics being a major driver and obfuscating from the intended purpose which is to make opportunities available to classes of people who were disadvantaged by the apartheid system. Employment equity and affirmative action recruitment processes are often attributed to poor management capacity and the decline of the quality of teaching as the perceptions are that qualifications, experience and competency are subordinate to race in the appointment process (Kraak & Young, 2001). The sector may have inherited some of the complications, however transformation only served to further destabilise the sector (Cosser, McGrath, & Badroodien, 2003). The turbulence in the sector after decades of transformation and radical change remains pervasive and continues to be marred by poor pass rates, lack of funding, dysfunctional policies and practices and weak governance.

The literature reveals stark features and importantly the inherited stigma from the previous Further Education and Training (FET) sector and the subsequent unintended effects of transformation on colleges and faculties (Malale & Gomba, 2016; Mokgatle & Madiba, 2017). These studies cite the curricula, untrained lecturers, poor facilities and poor management capacity as some of the reasons for the negative stigma of TVET colleges although there are some which appear to be thriving. The new managerialism and neoliberal values in policies sees corporate activities such as human resources and quality control becoming more intrusive in colleges in functions such as appointments, decision-making and the allocation of funding and subsequently results in the erosion of academic freedom and educational values (Barnett, 2015). The once esteemed role of the college lecturer is challenged and diminished by the corporate managers who hold their

positions as superior to lecturers' in the organisation and this has further confirmed the stigmatisation in the sector as quality education is no longer regarded as a priority.

Public service values and the attainment of educational outcomes are being challenged by the increasing, often inappropriate, unsuitable and poor application of quality and accountability measures by the corporate managers at colleges (Scott, 2006). The increasing emphasis on quality and measurement practices sees college lecturers spending more time on non-teaching tasks such as mounds of record keeping and paperwork and less time on their core duties of effective teaching (Terblanche, 2017). The unnecessary paperwork, quality and performance appraisal activities take up time and are more of a window-dressing practice without any added value to improving lecturer performance or motivation and lecturers are often resentful when undermined by judgments and assessments of their work by non-academic people (Ross, Romer, & Horner, 2012). The redistribution of academic control and the diminished democratisation of college lecturers as academics may be the cause of growing dissatisfaction amongst lecturers over the new management practices taking over their academic spaces.

TVET colleges have college councils as the main governing body and their decision-making to meet educational goals is being more aligned with corporate values and market factors, which in itself has paradoxical implications, given the service role of colleges in the community (Wedekind, 2008). Council members are elected from the community, more often they represent the political elite of the community and lack knowledge and understanding of the sector necessary to make sound decisions that would improve the educational practices required to achieve educational aims (Moyo, 2008; Sebele, 2015). College council members are paid to meet a few times a year, are hardly ever seen on campuses and are unacquainted with the realities faced by lecturers. The council and senior college managers including the new corporate managers are responsible for the management and allocation of funding received from the DHET and unfortunately corruption, mismanagement of funds and a lack of accountability account for the current impoverished state and the decline of education in many colleges in the sector (Akoojee, 2008; Buthelezi, 2018). College and faculty discord due to lack of resources, poor management and slow progress has resulted in lecturers' rising dissatisfaction with their jobs (Martin & Roodt, 2008). The literature is consistent with descriptions of the sector as chaotic, inconsistent and with a distinct void between national policy expectations and college realities due mainly to poor governance and the transfer of decision-making powers to college councils and corporate managers (Buthelezi, 2016).

Neoliberalism and the decision-making powers of college councils are not the only characteristics of the current TVET landscape in South Africa. Jansen (2004) describes how the general increase in the population since the 1990's as well as the increased access to education created further challenges that the education system was not adequately prepared for. The challenges for the TVET sector are: accommodating the increased student numbers, larger classes and changes in the profile of students seeking access to tertiary education. Students that are coming from the public school system that is failing to adequately prepare students for tertiary education as the GET system itself is in a state of decline and students struggle to cope at a tertiary level (Nel, Troskie-de Bruin, & Bitzer, 2009). The DHET is unable to expand the capacities of TVET colleges in the face of the massification of education and the promises to make tertiary education accessible to the masses lacked foresight. The TVET sector has the potential to be the panacea to the problem of access, skills development and economic development if the government is willing to direct more funds and fix the weaknesses in the system, in particular the neoliberal influence in policy development and decision making.

The large classes with students who have mixed abilities and the challenges for lecturers in having to be competent in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the courses they teach without the necessary resources, well-equipped workshops and facilities can lead to high levels of stress for lecturers. Mmako and Shultz (2016) found that many college lecturers are chronically stressed due to having to perform a number of complex tasks in increasingly challenging environments, without the basic resources. Franzsen (2003) confirms that new corporate demands and changes in the workload of lecturers take up too much of their time and energy, depresses and demotivates them, destroys trust and teamwork and offers little value at great cost to the quality of education delivered. Dwindling funding, increased emphasis on administrative work increasing the workload, student protests and union unrest, and the indolent approach of college management are systemic and endemic problems of TVET colleges that are affecting lecturers (Wedekind, 2010). Franzsen (2003) adds that the lack of a clear job description for college lecturers and the lack of configuration between what is expected of them in contradictory policies, the requirements of the curricula and the realities faced at faculty level have created a culture of uncertainty and confusion for them. These problems continue to persist more than ten years after Franken's findings as confirmed in the recent studies. TVET colleges are unable to meet the increasing demand of students and lecturers continue to function in the demanding environment.

Martin and Roodt (2008) explain that human capital in the form of the educators in a knowledge intensive organisation is far more important there than in any other organisation. Therefore, work

cultures that foster higher performance, increase lecturer motivation, instills positive views of the organisation, offers support, values participation, creates a sense of belonging and diminishes work stress are highly desirable (Kokt & Ramarumo, 2015). On the contrary, workplace cultures that stifle, disempower and devalue their lecturers, will ultimately have poorly performing lecturers thus hindering their efforts to produce quality education. While it is acknowledged that academics, their profession, value and contribution are fundamental to educational institutions, issues such as the erosion of academic freedom remain pervasive.

This section examined the literature to establish the role of TVET colleges within the South African education system. While the current state of the sector is discussed from the literature, the historical perspective of changes in the TVET landscape in South Africa over the last three decades is included as it is relevant to the context. The literature is examined to present the perspectives of the characteristics and role of the sector as it transitioned after the demise of apartheid, through the transformation, reconstruction and development policies to the current policy expectations and aims guiding the sector. The literature gives views of some of the experiences of lecturers in the sector. In the next section the literature is further interrogated to conceptualise TVET college cultures.

2.3. The Conceptualisation of TVET College Culture

In order to conceptualise TVET college culture, similar studies in schools and higher education institutions are examined as knowledge pertaining specifically to college culture is scant in the literature and therefore reference is made to "institutional culture" as similar inferences can be made to arrive at the meaning of culture for TVET colleges. An understanding of institutional culture arising from the literature reflects an agreement with the view that culture is socially and symbiotically constructed and can also be a contested reality (Hofstede, 1980; Hoover & Harder, 2015; Lumby, 2012; Sabanci et al., 2017; Simkins & Lumby, 2002). Since humans create their own realities, realities will differ as individual perceptions differ and therefore conclusions of culture are contestable due to its subjective characteristics. Culture, therefore, is a social system that creates constructs of what people define into their reality of the world around them. College cultures are thus constructs of what lecturers give meaning to in their experiences of it.

Culture is a social phenomenon in any social group, which is inherited and learnt by the individuals in the group leading to individual and collectively held values, attitudes and behaviours. Grant (2006) explains that culture is deeply rooted in the people and history of an

organisation. The college as an institution and the faculties within come with a cultural history which is broadened by employees' personal beliefs, values, ways of behaving and ideals which may align or clash with the college culture creating a dynamic and indiscriminate setting. Niemann (2006) is of the view that man is responsible for creating his own culture, confirming the idiosyncratic nature of culture and the assumption that culture is not experienced in the same way by all. Trowler (1998) adds that culture is partly constructed as well as enacted and therefore the lecturers in the college and faculty will learn and adapt to the culture, while at the same time, their personal beliefs, values and behaviours may preserve or alter the status quo.

In the literature, there appears to be two camps amongst authors as to the concept of culture. Verbos, Gerard, Forshey, Harding, and Miller (2007) are of the view that culture is a pattern of shared assumptions, that is learnt by the collective, as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has shown to have worked well enough to be considered valid and can therefore be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel. Bolman and Deal's, (1991, p. 252) famously quoted definition of culture as, "the way we do things around here," is used to conceptualise institutional culture in many studies. Hofstede (1984), a leading author on culture and whose views are echoed through many studies, holds that culture consists of patterns of shared assumptions that are learnt by members of a group. Martins and Coetzee (2007) and Smircich (1983) add that culture is a system of shared knowledge and collective patterns of life experiences of people in their environment. The idea of "shared values, attitudes and behaviours" perceived "collectively" by members of an organisation has come to be the generally accepted notion of institutional culture by this camp. This group psychology approach is significant in terms of the study seeking to understand the prevalence of individual or collective views of the work culture within the two camps.

The other camp of authors argues against the idea of culture as something shared and experienced in the same way by all members in an organisation (Silver, 2003). He reasons that the difficulties of academics in a rapidly changing, discouraging and hostile environment has weakened the previously accepted concepts of shared beliefs in academic cultures. Authors such as Becher and Trowler (1989) and Clark (1987) question the idea of culture as something that is shared by all in higher education institutions as departments and faculties form academic tribes that challenge the shared and common culture notions. This view also acknowledges that educational institutions experience contested realities due to the different subject disciplines and therefore members may experience conflicting values and allegiances between their faculty culture and institutional culture. Barnett (2000) supports this view by suggesting that educational institutions are

multifaceted and one cannot assume the manifold of activities that occur have anything in common. Present TVET colleges are a product of the mergers of the previous FET colleges which operated according to disproportionate funding and resources and racially segregated apartheid policies and therefore the idea that faculties follow a shared culture is highly unlikely due to the different inherited ways of doing things.

More recently, Barnett (2015) is of the view that the shared beliefs, ideologies or dogmas of a group which impel individuals into action and which give their actions meaning are part of the decline of modern university and the once the unifying system of beliefs is being eroded. Dill (2014) holds a similar view of academic cultures, the independence of disciplines and the emergence of subcultures reflect of a range of perspectives that can be found within an institute and asserts that the weakening of a shared culture is a result of the failure to manage it. There are no proven models that can be applied to cultural settings in order to manage diversity and multiculturalism that will be satisfactory to all. Within TVET colleges, different disciplines, faculties, levels and hierarchies, consisting of individuals who have different needs, roles and agendas, such as students, administrators and support staff, management and lecturers exists, and thus a view of the common culture that is shared by all cannot be assumed in the study. Moreover, the social and multi-cultural diversity of the South African society further add to the cultural complexity of workplace cultures and members of an organisation may belong to a variety of sub-cultures that may be in opposition with one another and with the college culture.

Another factor in the argument against the shared belief notion is individualism. Silver (2003) contends that shared values can only stem from an organisation that is more or less homogenous in nature and educational institutions are anything but homogenous. Rather they are multifaceted, diverse and multicultural and individual and group identities denigrate assumptions of shared values and perspectives. One cannot predict how individuals will act or if individuals who identify with a specific group will share the groups views. A search for what unifies lecturers in terms of their experiences as well as what overlaps or divides them should be the aim to understanding the cultural effects on experiences (Silver, 2003). In order to achieve the aims of the study, this is the view of culture that the study leans towards. Also, individual or lone experiences cannot be excluded just because they do not fit the norm. The literature reflects on one hand, the concept of culture as attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and goals that may be shared by all members, but on the other, faculties and disciplines exist as pockets of sub-cultures that individuals within the same organisation may or may not choose to identify with.

The study leans towards the views of the pre-dominance of sub-cultures in the college since the aim is to understand culture as experienced by lecturers in a faculty and the assumption that the faculty culture represents the immediate work environment, it is likely that lecturers' work life is dominated by the faculty rather than the college. A further justification in adopting this concept of culture is the strong historical influences in TVET colleges in South Africa as well as the decentralisation of the operations of specialist faculties at the college. Another reason, as mentioned previously, is that institutions tend to posture towards a specific ideology or image, whereas the discipline and faculty culture depict the actual practices and realities which may be in conflict with the college's vision and mission. Mission statements represent symbolic manifestations of the culture in an attempt to create a common vision as to what the institution stands for usually for public relations purposes (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). While Barnett (2015) adds that faculties and departments can act as proxies for academic identities that can compete with or veto that of the institutions'. Verbos et al. (2007) argues that institutional culture as being more congruent with 'organisational' identity. Lecturers, by nature of the profession, uphold a strong sense of professional identity which is more likely to configure with the faculty where they contribute their expertise and are valued for it (Coetzee & Mensele, 2014). While the study leans towards sub-culture dominance, institutional loyalty and pride by lecturers cannot be relegated and both lines of argument have to be considered.

Academic identities and collegial fellowship may strengthen the sub-culture effects on lecturers' allegiances, however other factors may also play a role such as race, religion and backgrounds which can direct individuals to identify with and uphold the college culture (Coetzee & Mensele, 2014). This present another possibility that the institutional culture may be more profound. The study seeks to examine the experiences of lecturers of aspects of their faculty culture and descriptions may reveal what and who they identify with, whether it is the faculty, the institution or even groups within the sub-cultures and therefore it is not possible to predict how the culture will determine where individual loyalties will lie, based on the different arguments put forth in the literature and for this reason the study must consider all the possibilities of the faculty culture.

Sailes (2008) elaborates on the meaning of culture as an agreement by lecturers on what they regard as important and the leading ways of behaviour they are willing to accept. They can further re-construct their reality through their collective and individual experiences by accepting or rejecting new cultural influences as they emerge in the environment. The notion that culture is created by the way employees interact with each other and come to an agreement of what is acceptable, familiar and meaningful to them and reject influences which may be considered a

threaten or disruption to their way of doing things will indicate the cultural influences lecturer are willing to accept or reject in the construction of their culture (Barnett, 2015).

The search in the literature for a specific concept of culture is difficult as views of culture usually include a broad spectrum of approaches, contexts and applications, rather than narrow, definite views (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008; Van Houtte, 2005). Meanings of culture are also motivated by the agenda of the study. The meaning of culture is also approached through a number of disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, psychology and institutional theory which can add other dimensions to the understanding of the concept (Lumby, 2012). This further complicates attempts to conceptualise the meaning of culture as this study can be situated within any of those disciplines, however the study retains the position of a cultural study.

Hofstede (1984) breaks down culture into deep culture, which he explains as the tacit and unconscious shared values of members, and shallow culture which describes the visible signals of culture or practices of members. Other studies affirm the notions of underlying, unconscious, cultural factors not visible to an outsider, the taken for granted values that make up culture (Ramachandran, Chong, & Ismail, 2011). Hofstede elaborates that some aspects of culture are deeply embedded in the psyche and that lecturers can unconsciously agree to certain aspects of culture, while other aspects are more visible, tangible and distinguishing to outsiders. Van der Westhuizen et al. (2005) agree that culture comprises tangible and intangible cultural factors. Tangible factors are the verbal, behavioural and visual manifestations. Verbal manifestations include language, stories, heroes and heroines, the curricula and learning outcomes. Behavioural manifestations refer to the rituals, ceremonies, traditions, discipline, leadership orientation and management style. Visual manifestations consist of facilities, structures, buildings, symbols and dress code. Thus, an understanding of culture entails seeking out the tangible and intangible manifestations of culture in a setting.

The literature serves to further expand on the meaning of culture by offering a range of synonyms which can be helpful in the conceptualisation of culture for the purpose of the study. Cohen et al. (2009) uses terms such as the atmosphere, feelings, tone, setting, quality and character of life in the institution. Silver (2003) adds terms such as the essence and the consciousness in an organisation. All these concepts of culture are acceptable within the parameters of the research agenda of this study as the literature has proven the concept is extensive in its applications and so is the understanding of the human experience.

Trigwell, Prosser, and Waterhouse (1999) offer their version of culture as the wider culture in a national and international context and explain that the culture of lecturers is generic. It is agreed that certain elements of culture are the same in similar settings. They add that each institution can develop its own unique, distinct culture that is perceived and viewed by those judging it from the outside. Trigwell et al. (1999) explain that colleges are cultural microcosms of the broader community in which they exist. The faculty culture will therefore include reflections of the college culture and of the broader community where its members reside. Naghieh, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson, and Aber (2013) adds that the psycho-social work environment is a reflection of broader social issues, thus TVET colleges do not function independently from the broader environment which includes the economy, social influences, politics, as well as global effects. With emphasis on the fourth industrial revolution, the global culture is starting to have a significant influence on local colleges as well as the expectations of lecturers (Nundkumar & Subban, 2018). In this line of argument the study must consider the broader cultural milieu that is likely to influence the faculty culture, in particular the sector and the broader educational system as well as the prevailing political, social and economic dynamic of the time.

While the broader community will influence values, attitudes and beliefs, from the perspective of behavioural theory, lecturers have individual needs such as the need for safety, recognition and self-actualisation, which must be provided for in the work environment for achieving satisfaction (Maslow, Stephens, Heil, & Bennis, 1998). Culture is very much determined by needs and the capacity of the environment to satisfy these needs. Institutional theorists point to an organisation's artifacts such as its mission and vision statement, as well as the institutional practices that guide the behaviour of employees (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). These views place the burden of employee wellbeing on the employer. The theory of sense of coherence (SOC) unifies the views of behavioural and institutional theorists by affirming that the employees' health or ill-health stem from the work environment. These perspectives of the institutional culture acknowledge that wellbeing, behaviour and performance of employees emanate not only from the broader community but more so from the work environment and the institutional theory perspective supports the research problem in the study.

A summary of this section shows that as individuals are different and unique, so too are organisational cultures different from one another. Culture as a concept includes perceptive in institutional and faculty or sub-cultures as well as views from behavioural theory, institutional theory, anthropology and psychology. A differentiation is made between deep culture and shallow culture allows discussed as tangible and intangible aspects of culture. The conceptualisation of

college culture is espoused extensively in reviewing the literature and highlights the number of possibilities of the study within the purposes and aims stated in the introduction section. The hypothesis and assumptions put forward in the problem statement may create the notion of certain expectations, but as the literature shows the conceptualisation of culture cannot be restricted to exclude or include the elements that the meaning of a culture may assume and at this stage a number of findings are possible. In the next section, factors that may influence a college culture and lecturers experiences are examined in the literature.

2.4 Factors that Influence TVET College Culture

A wide variety of work-related factors are cited in the literature as possible influences to the college culture. Coetzee and Rothmann (2005) identify factors such as workload, control, relationships and management styles as occupational factors shaping the culture. Factors such as work overload, loss of control over lecturers' disciplines and in exercising their expertise, poor relations with management are cited as undesirable due to their negative effects on physical and psychological ill-health in lecturers (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017). Other factors identified are: an emphasis on administrative work that takes the focus away from teaching; lack of information, ambiguous, unclear and incomplete information; lack of support from management at most levels, inadequate teaching resources; uncaring and remote management style; lack of opportunities for promotion, unfair appointments and promotion practices; a rushed pace of work; the massification of students; changes in the market place and globalisation and the inertiatic responsiveness of the sector (Field & Buitendach, 2011). Each college may be dealing with some of the factors in varying degrees or some may experience their own unique set of challenges not mentioned above. Others may have overcome these challenges and turned them into positive factors driving their success and may not be reflected in the literature.

Rothmann and Barkhuizen (2008) identify factors such as profound inequalities and distortion of the sector; poor articulation; under-prepared students from poorly resourced economic and academic contexts; unequal distribution of resources; declining state subsidy and increased competition from private institutions. Cultural factors are cited in the literature however, college cultures need to be understood by delving into the underlying layers filtering within a specific context from the perspective of lecturers who work there as cultural settings are not the same. There may be colleges that have systems and strategies in place to address some of the negative factors mentioned. Buthelezi (2018) mentions the extensive use of partnerships at one TVET college where external funding helped to develop artisan and in-service training programmes

guided by the partner's needs. The partnership also put in place an agreement of employment of the students after graduation.

Numerous studies highlight leadership and management styles as key factors in shaping TVET college culture (Mmako, 2015; Sebele, 2015; Sieberhagen et al., 2011). Mafini (2016) identifies leadership style, policies, and managerial values as fundamental in guiding attitudes, behaviours, motivation and performance of employees. Bello et al. (2015) agree that leadership roles are central to internalising a quality culture in educational institutions. The leader is ultimately responsible for setting the tone and establishing norms in the organisation for others to model. Vos, Van der Westhuizen, Mentz, and Ellis (2012) explain that the role of the manager is to create a supporting and empowering environment with an emphasis on being supportive rather than directive. Lecturers are purported to exercise greater agency, comply willingly with rules and perform better when they have supportive and caring managers. Rothmann and Cilliers (2007) stress the role of the leader in the creation of a favorable organisational culture, but due to rapid changes, organisations may need new ways of thinking and responding. Critical thinking and innovative leadership appear to be deficient in the management capacity as TVET colleges. The dynamic and sometimes erratic broader environment necessitates the need for new or easily adaptable skills, competencies and attributes of managers that are able to navigate through challenges successfully and who are able to facilitate innovation, change management and leadership rather than simple administration. Weak management could be the reason for the slow progress in some colleges.

Poor management skills, lack of profundity and thus poor decision-making could be the factor responsible for the possible polarisation between managers and lecturers (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, and Calarco, 2011). Managers who are not in touch with the needs of lecturers reflect directly on their perceptions of the work culture. Poor management in TVET colleges appears to be a pattern in much of the literature. Coetzee and Rothmann (2005) confirm that poor communication and lack of clear information and directives by managers is a determinant of occupational stress and frustration for lecturers. Franzsen (2003) adds that employees are contingent on the manager to lucidly inform, lead and motivate them and lecturers may experience uncertainty and antipathy towards managers who fail to fulfill this role. Mmako and Shultz (2016) describe recognition and feedback from managers as key factors in lecturer engagement and found that lecturers are generally unhappy with the level of feedback and recognition received from their managers. Lack of clear direction, guidance and information from managers and phlegmatic attitudes emerge from the literature as persistent management factors contributing to lecturer

dissatisfaction (Zungu, 2015). The transition to managerialism in colleges may be the cause for the lack of cogency and possible role confusion by educational managers who probably rose from the ranks of lecturers and not business managers. The emphasis on accountability, efficiency, achievement of outcomes and increased competition can result in poor educational decisions thereby increasing tensions between management and lecturers in colleges.

Throughout the literature the changes in the TVET sector emerge as the impetus for the states of colleges and poor attitudes amongst college lecturers due to the failure to manage transformation (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Buthelezi, 2016). Radical political, social and economic changes are mentioned, yet the degree of responsiveness in much of the sector has been somewhat protracted mainly due to an enervated management approach. Weak management and governance is the reason stated for the continuance of the outdated programmes and passé environments in colleges. Kraak and Young (2001) describe the lack of cohesion by the DHET in the implementation of transformative policies has led to fragmentation amongst colleges in the sector due to their inability to demonstrate the changes being proposed and is the result of the general abstruseness at college and faculty levels. Other challenges mentioned are the lack of clear directives and sometimes contradictory requirements from quality assurance bodies such as UMALUSI (Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training), capacity constraints, diversity, mismanagement and the inability to adapt (Essel, Agyarkoh, Sumaila, & Yankson, 2014). At faculty level there is ambiguity and inconsistency in the core work practices amongst lecturers. These factors accompanied with the slow pace of progress in an ever-changing labour market could all be working contradictory to lecturer wellbeing and their coping abilities which this study seeks to understand.

The failure to respond to new demands for skills in the labour market in some TVET colleges is mainly attributed to the curricula offered and this characteristic of the sector is well documented in the literature. Several researchers note that the TVET curricula are poorly designed for its purpose and this remains a contentious issue amongst lecturers in having to teach outdated content that will be of no value to their students (Buthelezi, 2018; Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Wedekind, 2010). Although some programmes are accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and passed by policies and legislation, consultation with subject experts together with employers has been negligible in their development (Wedekind, 2010). Very little change on post-matric programmes known as Vocational Curriculum Report 191 has taken place, with only the cover pages of the syllabi being changed yearly (Sixabayi, 2016). Most of the Report 191 curricula have not changed in over twenty years.

While the DHET policies outline the national goals of economic development through skills development, this is not articulated in the TVET curricula and learning content precludes relevancy and employability for a changing the economy (Vally & Spreen, 2014). Curriculum reform for school dropouts, the NCV (National Certificate Vocational), developed along the controversial and rejected outcomes-based model used in general education, came with vague subject guidelines and quality assurance standards and was not supported with the necessary infrastructure, resources and guidance (Sixabayi, 2016), and is failing education like the similar outcomes-based model in schools has. The much anticipated and hyped NCV curricula was adopted from Australia as is, incoherently and clumsily rolled out and was not well received by lecturers as they saw its flaws and inconcinnity to the South African context (Buthelezi, 2016). Curriculum reform for post matric Report 191 courses has yet to take place and there is no indication when or if this is likely to occur.

Lecturers are critical of the curricula and of DHET's past failures. The curricula are seen as ineffectual by lecturers in that the content includes workplace methods, processes and equipment no longer in use and relevant knowledge and critical skills essential in a knowledge based economy is missing (Terblanche, 2017). The exclusion of lecturers as subject areas experts and industry stakeholders in the curricula design and the political motives and overreach of the DHET in negligently copying unproven models used in other countries and adopting them with no regard to the South African context are the reasons for NCV curriculum failure in the sector (Zungu, 2015). Lecturers' sense of despondency arises from having to facilitate and maintain positive learning experiences for students and prepare them for the world of work, which can be seen as a futile exercise and a waste of energy and resources due to the curricula's low economic value (Terblanche, 2017). From an ethical perspective, lecturers carry the guilt of knowing that graduates' qualifications are in reality a limitation to their employability and the DHET is guilty of committing a disservice to the community by not updating it. The TVET sector has the potential to be a key driver of the economy if a full commitment is made to curriculum reform which must involve industry, curriculum and subject area specialists and strong leadership capacity and the process must be ongoing to ensure relevancy (Wedekind, 2010).

A number of factors emerged from the literature and discussed above reveal mostly poor cultures in TVET colleges. Amongst others, management capacity, the lack of innovation and progress and the curricula are mentioned as factors influencing college culture. Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006) add that safety, facilities and infrastructure as the tangible manifestations of college culture. The issue of funding is indicative in the widespread

mismanagement of resources at TVET colleges and the lack of accountability by the DHET and is well documented in the literature (Buthelezi, 2018; Moyo, 2008). The effects are crumbling infrastructure, unsafe environments, lack of learning materials and basic resources. Lecturers' ability do their jobs effectively is severely impeded and institutions are perpetrating a disservice to students by providing sub-standard education (Johnson, 2006). While there are some colleges that are thriving, possibly those with inherited facilities and funding, much of the literature on TVET college culture is unfavourable and disparaging. The next section examines the literature in order to conceptualise wellbeing in the context of lecturer wellbeing.

2.5 The Conceptualisation of Wellbeing

The literature offers various perspectives on the concept of wellbeing, and for the purpose of the study "employee wellbeing" will be used to infer lecturer wellbeing due to the paucity of studies on college lecturers' wellbeing, (Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa, & Hernández, 2016; Buthelezi, 2018; Sieberhagen, Pienaar & Els, 2011). Definitions of wellbeing include interpretations such as conscious and deliberate approaches to an advanced state of physical, psychological and spiritual health. Some studies define wellbeing as a multidimensional state of being that describes the existence of positive health in an individual and is exemplified by a certain quality of life. Descriptions of negative wellbeing is also extracted from the literature.

According to Hansen, Buitendach, and Kanengoni (2015), wellbeing is a term derived from the positive psychological field and entails the cultivation of positive emotions to ensure the optimum functioning and experiences of the individual. Hansen et al. (2015) distinguish between wellbeing and happiness. Happiness implies an individual displaying a high level of positive feelings to negative feelings, whereas wellbeing comprises a broad category of phenomena that include emotional responses, domain satisfaction, and global judgments of life satisfaction. Wellbeing, in the context of the study, is preferable as it denotes an individual's feelings, disposition, emotional reaction and evaluation of aspects of the environment that are meaningful to them. Wellbeing denotes physical, psychological and emotional health which is disrupted when any one of these is affected by the demands in the environment.

In the literature, descriptions of wellbeing show a close relationship to the type of work culture in affecting aspects such as job satisfaction, motivation and organisational commitment and the job itself (Cameron et al., 2011; Coetzee & Mensele, 2014). Roodt, Rieger, and Sempane (2002) indicate that job satisfaction and wellbeing symbolise a positive emotional state resulting from

one's job experience. Wellbeing reflects an individual's perception and evaluation of the job and this perception is influenced by the person's unique circumstances such as needs, values and expectations which may be validated or invalidated by the work environment. Sense of wellbeing is then reflected in the attitude, behaviour and feelings towards the job and will manifest in the level commitment, motivation, performance and productivity of the employee.

The workplace culture ought to be structured in a way that is psychologically meaningful to employees and should be reflected in the policies, procedures and practices of the organisation that set out the shared understanding the expected behaviour and work performance (Verbos et al., 2007). Lecturers' identity as disciplinary experts will be endorsed when the culture acknowledges, supports and values their contribution and participation and thus enhances their wellbeing. Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, and Hornung (2012) explain that a sense of institutional connectedness is an important aspect for healthy employees. Lecturers who feel connected to their work culture and their role in the organisation is acknowledged will more likely respond positively in their professional behaviour and performance. Individuals will experience wellbeing if they experience overall feelings of job satisfaction (Vazi, Ruiter, Van den Borne, Martin, Dumont, & Reddy, 2013). Negative physical and mental health is like to ensue when individuals have experiences that are dissatisfying and discouraging. Vazi et al. (2013) elaborates that individuals seek meaning in situations and their sense of wellbeing gives them an indication of the ability to cope with work situations which they may regard as meaningless or challenging. Wellbeing depends on the degree of skills and the resources individuals possess to cope with workplace stressors. Lecturer stress is more often as a result of the misfit between the individual's resources to cope with a job, such as knowledge and skills, as well as the degree of workplace support available to cope with environmental demands (Kamil, 2014).

Kamil (2014) adds that psychological stress remains a pervasive health and social problem amongst educators. Ill health in teachers is well documented in the literature (Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Rothmann & Barkhuizen, 2008; Zungu, 2015) and manifests in symptoms such as burnout, chronic stress, varying degrees of depression, cognitive dissonance, addiction and hypertension. It is likely that TVET college lecturers face similar challenges and therefore the literature lends support to the anecdotal evidence and hypothetical assumptions presented in the research problem of the growing dissatisfaction amongst college lecturers and the resultant poor health. Ill-health cannot in all instances be attributed to the workplace however the literature demonstrates that employee wellbeing is associated with the type of experiences they have in the workplace.

The literature differentiates wellbeing into two categories; hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing (Hansen et al., 2015; Vazi et al., 2013). Hedonic wellbeing refers to subjective emotions such as happiness and the experience of pleasure. Hedonic wellbeing is characterised by the display of positive attitudes and moods and the absence of negative attitudes and moods in an individual. Lecturers' hedonic wellbeing will be displayed in positive attitudes to work. Eudaimonic wellbeing is more cognitive and based on the motivation the individual possesses to achieve goals thereby contributing to positive feelings. Lecturers possess individual states of eudaimonic wellbeing which they bring into the workplace and the work culture can either reinforce or diminish it. Eudaimonic wellbeing is dependent on the individual's internal motivation to cope with challenges positively in order to maintain wellbeing and the college culture can either strengthen or challenge the individual's eudaimonic wellbeing. Thus, hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing is based on an individual's acquired and developed coping capacities, or the lack thereof, and how he or she is able to assess a situation as favourable or threatening and then select the appropriate response to maintain their wellbeing.

Thus far, wellbeing is shown to be based on the individual's ability to cope with the environment with the acquired resources, which is their inner knowledge and skills, indicating that wellbeing is a choice or rather that lecturers are ultimately responsible for state of health in the workplace (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). Institutional behaviourists, however, emphasise the responsibility of the organisation in creating and maintaining a culture that supports its employees (Bello et al., 2015; Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Both these views support the aim of the study in understanding how lecturers cope with work demands which threaten their wellbeing as well as to what extent is the workplace supportive of employee wellbeing.

Hansen et al. (2015) explain that wellbeing has a direct impact on the quality of education and therefore it becomes necessary to examine college cultures in order to discover those aspects which enhance and cultivate positive capacities and which may act as a buffer when lecturers encounter threats to their wellbeing thereby ensuring commitment, productivity and quality education and then to maintain these aspects. Factors that are identified as contrary to wellbeing must then be removed or addressed. In many instances, even an unmotivated and poor performing lecturer can to a large extent be ameliorated by a caring and supportive work culture. The study seeks to identify what lecturers need from their work culture to enhance their wellbeing and coping abilities so as to positively contribute to the goals of providing better quality education.

Kamil (2014) suggests that any initiative for developing educators' health should focus on the organisational climate and identifying the causes that threaten wellbeing so that interventions can be implemented. Kamil (2014) identified five dimensions that reflect an educator as a whole: wellbeing, aspiration, autonomy, competence and integrated functioning. These dimensions can also be seen as elements that augur wellbeing. All five dimensions need to be recognized and provided for in the work environment for the optimum functioning of lecturers, which then facilitates better output and the achievement of quality education.

This section examined the literature to establish the meaning of wellbeing. It was discovered that wellbeing is an individuals' state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, in the case of the study, of the work culture. Satisfaction is shown to be linked to positive health whereas dissatisfaction can manifest in ill-health. The literature explained that wellbeing consists of two categories namely; hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Hedonic wellbeing indicates the individuals' internal coping competencies such as their levels of skills and knowledge whereas eudaimonic wellbeing reflects their cognitive assessments of situations in order to adopt suitable coping mechanisms to environmental stressors. The literature showed that while individuals bear the onus for their personal wellbeing, the organisation is also responsible for creating a supportive culture that optimises lecturer potential and incentivises better performance. Aspiration, autonomy, competence and integrated functioning are also aspects of wellbeing identified in the literature. In the next section, the literature is examined to understand the extent to which TVET college cultures affect lecturer wellbeing.

2.6 The Effects of TVET College Culture on Lecturer Wellbeing

The literature reviewed provides various perspectives on the concept of TVET college culture within the South African context. Factors and characteristics of college cultures were identified and discussed. The terms "culture" and "wellbeing" were conceptualized and described according to the literature. The purpose of the study is to understand the experiences of lecturers of their work culture in terms of their descriptions, feelings and aspects they regard as positive or disruptive to their wellbeing. The literature supports the link between work culture and employee health (van der Westhuizen, 2018; Vazi et al., 2013). The section continues to dissect the literature to assess the effects of TVET college culture on lecturer wellbeing.

Lecturer wellbeing is a complex blend of motivations, behaviours, skills and positive feelings primarily influenced by the individual's immediate environment (Stoll et al., 2006). As stated

earlier, the culture of the college sets the conditions for lecturers to feel satisfied, inspired and cared for or to feel devalued, dissatisfied and uninspired. Sabanci et al. (2017) agree that the work culture allows educators to make sense of what is happening around them and thus know what is expected of them. Colleges that have positive, enabling and empowering cultures where lecturers feel safe and valued will have a workforce that displays less stress and anxiety in their attitudes toward their job (Van Zyl et al., 2010). Melé (2016) asserts that the role of the lecturer is both rational and emotional, meaning they bring their talents, creativity and expert knowledge and skills, and these contributions to the educational development of students is fundamental to their professional stature, identity and sense of purpose. No work environment can be completely free of stressors, however chronically poor work cultures can result in salutogenic effects on wellbeing ranging in numerous physical, mental and emotional symptoms.

Salutogenesis a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive feeling of confidence that one's environment is reasonably predictable and that things will work out as can reasonably expected (Antonovsky, 1987). Salutogenesis is an ideal from which wellbeing in the workplace can the studied. The emergence of salutogenesis as a discipline of medicine underscores the importance given to the understanding of healthy workplace cultures as integral for employee wellbeing (Becker, Glascoff & Felts, 2010). Workplaces are seldom predictable and orderly as earlier discussions indicate factors such as increasing work demands, lack of resources and adequate facilities and uncaring managers point to college cultures that can be contraposition to lecturer wellbeing. It is normal and expected that workplaces will be challenging and demanding within the realm of reasonability. Demands and challenges which threaten wellbeing cannot be avoided or removed completely but they can be understood to determine the effects on wellbeing which is the aim of the study.

Hansen et al. (2015) found that it is necessary to study and examine educational environments in order to find ways to respond to the increasing phenomena of unhappiness and dissatisfaction amongst educators. Coetzee and Mensele (2014) indicate that commitment, job satisfaction and employee wellbeing are work-related attitudes that warrant greater attention in the education sector. When employees are happy, they are committed and develop a positive view of the organisation, their behaviour is consistent with the expected standards and there is less dissonance and stress. Employees who rank high on organisational commitment and wellbeing show support for and acceptance of organisational goals and values. Even when faced with external challenges, employees who experience a supportive and caring work culture show a willingness to go beyond the call of duty and to remain in the organisation.

Rafferty and Jimmieson (2017) found that exposure to negative work cultures can be assessed by a range of indicators such as elevated risk in mental health problems; increase in self-related illnesses; adverse sleeping patterns; increase in sickness absenteeism and hospital admission and an increase in stress related medicine prescriptions. Depression, heart attacks and strokes linked to hypertension and chronic fatigue syndrome are more serious effects of compromised health due to work stress (Kamil, 2014).

Earlier discussions describe TVET college cultures as characteristic of management incapacity, unclear policies, outdated curricula, lack of resources and adequate facilities and the slow pace of progress indicating that college cultures are likely to be a hindrance to lecturer wellbeing and optimum health. The literature provides adequate understanding of work culture on employee wellbeing although a negligible number of studies dealt with lecturer wellbeing in TVET colleges cultures directly. It is therefore presumptuous to predict the experiences of college lecturers of their workplace culture nor the extent, if any, of the effects on their wellbeing thus the purpose of the study.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter outlines the views in the literature on the various elements of the study. An explanation of the concept of culture is given and the possible factors and characteristics of TVET college culture is discussed. An explanation of the meaning of wellbeing is given. Wellbeing is expanded to understand lecturer wellbeing in relation to the type workplace culture they may experience. A discussion of how aspects of the work culture may affect the health and wellbeing of lecturers in a TVET college faculty is given.

The next chapter describes the use of the theoretical framework selected for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORECTICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The study seeks an understanding of lecturers' experiences in a TVET college culture and how these experiences may affect their wellbeing. This section explains the use of the theoretical framework in achieving the aims of the study and its suitability in analysing the data and sense making process. This section will show how the theoretical framework aligns with the research questions and objectives in evaluating the data that will be generated. In order to adequately address the research agenda, Antonovsky's salutogenic theory of sense of coherence (SOC), is selected as the theoretical framework to best analyse and present the data.

3.2 Antonovsky's Theory of Sense of Coherence (SOC)

The study aims to capture lecturer experiences and their state of wellbeing from their interactions with their work culture. The study is a qualitative study within the interpretivist paradigm as the aim is to establish a body of knowledge for understanding peoples' experiences of the real world around them. As discussed in the literature section, culture is constructed as one interacts with the environment and such interactions can be positive or negative. The individual's reactions to situations and challenges in the environment, their perceptions of these situation as enhancing or threatening to their wellbeing and their subsequent reactions and coping abilities will vary from individual to individual due to the nature of culture. The narrative inquiry research design followed in the study enables the understanding of social reality by generating data from individuals' stories in their real world setting (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Morrison, 2007). In order to best understand, evaluate and report the data, the theory of SOC is selected for the study.

Antonovsky and Sourani (1988) state that 'sense of coherence' refers to the extent to which one sees one's world as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful and the quality of these perceptions affects their coherence and life experiences. SOC is grounded in these three elements and each will be discussed in more detail in later sections as they provide a more complex and in-depth approach to understand experiences and reactions and how they may affect a person's health. SOC is widely used in studies on occupational stress and health as a framework to identify factors that may be a threat to wellbeing and to develop strategies and practices that enhance

health and wellbeing of employees in their work environment (Strümpfer, 2001; Klepp Mastekaasa, Sørensen, Sandanger, & Kleiner, 2007). SOC has been used as a theoretical framework in similar studies to assess and predict the health statuses of academic in United Kingdom universities as well as to identify health risks that could affect levels of commitment (Kinman, 2008, 2019). The SOC model was shown to provide a suitable prism to understanding the relationship between workplace stressors and the physical and mental health of academics. Geyer (1997) elaborates that SOC tries to explain why some people are able to cope well in their environment in response to stressors and others do not. The reason is that SOC is affected by a number factors such the personality of the individual, workplace relationships, the individuals social and family support and workplace support. SOC is based on two elements: firstly the individuals coping resources in their ability to comprehend, manage and find meaning in situations and secondly; the external resources provided in the workplace to aid employees health (Jenny, Bauer, Vinje, Vogt, & Torp, 2017). Lecturers are individuals and their experiences are likely to differ and since SOC offers such a basis for the understanding of these experiences, justifies its aptness as the preferred conceptual theory for the study.

SOC is understood to be a global orientation or disposition leading to a certain attitude an individual develops towards the environment. Mayer and Krause (2011) explain that SOC is a concept which has been introduced as a salutogenic, culture-general and universal life orientation that develops in childhood and generally stabilises around 30 years of age. Salutogenesis and its SOC model gives attention to the role of culture in shaping life situations by acknowledging possible environmental stressors and the internal and external resources an individual possesses and applies in contributing to life experiences of predictability, in work balance and meaningful roles as the ideal (Antonovsky & Sourani, 1988).

The theory of SOC establishes an ideal environment as a reference from which to find what environmental factors facilitate the development of the SOC and what factors disrupt it, thereby aiding in the identification of factors shaping perceptions of health and well-being in the workplace (Antonovsky, 1987). It suggests that the environment or culture is significant in strengthening or weakening an individual's response to workplace factors. These factors form the standards by which a person's SOC is measured and will include both the internal and external resources. Internal coping resources refers to one's level of skills and knowledge acquired through life experiences while external resources are those provided and made available by the workplace to facilitate coping and good health. Although individual traits may determine the SOC, factors such as the workload or lack of acknowledgement are likely to be similarly experienced by

employees. In addition to the external and internal factors, the principles of *comprehensibility*, *manageability* and *meaningfulness* and their application to how individuals perceive information from the environment and thereafter respond to it (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005), offer additional processes to understand peoples' experiences thereby affirming SOC's suitability in deconstructing the data in accordance with the research questions and objectives of the study.

SOC is based on the hypotheses that the world is more or less predictable and that things will work out for the individual as per his or hers' expectations (Antonovsky, 1987). It can be seen how the theory of SOC can be misinterpreted by assuming that SOC is only achievable if the world is structured, orderly and predictable. It is obvious that the world is anything but predictable or orderly or that individuals experience only good situations. In its most general meaning the heart of the salutogenic model of SOC is that it is a global "orientation" (Mittelmark & Bauer, 2017). This orientation refers to the individual's ability to cope with environmental stressors. It is from this orientation that the discipline of salutogenesis arises and its interest and use in the study of understanding the origins of health and wellbeing, the internal and external assets or resources necessary for wellbeing as well as the origins of disease and risk factors.

The "global orientation" basis affirms its suitability in understanding the experiences of heterogeneous groups in studies on culture. It follows the notion that one cannot predict how individuals will react to situations in the environment nor whether the same situations will be positively or negatively perceived since SOC is based on the nature or orientation of the individual. Therefore, the theory of SOC and its application in studying the environment to identify health enhancing or health threatening factors and how individuals might react given the resources available to them to deal with these factors to preserve health provides the lens to consider a vast number of possibilities that may arise from the data, and further confirms its suitability in the study. Further, it has the ability to identify factors which affect the majority of employees in the workplace regardless of their individual abilities to be resilient. Those then are factors that matter when they affect almost everyone in a similar way and these features of the theory make it suitable to meet the aims of the study.

The use of SOC as a theoretical framework in viewing the data also removes the possibility of confirmation bias by the researcher as well as abrogating attempts of data manipulation. The theory therefore serves the aim of the study to understand lecturers' experiences of their environment, and to let their narrative speak of their stories making it difficult for the researcher to distort these experiences. SOC and its components will also help to identify possible risk factors

in the work culture that may be acting contrary to wellbeing or those that are promoting it. SOC is therefore the suitable lens to understand how lecturers experience their work culture.

According to Hogh and Mikkelsen (2005), SOC is a relatively stable and global construct, that shapes perceptions and experiences, and the fact that its application cuts across lines of gender, social class, culture and socio-economic status makes it a suitable theory for the data analysis and interpretation process of the study. Also, the SOC construct reflects a person's capacity to respond to stressful situations and tends to increase with age through their life span (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005) which further motivates its aptness as it aligns with the sampling method, namely purposeful sampling, used in the study which aims to generate data to include a range of perspectives from the heterogeneous representative sample of the population. An example of this is that older and younger lecturers possess different levels of SOC and therefore their experiences may differ. Race, gender, past experiences and background are also factors that affect the way individuals perceive experiences. The theory of SOC also takes into consideration an assessment of resources provided in the workplace that enhance or inhibit wellbeing. The understanding of lecturers' experiences from the data generated will be evaluated by the way they cope and by their expression of their experiences of situations. Positive or negative experiences will reflect their levels of SOC as they navigate through the situations they describe in their work culture and this will strengthen understanding of the data within the research agenda.

The individual benefits of high SOC are the maintenance of balance and health in spite of stressful events. Individuals with high SOC react to environmental stressors in more appropriate and adaptive ways due to the internal and external availability of knowledge and skills on how to master situations (Mittelmark & Bauer, 2017). Internal resources are the individual's coping abilities based on aspects such as age, personality or motivation whereas external resources refer to those provided in the environment itself such as recognition or management support. Persons with low SOC have a lower awareness of their feelings and in the presence of environmental challenges and demands will display marked behavioural impairments and unease, stemming from a lack of confidence in their capabilities and will feel overwhelmed when exposed to an uncontrolled and challenging environment, and more so when the organisation is unable to help employees by failing to provide the necessary resources in the workplace. The more toxic that an environment is the fewer people will be able to be resilient and more are likely to succumb through manifestations of ill-health, depression and compromised SOC. In terms of the study of lecturers' experiences of their faculty culture and their wellbeing, SOC provides the suitable lens for evaluating and reporting the data.

The SOC as a theoretical framework and its use as the lens through which the data will be evaluated and reported within the narrative inquiry is explained. The next section explains the three components of SOC in more detail and the role each one plays in the development of an individuals' SOC.

3.3 The Components of SOC

SOC consists of three components (Antonovsky, 1987; Eriksson & Lindström, 2005):

Comprehensibility. SOC begins from the ideal that an individual interprets his or her environment as rational, structured, ordered, consistent and predictable. This component refers to the cognitive controllability or uncontrollability of the individual's environment as a result of cultural dynamics playing out. It is the extent to which a lecturer understands the workplace, the situation and events that occur and his or hers role in it. Lecturers require some sense of control and predictability in their work culture to maintain their SOC and will generally navigate to situations and events they are familiar with or which makes sense to them. Comprehensibility is threatened when there are changes or challenges in the culture that do not fit in with their existing level of understanding or if they do not possess the resources to cope thereby disturbing their SOC and state of wellbeing. Comprehension of a situation makes it easier to manage it.

Manageability. This component denotes the extent to which an individual considers resources to be personally available to cope adequately with environmental demands and challenges. The study seeks to understand lecturers' experiences of the faculty culture, therefore the manageability component of SOC determines the extent to which the culture is perceived as supportive and caring, providing lecturers with the necessary resources to cope. Lecturers may or may not possess the internal resources needed to manage a situation or the external resources from the workplace than can help them cope better such as supportive management, processes, procedures and practices that enhance lecturer performance or access to employee assistance programmes may not be unavailable to them. In such cases, levels of SOC may drop and stress may set in which could result in symptoms of ill-health such as fatigue, despondency and even depression. Stress is the single cause of a number of serious health problems such as heart disease, strokes and low immunity (Kamil, 2014).

Meaningfulness. This component represents the motivational component and determines how the individual appraises a situation as challenging and whether it is worth making commitments and

investments in order to cope with it. It is based on the premise that individuals will react and find ways to cope with situations they perceive as important and meaningful to them or which affect them personally. Coping requires the motivation, which is the mental and physical effort, to solve or address the problem that is causing the stress. The motivational dimension is determined by the extent to which the job has meaning for the employee. Loss of meaningfulness is often reflected in apathy or feelings of detachment.

The lecturers' perceptions of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness are influenced by the interaction between their individual characteristics, personality and experiences and the qualities of the work environment (Jenny et al., 2017). SOC provides the study with a theoretical model for the assessment of the faculty culture and its influences on lecturers' ability to cope with stressors and challenges that may be prevalent in the environment. The work culture is decisive in shaping the SOC of lecturers and therefore their state of wellbeing.

Mayer and Krause (2011) indicate that organisational health and individual health are strongly interrelated. Lecturer wellbeing or ill-health is often a reflection of the state of the organisation. Dale and James (2015) explain that educational organisations such as TVET colleges, are places of affective intensity where lecturers experience a range of feelings. Lecturers as educational professionals and whose career choice is most likely a personal one, generally hold a high degree of meaningfulness for their jobs as it forms part of their identity. Pienaar et al. (2009) add that negative factors in the work culture such as physical and mental overload, poor work conditions, inadequate resources and an unfavourable social climate are likely to contribute to poor health whereas a healthy organisation will be reflected in a satisfied and motivated employee free of stress symptoms.

The idea of the theory of SOC is for organisations to seek ways for the continuous improvement of employee health so that they reach high levels of satisfaction. The aim is to identify and create environmental factors which nurture the SOC, and support and facilitate optimal wellbeing that ultimately results in overall organisational efficiency (Becker et al., 2010). Within the context of the research topic, TVET college culture and lecturer wellbeing, SOC provides the basis for the analysis, evaluation and meaningfully reporting of the data in relation to the research objectives of the study as shown in its use in similar studies and is therefore the preferred theoretical framework for the study. (Strümpfer, 2001; Klepp, 2007; Kinman, 2008, 2019)

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter explained the theoretical framework used in the study. A detailed explanation of Antonovsky's sense of coherence (SOC) is given and reasons for its suitability to the aims of the study is clarified. The standards that determine SOC are explained. The components of the theory namely; comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness and how these will be used in the analysis and reporting of the data in the narrative inquiry is explained.

Chapter Four which explains the research methodology and design follows.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of lecturer experiences in a TVET faculty culture and how these experiences affected their wellbeing and to analyse, interpret and report their stories. The study was located in a faculty of a college and aimed to give lecturers a voice to express their experiences of the work culture and to document these stories meaningfully. In this chapter, the research methodology and design that was followed in the study is outlined. It begins with an explanation of the research paradigm and the approach chosen for the study. The research design, namely the narrative inquiry, that was followed and the research decisions that proceeded are explained. The method used for sampling and selections of participants is rationalised. The choice of the data generation instrument is discussed. The data analysis method is described. Steps taken to address ethical issues and trustworthiness of the study are included in this chapter.

4.2 Research Paradigm and Approach

A qualitative research approach situated within the interpretive paradigm was used in the study. According to Taylor and Medina (2013), a research paradigm comprises a view of the nature of reality (ontology), a related view of the type of knowledge that can be generated and the standards for justifying it (epistemology), as well as the disciplined approach to generating that knowledge. Creswell (2012) describes a paradigm as a world view or set of beliefs that guide research and the practice of it. The interpretive paradigm was used in this study as the aim was to understand the real-life situations of the lecturers and of their social world, as seen from their standpoint as those individuals who were participating in it (Cohen et al., 2007). The ontological belief, according to Creswell and Clark (2017), was that lecturers' perceptions of their work culture, the truth and reality thereof were constructed through their own lived experiences. Since beliefs and experiences are deemed to influence actions and response in this instance in the workplace, exploring these beliefs and experiences was a useful thing to do in order to gain understanding. The study acknowledged that there was no one truth, nor was the aim to reach a common or collectively held truth, rather the perspectives of the participants' experiences were pursued in order to solicit thick descriptions and to

fully inundate the data generation process on the research topic. Qualitative studies acknowledge the existence of multiple realities. The interpretive approach acknowledged that the same phenomenon could be experienced differently by the individuals who constructed meaning thereof in different ways (Scotland, 2012) which was congruent with the aims of the study and research approach.

The interpretive paradigm fitted the purpose and objectives of the study as it provided for data generation to take place in the natural setting of the participants and allowed the researcher to reflect on those experiences and report them in the narrative (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). The interpretive paradigm and social theory affirms that knowledge is a product of the environment and that people's experiences can provide understanding of social phenomena. The lecturers' natural work environment was the particular faculty of the college where they worked and which was regarded as a sub-culture of the college culture. Faculty cultures exist within the college and broader social culture, and may align with aspects of the broader culture or be in conflict with other aspects. The study aimed to circumvent simplistic interpretations of events and situations and to uncover new or hidden layers of understanding of the phenomenon as told by the participants (Scotland, 2012). The interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to capture the lived participants' experiences of their work culture and the theoretical framework chosen aligned with the research paradigm to analyse, interpret and report the findings from data that was generated meaningfully as pertinent to the research objectives.

Qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role in the research they conduct (Golafshani, 2003). In order to generate data and understand the phenomenon being studied, it became important for the researcher to immerse herself into the study in order to truly understand the real-world experiences of the lecturers from their point of view and to report their stories. The researcher was a member of the faculty where the research was conducted and therefore had a sense of understanding of the dynamics of the culture as well as being able to relate to the experiences of the participants in an unobtrusive and unbiased manner. The qualitative research approach was the most suitable for this study as it had the unique goal of facilitating the meaning-making process by the researcher's engagement with participants' descriptions and explanations in the data (Krauss, 2005). The complexity of meaning in the experiences of the lecturers had much to do with how they attributed meaning to different objects, people, situations and events in their work culture from their own perspectives and sense of reality. The researcher, as an insider, had the ability and skill to accurately, objectively and critically capture, give meaning to the experiences of the participants and

report the findings and conclusions of the phenomenon to enable the creation of knowledge and understanding that the study sought.

Interpretive research is fundamentally grounded in communication, focuses on the real, located practice and is an interactive research process involving both the researcher and the participants to develop thick rich descriptions and detailed stories (de Gialdino, 2006). Hence, the use of the narrative inquiry as the research design was chosen to best meet the purpose of the study. The semi-structured interview as the data generation instrument was selected as it aligned with the research design which enabled the type of data to be generated that best met the aims of this study. The narrative inquiry research design is elaborated on in later sections. The semi-structured interview was the sole data generation instrument used in this study and justifications for its efficacy is explained in more detail in a later section. The sample size was small comprising six participants as in qualitative research the number of participants selected depends on the number required to fully inform all the important elements of the phenomenon studied (Sargeant, 2012). The aim was to acquire rich, in-depth data of the experiences from different perspectives of the participants, by engaging in a communication interchange with them through the semi-structured interview.

Qualitative studies do not generally seek demonstrable and measurable cause and effect representations of social phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher did not use any form of measurement as statistical representation of the research topic was not the aim of the study. The study was not seeking a general consensus of the population on the research topic but rather to understand the full range of perspectives possible by generating the robust and thick data that was necessary to achieve this aim. The interview questions were used to establish an open dialogue with the participants on the research topic so as to generate details and in-depth descriptions in the data. The aim of the study was to analyse and report the data in a manner that developed a body of knowledge and understanding which reflected a particular social reality. The knowledge and understanding presented in the study was studiously reported to retain the voices of the lecturers who told of their experiences of their work culture. It was for these reasons that the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach were suitable for this study. This section described the research paradigm and research approach adopted in the study. The next section describes the research design that was followed in the study.

4.3 The Narrative Research Design

The purpose of the study was to capture and report lectures' experiences of their work culture and the effects of aspects of the culture on their wellbeing. The research problem arose from assumptions that lecturers' wellbeing was being affected by their work culture and the study sought to explore this phenomenon. In order to address the research questions fully, rich descriptions of the research phenomenon were required of the data and the most suitable way to achieve these aims was to apply a narrative research design (Cresswell & Clark, 2017). The use of the narrative inquiry follows.

4.3.1 The Narrative Inquiry

According to Creswell (2012), the term 'narrative' is derived from the word narrate, which means to tell a story in detail. Stories are sometimes fictitious, based on imaginary characters and told or written describing certain details, usually for the entertainment of the reader. Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) suggest that a narrative inquiry is more than just telling stories and is about actual real lived experiences, rather than made up stories. Narratives are based on social actors who produce and present their experiences and personal knowledge on past, present or future events and can therefore be used to gain understanding and information on social issues. Humans are generally 'story-telling animals' and narratives provide a medium for them to express their experiences and for the researcher to capture and report their realities (Robert & Shenhav, 2014). The narrative inquiry facilitated the achievement of the research aims which was to extract rich thick data of the lecturers' experiences of the faculty culture from the stories they told and to analyse, interpret and report the data meaningfully. Therefore, this narrative inquiry was not just the telling of stories, but rather an attempt to chronicle the actual experiences of real people whose experiences were real to them. The narrative inquiry supported the researcher's approach to fully capture and report the lecturers' stories in order to offer a more in-depth understanding of the research topic.

There are different methods of narrative inquiry that can be used to capture real-life experiences in qualitative research which include biographical studies, ethnography, life history, autobiographies, letters and diaries (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). The type of narrative inquiry selected for the study was the oral narration by lecturers of their experiences, thoughts and knowledge through the use of the semi-structured interview and then for the researcher to retell or report these stories without distorting their voices. The narrative research design helped to achieve the two main aims of the study; the first

was to capture, record and report the actual lived experiences of the lecturers on the research topic and the second was to acquire a variety of perspectives so as to generate the rich data sought. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) contend that with the narrative inquiry, meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through the interpretive process which gives rise to a body of knowledge on the phenomenon. Meaning and understanding emerges through the researcher's critical engagement with the data in the analysis and evaluation phase of the study. Furthermore, Geertz (2008) asserts that naturalistic research such those used in a narrative inquiry facilitate 'thick descriptions' of the contextualised behaviours and examines situations through the eyes of the participants. It is for these reasons that the narrative inquiry was selected as the most suitable method to tell the stories of the lecturers on the research topic.

Creswell and Poth (2017) note that the participant and the researcher are interactive and inseparable in the data generation process. The researcher exercised her efforts to build a relationship of trust and respect with the participants and by doing so the participants felt valued, comfortable and confident that the researcher was truly interested in hearing their stories and that what they had to tell was important and valid. The researcher and participants were familiar with each other as colleagues and the judiciousness to affirm her position as a researcher with the participants was exercised to avoid any form of confirmation bias which could have contaminated the data. Special care was taken to ensure participants knew that they were the focus of the interview and that their openness and honesty was not only encouraged but also welcomed. It was integral to emphasise that their participation and contribution was essential to the purpose of the study in order to legitimise the sharing of their stories. The participants were purposively selected for the study based on the criteria discussed under the sampling and selection section. This further affirmed the value of their role in the study which elevated their enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the study. The effectiveness and success of the narrative inquiry was due to the level of planning and attention to detail in its execution and in the skills of the researcher which created the sort of interaction with participants that enabled the outpouring of information which ensured data saturation.

Luttrell (2010) explains that a narrative can be oral or written and may be heard by way of an interview or in a natural conversation. In this study a narrative on the research phenomenon was constructed on the data generated through questions put forward to participants in the semi-structured interview (Appendix F). Participants told their stories, led by carefully developed questions designed to elicit detailed accounts that informed the research topic. Their experiences were related orally, while the

researcher noted non-verbal messages and observations and thereafter all the data was documented for analysis and reporting. Creswell (2012) explains that a narrative inquiry investigates and represents the view of the participants and their definition of the situation, and the constructs of the participants' stories were used to build and structure the narrative. Once the data was generated, a thematic and content analysis of the data was meticulously conducted using the theoretical framework to draw out themes, topics, theories and lines of argument which led to the findings and conclusions. This section explained the research design followed and gave reasons for decisions taken in the process. The next section explains the sampling and selection of participants.

4.3.2 Sampling and Selection of Participants

The study aimed to capture and understand the experiences of lecturers in their work culture. A qualitative research approach and interpretivism paradigm guided decisions on the use of the narrative inquiry as the research design and the semi-structured interview as the instrument to generate the data. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to give the participants a voice to narrate their experiences and to generate rich descriptions in the data. Therefore, purposeful sampling and selection of participants was used to facilitate the research aims. The sample size was small with six participants from a population of thirty which was in keeping with the qualitative research approach to extract rich, descriptive data that reflected the varying experiences of the participants on the research topic for the purpose of understanding (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Purposeful sampling allowed for the selection of participants who were best able to inform the aims of the study which were to acquire a range of perspectives and to generate the rich thick data (Burton & Bartlett, 2009). The method is used when the researcher has a specific objective in mind and participants are specifically selected to meet that purpose (Etikan, 2016). Three specific criteria were used to select participants so that they adequately represented the lecturer population at the faculty in order to meet the stated aims. The selection criteria used were gender; race and age.

On the criterion of gender, an equal number of male and female participants were selected as culture could be experienced and dealt with differently on the basis of an individuals' gender. Males and females are affected differently by situations and also cope differently in terms of their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing and SOC (Vogt, Hakanen, Jenny, & Bauer, 2016). Therefore, gender

as a selection criterion helped to offer the different perspectives of the phenomenon that the study sought.

The second selection criterion used was race. Given the historical background of South Africa discussed in the earlier chapters of the study and the inherited disparities amongst different race groups, as well as the merger of colleges which prior to1994 operated on the basis of race, race was construed as factor that would play a role as to how people of different races experience and perceive culture (Tabensky & Mathews, 2015). Experiences are likely to vary as individuals carry the values and acuities acquired from their different racial communities to the workplace. The views of participants from different race groups provided a further dimension to understanding the research topic. Suransky and Van der Merwe (2016) assert that within the South African context of racial disparities, institutional culture may be the main obstacle in the way of successful transformation in the tertiary education system. The stories told by participants could possibly reflect the existing power relations and inequalities that may reinforce or challenge the status quo.

Age was the third criterion considered in the selection of participants. Rothmann and Barkhuizen (2008) indicated that new lecturers entering an institution possessed the "fire" to teach despite challenges, whereas older employees experienced chronic stress and dissatisfaction and possibly apathy. Age and length of service could affect how employees SOC might aid or disrupt their coping abilities in the work environment. Older lecturers may have developed better resources, skills and knowledge to cope due to their experience, or they may be set in their ways and resistant to change (Becker et al., 2010; Jenny et al., 2017). Length of service and age are factors in the way new and old employees may perceive and experience culture. It was for these reasons that gender, race and age were the criteria used to purposively select participants for the study. The selection criteria also ensured generation of the varied perspectives as well as the rich, thick data which the study sought.

Purposeful sampling was used to specifically select participants who would best inform the research objectives and it also allowed the researcher to select participants who were easily accessible, available and willing to participate in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Given the time constraints, limited resources, as well as meeting the aims of the study, purposeful sampling was used as not all prospective participants were available or willing to participate in the study. Participants worked in close proximity to the researcher and she was able to access them easily as needed for the research and the setting up of interviews.

The researcher and participants were familiar with each other which enabled her to establish a rapport of ease and trust with them. Cautionary steps were taken to ensure a neutral stance during the data generation process and to avoid a situation of distrust and suspicion that could have rendered participants unwilling to share their views for fear of repercussions and to avert the possibility of dishonest or false responses. In order to eliminate any form of contamination of data, and to negate notions of data manipulation, all responses of participants were considered in the study and confirmed with them.

The sample size was compatible with the aims of the study. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) explain that sample size in a qualitative study should not be too large that it becomes difficult to extract thick, rich data. On the other hand, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the sample size should not be too small so that it becomes difficult to achieve data saturation or informational redundancy. Considering these arguments, the researcher believed the sample size of six from the population of thirty and the purposive selection method that considered specific criteria was quantitatively adequate for the study to generate sufficient data which would address the research questions effectively. Participants were shortlisted and those who were available and willing to participate were finally selected. Therefore, justification for keeping the sample size small so as to elicit specific rich detail from the number and type of participants selected, combined with carefully selected interview questions allowed for the generation of detailed and descriptive type of data that was required for the study. Specific characteristics of the participants were not included and pseudonyms were allocated to protect their identities. The method used to analyse and interpret the data generated is discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2017) explain that stories told in a narrative inquiry may not necessarily be true and therefore the researcher plays an integral role in the analysis and interpretation to give context to meaning in order to truly reflect life experiences. Antonovosky's theory of SOC was the theoretical framework together with a thematic analysis approach was used to analyse and interpret the stories in the data. Clarke, Braun, and Hayfield (2015) suggest a thematic analysis approach for data analysis when using the narrative inquiry within the qualitative research paradigm. Thematic analysis was used to analyse and evaluate the data by identifying and establishing patterns within the data items into topics and themes that would be used to build the narrative report. Joffe (2012) gave further reasons for the usefulness of thematic analysis for this study. Its flexibility in being able to be used

with any theoretical framework allowed the researcher to analyse and code the data in an inductive way to build the narrative. It allowed the researcher to analyse and interpret the data more critically and to consider the possibilities of meanings in the descriptions given by the participants and in the context of the research setting. Thematic analysis also helped to develop theories or lines of arguments from the data that would confirm or refute assumptions or hypotheses put forward in the introduction section.

In the case of qualitative research methodology, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) confirms that the researcher plays a direct and intimate role in both data generation and analysis. The researcher was a tool in the analysis and interpretation of the data by critically engaging in the data to decipher and draw meanings while preserving participants' voices when retelling the stories in the next chapter. Themes and patterns emerge through the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data which were facilitated by the theoretical framework and the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to be fully familiar with the data so that stability of analysis, interpretation and meaning was maintained in every instance that the data was evaluated so that the reporting of the findings and conclusions retained the voices of the participants. The characteristic of reflexivity of thematic analysis (Joffe, 2012) allowed the researcher to make critical choices and assumptions underpinned by the data enabling the themes and topics to be actively generated by the researcher. All themes and topics were included, frequent major themes as well as minor themes to reflect all meanings in the data. It is important to note that one theme may represent different meanings to participants as the themes are discussed and reported in Chapter Five.

This section presented a comprehensive description of the research design of the study. The narrative inquiry approach was explained and reasons for its use in the study was given. The next part of the narrative inquiry is the reporting and presentation of the findings and conclusions, in a manner which retains the voices of the lecturers in the following chapter. The sampling and selection methods were discussed and their suitability to the study was motivated. The approach to data analysis and interpretation was described extensively and the use of data analysis method was explained with justifications for its suitability clarified. The next section provides an overview of the research setting.

4.4 Research Setting

The research setting was a faculty of a public TVET college. The name of the college and any identifying sites were not mentioned in the study to protect its anonymity. The physical campus setting reflected aged and deteriorated buildings and structures. Classrooms did not have proper ceilings, the walls were not plastered and ablution facilities were outdated. The access road to the campus was a dumping site, with debris and rubble covering the surface creating driving hazards and damages to tyres were daily occurrences. Residents from the nearby informal settlement often burned their waste and the dumped material and the toxic fumes pervaded the campus such that on windy days teaching and learning was disrupted. Students and staff often complained about respiratory and breathing problems due to the smog. Frequent flooding of the campus occurred due to its location which added to the unhealthy conditions. Mould and moisture which pervaded the classrooms were known to cause respiratory problems amongst other related health issues (Patovirta, Meklin, Nevalainen, & Husman, 2004). Aside from the unhealthy conditions, students seemed eager to attend and there was a high demand for the programmes offered at the faculty. The campus' location was ideal for easy and convenient access to public transport and nearby accommodation facilities for students. The faculty was reputed for producing good student pass rates.

The participants selected were lecturers of the faculty where the research study was conducted. The researcher was also a member of the faculty and familiar with the participants and the ways of the college. There were many assumptions and perceptions about the faculty culture amongst the lecturers, as indicated in the research problem, however a study such as this had never been conducted at the faculty. The researcher believed the research setting was rich with stories, experiences, as well as both negative and positive assumptions and perceptions which warranted a scholastic inquiry. The study had the potential to provide knowledge that would be useful to lecturers, managers and other persons of interest, as it would provide an understanding, knowledge and information of why the culture in the faculty was the way it was as well as to identify, introspect and understand the causes of lecturer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The participants were eager to share their experiences and indicated that such a study validated their feelings and experiences of the work culture which they felt were overlooked.

The faculty's management structure consisted of the faculty head, with senior lecturers who managed the lecturers and programmes offered. The faculty head reported to the campus manager. This was

the hierarchal structure in all faculties at the college. Lecturers were allocated subjects to teach, according to their qualifications and areas of specialty. Programmes changed from time to time based on national skills audits by the DHET that indicated the areas in the labour market where there was a shortage or oversupply of graduates (Buthelezi, 2016). Changes in programmes meant that lecturers were redeployed to teach new subjects outside of their area of expertise. TVET lecturers were often able to teach a range of subjects in different subject areas and that had the advantage of making them more employable as well as affirming job security. The study aimed to bring to light a deeper understanding of lecturers' experiences in the research setting and the extent to which those experiences affected their wellbeing. The study also sought to identify factors in the research setting that were challenging or enabling to lecturer wellbeing.

The research setting was described to provide an overview of the 'natural setting' where lecturers' experiences occurred, and the data generated. The next section discusses the data generation process that was followed in the study and includes motivations for decisions taken by the researcher before, during and after the process.

4.5 Data Generation

This section explains the semi-structured interview as the sole data generation instrument used in this study. The data generation process that was followed in order to meet the research aims is described. The researchers' role as an insider researcher in the data generation process is examined and clarified.

4.5.1 The Semi – Structured Interview

According to Geertz (2008), semi-structured interviews comprise a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with sub-questions emerging from the interaction and dialogue between the researcher and participant. Whilst questions in the semi-structured interview were predetermined, there was flexibility in terms of where and when they are asked and whether there are other questions not predetermined that might be asked, since these may emerge during the discussions with participants. It was this responsiveness and flexibility of the semi-structured interview which enhanced its use as well as the researcher's role as a research instrument within the research rather than a neutral bystander which further enhanced the data generation and analysis process.

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of participants' experiences of the research phenomenon therefore the use of the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to delve deeply into social and personal matters in order to extract the wide range of experiences from participants (Sargeant, 2012). Specifically-formulated questions served as a guide to flesh out responses that were meaningful to participants which further augmented the suitability of the interview for the purpose of the study. No specific answers to questions were sought, nor were there right or wrong answers that were required and all responses were considered in the data. The semi-structured interviews usefulness allowed for open discussions where participants could talk about their experiences of the work situation which were not necessarily in line with the pre-determined questions further enabling depth and capaciousness of the data generated.

Creswell (2012) adds that researchers should choose a type of interview which allowed them to fully and optimally learn the views of the participants and the semi-structured interview served that purpose. Salkind (2009) highlights several advantages of using semi-structured interviews. Firstly, its flexibility allowed the researcher to pursue any direction by probing for details and clarification. Secondly, the interviewer could take note of non-verbal cues and behaviours of the participants during the interview which provided valuable cues for the interviewer to navigate further. The interview was a communication interchange and non-verbal messages were as important as the oral responses and gave support and meaning to the data. It allowed the researcher to observe what was not being said, changes in mood and tone as well as the type of language being used as all of these were vital to the robustness of the stories narrated by the participants thereby enriching the data generated.

Keeping in mind the research objectives and questions of the study, carefully constructed interview questions were formulated to ensure rich, thick descriptive data to be elicited. The questions were discussed and deliberated on with the research supervisor to ensure they aligned with the aims of the study. The reasons given justified the decision for choosing the semi-structured interview as the data generation instrument for the purpose of this study. The data generation process that was followed and research protocols that had to be addressed are spelled out in the next section.

4.5.2 The Data Generation Process

The data generation process began once ethical clearance (Appendix C) was granted from the Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Permission to conduct research (Appendix A) at the

college faculty was sought and granted as reflected in the gatekeepers' letter (Appendix B). All provisions in the gatekeepers' letter were adhered to. A meeting with the faculty was held where arrangements for conducting the interviews were discussed and agreed upon. The researcher gave the assurance that research activities conducted with participants were scheduled with consideration to the normal continuance of the faculty operations and the participants work obligations. The names of the participants were withheld for protection of their anonymity and integrity or the possibility of any interference in their participation.

An interview schedule (Appendix G) and data management plan, which was submitted with the ethical clearance application, directed the research activities and indicated how the data was to be generated, processed, stored and documented. The location, dates and times of the interviews were agreed upon between the researcher and participants.

Creswell (2012) stresses the importance of finding a location to conduct interviews that was quiet and suitable. All the interviews were conducted at the participants' workplace, during a time when there was student unrest and lessons were suspended and the timing was helpful as participants were not inconvenienced. The unrest did not present a safety threat to the participants. An unoccupied office situated away from the faculty was used to conduct the interviews in order to avoid disturbances, distractions and to protect participants' anonymity. Care was taken to ensure confidentiality and to obviate any indications which may have made it apparent that research activities were being conducted. Participants were not aware of the identities of the other participants and the motivation for this was to avoid prior discussions that could have influenced the authenticity, credibility and reliability of the information shared.

Given the researcher's limited experience and skills as an interviewer, various literature was studied and expert interviewers were consulted to help develop her interviewer skills and competencies as well as to fully understand the interview process (Libakova & Sertakova, 2015). The researcher was fully aware that the quality of the study was dependent on the successful execution of the data generation process. To avoid general responses, the technique of asking participants to give examples of their experiences or to describe their feelings about situations and events was used. The researcher emphasised at the start of the interview that the participant's personal accounts were being sought. The interviewer listened, observed and interjected only when it was necessary to clarify or to request further elaboration on a topic they raised and exercised her interviewer skills confidently.

The office selected to conduct the interviews was rearranged for the purpose and made comfortable for participants. The couches were arranged so that the interviewer and participant faced each other similar to the set-up of a psychologists' room. The office was located in a quiet part of the premises and interviews proceeded according to the schedule without any problems. A security staff member was strategically placed to ensure safety and to keep people away from the area for the duration of the interviews. Recording equipment was checked and tested prior to interviews. Each interview began with an introduction to the purpose of the interview and the role of the participant was explained. The topic and the research objectives were explained, and expectations of the interviewer and interviewee were clarified. The researcher sought permission to record the interviews and all participants agreed to that. It was explained to them that their contribution to the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time if they decided not to continue. The researcher assured them of her duty to protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and duly assigned them pseudonyms. Once the declarations (Appendix E) and consent forms (Appendix D) were signed, the interviews commenced, and each lasted about an hour.

During the interviews, questions were asked and participants expressed their views openly and freely with minimum interruption from the interviewer. They were given time to deliberate on the questions before responding. The researcher initially found it challenging to listen attentively and take notes at the same time, so the note-taking was abandoned, as the interviews were recorded anyway, and full attention was then given to exercising her advanced listening and observation skills. Tone, mood, posture, facial expression, changes in tone and expressions of participants during the interviews were noted. The interviewer listened and interjected when it was necessary to probing further, seek clarification or to confirm meaning of responses with the participants. After the pre-determined questions were addressed, participants, at their behest, continued the discussion this time with more candidness and less incertitude with their responses. This technique proved helpful to further elicit details and helped to identify critical data items emerging. Also, by that time they were more relaxed and immersed in the discussions as more thoughts were emerging. This allowed the researcher to optimise data generation, confirm meanings and summarise with the participants. At the end of each interview the researcher thanked the participant for their time, participation and willingness. After the participant had departed, written notes were made of the discussion. Observations and other non-verbal cues were noted. Later, the researcher listened to the recordings and all the data was transcribed and summarised in a table format.

The data generation process was fully explained as it had occurred. In the next section, a brief description is given of each participant and the contribution they made to the study.

Steven shared his experiences as a secondary school educator for the greater part of his career and described differences between the private school he had taught at and his current work environment. Annie spoke of her experiences as one of the participants with a long service history at the college and described the changes she observed over the years. She told of her experiences as a female lecturer. Her views on the quality of new lecturers and managers entering the college environment were insightful and she opined on the days when she perceived educators took more pride in their jobs. Samantha narrated her story as a young female lecturer in the faculty. She had worked in industry previously and gave her perspective on the faculty or government institutional cultures compared to that of a business. She offered her industry insights regarding the gaps in the TVET curricula and its relevancy in the current economy.

Simone described her views as a young lecturer, her calling as an educator and her initial excitement and enthusiasm when she was appointed at the faculty. She compared the college to other higher education institutions and described the differences she observed. Tony had a lengthy service at the faculty and spoke of his feelings on political changes and employment equity policies and how these had affected his career and promotion opportunities. Patrick was a foreigner and gave a comparison of his previous employment at a tertiary institution in another country and his current work culture. All participants shared their invaluable experiences and knowledge, and every effort was made to retain their voices in the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data. The next section addresses and clarifies the researcher's position as an insider researcher in this study.

4.5.3 The Researcher's Position as an Insider Researcher

The researcher's positions as a researcher, a member of the faculty and a colleague of the participants were relevant in the data generation and analysis processes particularly to the issue of trustworthiness. Being an insider did not make the researcher better or worse in this study, just a different type of researcher. Her position allowed her to be a research tool in conjunction with the semi-structured interview, in that she had prior knowledge of the ways and behaviours of the participants in their normal work circumstances and was thus able to read their verbal and non-verbal responses better, without making assumptions or holding any preconceived biasness. It helped her during the

interviews to decide where and when to ask questions for further probing and was cautious not to lead the participants.

Kanuha (2000) attests that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding of the participants' stories in terms of their behaviour and responses, which may not be the case where the researcher was an outsider. It can, however, be construed that based on political and inter-personal relations that existed in the culture, participants may have been reluctant to reveal too much to a colleague who was also part of the organisation. This would be possible where there was a high level of distrust in the culture and fear that information, particularly the wrong information, would get back to the wrong people and have repercussions. The researcher anticipated such assumptions and dealt with these by taking extra care to establish trust with the participants and to assure them of her intentions and research obligations to protect them and the integrity of the study.

The researcher considered these sensitivities during the data generation process in light of her position and mediated any form of bias by maintaining a neutral stance throughout the study and by diligently adhering to her research duties to ensure confidentiality and protection of participants' identities. The trustworthiness of this study held personal meaning and importance for the researcher, as did her integrity as a researcher, therefore extra care was taken to ensure the findings and conclusions reflected the stories as told by the participants and to avert aspersions of biasness or manipulation of data. The participants' actual words and quotations were included throughout the reporting and presentation section. The researcher believed that she had upheld her ethical duty to protect participants from any sort of harm. Their willingness to speak freely with her and in the case of Tony, after the tape recorder was switched off, indicated a high level of trust was achieved. The role of the insider researcher in the data generation process was clarified.

This section gave a full description of the data generation process that was followed. The semi-structured interview and its use in the process was explained. The researcher clarified issues as to her role as an insider researcher that may arise and how these were addressed. Some of the ethical and trustworthiness issues related to her position were included. The next section explains how the researcher dealt with ethical issues pertinent to the study.

4.6 Ethical Issues

Any research study must ensure adherence to ethical protocols. Johnson and Christensen (2012) explain ethics as a set of principles that guide and help researchers in conducting ethical studies. Adherence to a number of ethical obligations ensured the study was in compliance with research ethics. One of the main requirements was the acquisition of the ethical clearance certificate (Appendix C) from the Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This was granted after approval of the research proposal which succinctly outlined the details of the study. Ethical clearance was granted on submission of the gatekeeper's letter, the declaration of confidentiality and participants' informed consent forms. The gatekeepers' letter confirmed permission to conduct the study at the college faculty and spelled out certain conditions which were complied with. The declaration and informed consent forms confirmed that participants were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their written consent to participate.

Cohen et al. (2011) explain that researchers must ensure that participants really understand what a study is about and the implications before signing the consent forms. Lecturers who agreed to participate were informed of the research aims, purpose, and research method. It was explained that they would have to engage in an interview where questions would be put to them and that they were required to give personal accounts of their experiences which will be reported in this study. The researcher explained her obligation to ensure their anonymity was protected and that their participation was confidential. As an insider researcher, she was sensitive to the fact that participants might have been reluctant to share their personal views freely for fear of reprisal. The participants were assured of their anonymity by allocating those pseudonyms to be used in the study. The first part of the interview was used to explain their rights as per the declaration and to remind them of their role regarding the aims of the study.

Cohen et al. (2011) confirmed that participants must be protected from physical, emotional or psychological harm during the study and that the study should not disadvantage them in any way. The participants' identities remain known only to the researcher and their interview recordings have been stored safely. Participants were not aware of the other participants' identities. They were informed that there were no right or wrong answers, but that their own experiences were integral to the study.

Permission was requested to record the interviews and participants were assured that their information shared as well as the recordings were strictly confidential and for the purpose of the study only.

The college was not given the names of the participants. Discussions, communications and arrangements were confidential and conducted with discernment. There exists the possibility that information may be leaked, however, there has to date, been no indication of a threat to participants, the faculty or college or to the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher was cautious in her own conduct, particularly as an insider researcher, and refrained from discussing any part of the research with anyone other than the research supervisor. The researcher exercised extra caution not to draw attention to herself, her research activities, research notes and material or to the identities of the participants in the study throughout the course of the research project. Interviews were arranged to ensure privacy. Participants were reminded that their contribution was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. They were informed of their right to withhold their contribution should they have so wished. Except for the researcher and the research supervisor, no other person had access to the data. All the data was treated with the strictest confidentiality and not discussed with anyone, other than the supervisor. The data was concealed on the researcher's personal computer which was only accessible with a password known to her. All notes and recordings were safely stored and only the researcher had access to them. The researcher was confident that all ethical protocols were adhered to. In the next section, the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study are explained.

4.7 Trustworthiness

Krefting (1991) explained that there was no absolute truth and qualitative studies were not generalizable, rather the purpose of inquiry was to develop idiographic knowledge. A qualitative study must meet the requirements of being trustworthy if it was to make a contribution to the body of knowledge on the research phenomenon. Idiographic knowledge, which is the knowledge acquired from peoples' lived experiences made it even more imperative to ensure that such knowledge was trustworthy.

Schwandt, Lincoln, and Guba (2007) identified several criteria to ensure trustworthiness when using narrative inquiry in a qualitative study namely credibility; dependability; confirmability; transferability and authenticity. The data generated reflected the actual experiences of real people and were not made-up stories. Participants appeared to be honest in the information they shared, and they

showed no reason to question the credibility of their stories and the researcher was confident in the credibility of the data. The researcher suspended any form of biasness and adopted a neutral stance during the analysis and interpretation process and had full confidence in the truth of data and in its interpretation and reporting thereby meeting the standard of credibility. The criterion of dependability was assured by the researchers' efforts to be completely familiar with the data by rereading to ensure the same meaning was interpreted each time. Stability and consistency in the interpretation of the data over time further enhanced the trustworthiness of the narrative report in the following chapter. The study also meets the criterion of confirmability as the both the researcher and supervisor were able to reach congruency as to the meaning and interpretation of the data. Although the findings and conclusions were not generalizable, they could be transferable to similar settings to understand a similar topic. The researcher is confident that the study meets the criterion of authenticity. In many sections of this chapter the researcher indicated the steps taken to address questions of authenticity to ensure the study maintained the tone of the participants. This was also achieved by using direct quotations and italics to reflect the actual words of the participants in the reporting and discussion sections.

Other methods were used to ensure trustworthiness such as member checking. Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2009) explained that member checking was a process whereby the findings or specific descriptions of themes were taken back to the participants for clarification of meanings. Proceeding data analysis and interpretation, the researcher set up second interviews with the participants to authenticate the findings, conclusions and reporting were a true reflection of the meaning that they intended. Member checking was a helpful exercise as the researcher was able to confirm the findings with them and avert any misinterpretation of meaning. The original transcripts of their interviews were given to them to read to ensure that their explanations and responses were accurately interpreted and reported in the study. Member checking was a tedious process but was essential to the issue of trustworthiness particularly for the insider researcher.

Schwandt et al. (2007) mentioned thick descriptions in data items as a criterion for trustworthiness in a qualitative study. The thick descriptions were achieved through carefully developed interview questions according to the objectives of the study, which were reviewed and validated by the research supervisor. The criterion of thick description was achieved as evidenced in the extensive reporting and evaluation chapter which reinforced the trustworthiness of the study. Additional research and self-development helped the researcher to acquire and use interview techniques and skills that not

only ensured optimisation of the data generation process, but also strengthened the integrity of the data which the quality of study depended on. The interview schedule and planning ensured the efficiency of the data generation process, while adhering to all ethical rules discussed above. Care was taken when the data was transcribed from the recordings, notes and observations and constructed onto a spreadsheet for analysis to retain meaning and stability of the data. Attention to all these aspects ensured the trustworthiness of this study.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter began with a description of the research paradigm and the research approach adopted with justifications as to their appropriateness for the study. The narrative inquiry as the research design and reasons for its use and suitability in the study was explained. The sampling and selection methods used were discussed indicating the reasons for their suitability. A description of the research setting was provided. The data generation method namely the semi-structured was explained, with reasons given as to why it was fit for the study. The data generation process was explained including a brief description of the contribution made by each participant. A description was included on the method used to analyse the data. The researcher's position as an insider researcher was clarified. Finally, a discussion on how the researcher addressed ethical issues and a description of the efforts made to ensure trustworthiness was provided.

Chapter Five which follows reports and evaluates the findings and conclusions made from the data.

CHAPTER FIVE
REPORTING AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to understand lecturers' experiences of their faculty work culture in a TVET college and the effects on their wellbeing. The purpose and aims of the study were best met by adopting a qualitative research approach. This was an interpretive study using a narrative research design and the data generated reflected the stories of the lecturers in their college faculty. This chapter reports and evaluates the data through the lens of Antonovsky's (1987) theory on sense of coherence (SOC) and in accordance with research objectives. The data, findings and conclusions are reported, evaluated and presented in the narrative as described below. The data generated attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. *How do lecturers describe the culture in their faculty?*
2. *What factors of the culture do lecturers feel affect their wellbeing?*
3. *How do lecturers feel about the culture they describe?*

The data reported included all the data generated from the oral stories narrated to the researcher. The data is reported in three sections. Section 5.2 is a textual summary of each participant's story. Section 5.3 is the table (5.1) showing the direct excerpts of each participants' response to the interview questions including columns for common topics that emerged in the analysis and interpretation process that were grouped according to their relevance to the data themes and are indicated in the table. The themes, findings and conclusions are reported in section 5.4. The next section reports the experiences of each participant of their faculty culture.

5.2 Participants' Experiences of their Faculty Culture

Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants. Participants' actual words appear in italics. Longer direct quotations were included. All responses were included. The researcher's paraphrasing serves to critically interpret and attribute meaning of the participants' experiences and stories within the context of the research topic.

5.2.1 Tony

Tony began by saying in a curt manner that the culture was *not inclusive.* While he initially said that management *was supportive* he later stated that, *management is unsupportive and the way they communicate is very poor.* He tended to vacillate in his responses, initially making contradictory statements and it was observed that he was attempting to sound neutral or say positive things despite his body language indicating otherwise. He gave short curt responses to the interview questions. However, once the tape recorder was switched off, he appeared more relaxed and requested to continue the discussion this time venting his apparent pent up frustrations more openly about the faculty culture.

This sort of reaction could be interpreted as being indicative of a culture of distrust and suspicion and fear of victimisation for speaking against the employer or it could mean that Tony had become accustomed to feeling under-valued or unacknowledged. It could also be interpreted as lecturers showing a reluctance to speak negatively about their employer or that doing so was a sign of disloyalty. His behaviour during the interview was telling that it was possible that even in dysfunctional work-cultures, lecturers would be conflicted in appearing to be disloyal to the employer in order to portray a picture that all was well. His initial sense of hesitancy disappeared once recording had stopped and he spoke more candidly about his experiences. In terms of the manageability component of SOC this situation reflected that Tony perceived his work environment with uncertainty and the extent to which he found his work meaningful enough to be motivated to cope would determine his level of resilience.

He was clearly agitated as he spoke, "*the lack of resources is frustrating and makes the job challenging. The buildings here are in a terrible state. Who wants to work in a place like this?"* He felt *the curricula was not holistic* and deficient in key attributes and skills that students needed for employment. *We have poor managers*. When asked to clarify *poor,* he said *they are useless! Meetings are a waste of my time and nothing comes of it.* He resented when managers pretended to listen to staff complaints and made promises to attend to them, but then nothing transpired. Such practices contributed to the cynicism, distrust and loss of confidence that began to emerge in those instances. He continued, "*We are not treated equally. My years' experience and hard work I gave to this division counts for nothing! I have applied so many times and I don't even get short-listed! People with less qualifications and experience than me are promoted and I must take instructions from them! I think*

some of their qualifications are fake. It's not fair! *At my age I have no chance of promotion because only black staff are promoted!*"

Tony's story reflected feelings of unfairness and marginalization due to affirmative action and this lack of recognition would influence his SOC and attitude towards work. While the transformation policies were necessary to redress previous inequalities, they also had the effect of creating tenuous workplaces where employees perceived that appointments and promotions based on race and not merit was unfair (Burger and Jafta, 2010). Lecturers who were excluded on this basis often carried resentment and disappointment. Recognition and acknowledgement went a long way to promoting positive attitudes and commitment and affirmative action had shown to be a detrimental factor to lecturer motivation, performance and work satisfaction in TVET colleges (Essel et al., 2014).

Tony opined on the equity issue and he displayed deep seated resentment as he blamed that for his feelings of a lack of achievement and progress in his career. He said, "*Affirmative action is to blame for the state of education! There are no opportunities here for us to grow. Expectations for students and lecturers is low. Quality and standards have dropped. Its easy now for students to pass. The sector is managed by incompetent people who don't know anything and that's why standards are so low!"* Poor pass rates, throughput and the quality of education in the sector as discussed in the literature was attributed to poor governance and ineffective policies (Buthelezi, 2016). The literature referred to the bringing in of political leaders and managers who displayed parsimonious understandings of the profession and sector and that often led to clashes between lecturers and management given the different drivers involved.

He continued, "*things are getting worse every year, what can you do?"* His demeanor told a story of bleakness for the future which suggested he had experienced prolonged exposure to a debilitating culture. His diminished sense of value, resentment, despondency and physical health where indicative of a compromised SOC. His tone and posture gave signs that he was experiencing some degree of stress. He spoke about how he had already *suffered a heart attack*, had *hypertension* and was on *chronic medication*. As a single person living alone, he attributed his state of health to his work stress. "*I don't bother anymore. No one cares! I do what I can because my health is more important*."

5.2.2 Annie

Her discontent was apparent when she started her story, "*Things are getting bad here. Look at the state of my computer rooms and equipment! They always say there's no money to fix anything. That is why the students are failing because half the time the computers are not working. How do they expect me to work like this?"* The lack of teaching equipment could be frustrating and stressful for lecturers as it directly inhibited their ability to deliver effective lessons necessary for students' performance. She continued, "*Management's attitude is pathetic. They don't care. That is why lecturers behave the way they do. And he (faculty manager) is so unprofessional. He comes and goes as he pleases. Some staff can do as they please because he can't discipline them."* Her story expressed disdain for her manager, his professional conduct and management style. She said, "*You know he has his friends (other lecturers) who sit in his office all day and do his work for him. They come late and leave early and he does nothing about it! But when I come late because of where I live and the traffic, I get called to the office! It's so unfair!"*

Unequal treatment of lecturers, favouritism and nepotism were practices that devalued staff who felt mistreated. Such discriminatory treatment of lecturers was an unhealthy and damaging practice as it negatively affected the self-concept of those lecturers on the receiving end and would weaken their SOC. The management style described in both Tony and Annie's experiences communicated that a climate had been created were some lecturers 'curry-favoured' with certain managers to gain approval, privileges and leniency. These lecturers took on the duties of the managers who were happy to let them do their jobs while they enjoyed more free time and had less responsibilities. Other lecturers such as Annie did not approve of these practices and felt that *lecturers and managers should stick to their duties*. Managers were role models who set the standards of behaviour for staff to follow as mentioned in the literature section and in instances where lecturers displayed unethical behaviour, such late-coming or not preparing for lessons, it usually stemmed from managers who failed to lead in way that instilled good work values. Managers' inconsistent treatment of staff was also detrimental to unity and would countermine the achievement of faculty aims as the literature indicated.

Her descriptions were more of a rant as she continued, "*They worry about us filling in all these unnecessary forms but they do nothing about the road and garbage and filth we have to work in!"* Her resentments were aimed at the college management whom she felt neglected the important issues such as health or providing resources yet patronised them for trivial matters such file management.

"*Female staff are treated differently here! I don't like the way he (faculty manager) speaks to me. He shouted at me many times. He will never dare speak like that to the male staff. I've spoken to him about it but I see he still does it! He will never speak like that to (naming black female lecturers). He is too scared of them*!" she said. Annie's story described a culture where she experienced harsher treatment from the male manager compared to the way he treated Black female and male lecturers. This was a unique form of discrimination from those described in the literature. Unfair treatment or victimisation by the manager appeared to be deliberate towards to those female lecturers he regarded as meek, complaint and less likely to retaliate whereas of he viewed Black and male lecturers as more of a threat as he perceived Black lecturers having more power in the current political climate and strong union affiliations. His sensitivity to Black lecturers could also indicate his fear of being accused of racism (Jansen, 2004).

It appeared Black lecturers in the faculty enjoyed more freedom as management overlooked their digressions. Lecturers of other race groups might perceive themselves as easy targets for managers who perpetuated such practices and would be more subservient in their behaviour for fear of being victimised (Jansen, 2004). Annie said she felt *vulnerable* and the disempowerment would compromise her levels of SOC and ability to cope in a culture she perceived as hostile. Her story showed that both race and gender do have an influence on lecturer experiences and on the institutional culture. Any form of discrimination and unfair treatment was likely to damage self-esteem and self-worth and would cause lecturers to withdraw their participation and contribution adopting alienation, isolation and detachment as a way to cope in such a culture (Burger & Jafta, 2010). Her feelings of disempowerment was indicative of an unmanageable environment, work would lose meaning and motivation to cope would be stretched to its limits.

As Annie continued with her story her weariness and frustration became apparent. Her initial anger changed to despondency and disappointment. She said, "*I come to work for the sake of my students and I want them to pass and succeed in life. My students keep me motivated."* This was often a source of tension for staff since they felt a sense of commitment to students but the institution exploited this by continuing not to give support and resources knowing that lecturers would not disadvantage students by striking or taking any other action. Annie experiences in terms of the comprehensibility component of SOC showed that she perceived the work environment as unstable and inconsistent.

Annie, like Tony, was also a casualty of affirmative action and equity policies. She said, "*People are not appointed on merit and that's why we have poor managers and lecturers who can't teach. Experience and good work count for nothing in this place!"* This was a consistent message from the different respondents in the study. Their age as a criterion in the selection of participants showed that older lecturers with years of experience and loyalty to the college were overlooked in favour of equity requirements while younger lecturers may still be hopeful. The college was answerable in addressing employment equity practices and ensuring representativity in the workplace (Burger & Jafta, 2010), however appointments and promotions based on race, nepotism and political affiliation and not qualifications, experience and skills had resulted in unintended negative outcomes such as resentment and disunity amongst lecturers in the faculty and negated positive outcomes such as teamwork and organisational commitment. Older lecturers had lower levels of SOC due to discriminatory practices that had stunted their careers and these respondents were highly despondent as work was perceived as meaningless and thus their motivation to cope was eroded.

Annie reported, "*The new breed of lecturers coming in don't have the drive to be good educators and have poor work ethics."* One of the reasons for the deteriorating quality of education in the sector was the attrition of good lecturers from the sector due to the poor conditions, systemic problems and affirmative action, leaving those who were not as committed and new lecturers quickly assimilated into the dysfunctional work cultures (Pitsoe, 2013). She continued, "*All I can do now is wait for retirement."* The ensuing sense of despondency, disillusionment and resentment amongst older lecturers who chose to remain and wait for retirement had done so with low levels of commitment and motivation, high levels of stress and diminished SOC due to a prolonged unmanageable work environment as was the case with Tony and Annie. Annie tried to find some meaning in her work and was sufficiently motivated to cope with her stress through *meditation* and *religious* faith. She felt *the culture can improve if managers are trained to be forward thinkers*. As described in the literature (Wedekind, 2008), a new breed of managers who possess innovative thinking abilities, resourcefulness and situational management skills was needed to help transform the existing stagnant culture.

5.2.3 Samantha

Samantha was not afraid to speak her mind during the interview and at staff meetings. She said, *"Because I say things as it is and because I'm a female, I am victimised by him (faculty manager).*

Male staff are treated differently. I know his attitude towards me is because I'm female and question him about things. He doesn't like us telling him what to do or coming up with better suggestions than him. He does the same thing to others (naming other female staff). There was a time he yelled at me when I asked him about something. I warned him never to speak to me like that again! But he will never try that with a male or black staff member! As a manager, he is useless and spineless! He is merely a messenger and even that he can't do right. He is hardly ever around when we need him. He comes late and leaves early and has others to do his work and he is not even ashamed of it but at meetings he preaches to us about the rules. Those staff that do all his work for him can do as they please. Yet he watches me coming and leaving! He needs to go! The division can function without him!" Samantha's story confirmed the discriminatory practices Annie spoke of in the work culture and in terms of the manageability component of SOC, the workplace was highly chaotic and dysfunctional due to the management style. It was not necessarily gender discrimination as the manager was aware of which lecturers he could dominate and was more the inability of the manager to manage diversity in the workplace (Dill, 2014). Black lecturers received preferential treatment and it was other race groups and females who experienced unfair treatment. Samantha had lodged a grievance on the issue. Grievances, complaints and conflict were symptomatic of unmanageable work environments and dissatisfied staff with affected SOCs.

Having previously worked in the corporate sector, Samantha indicated that corporate and government work cultures were markedly different and said "*Most of the lazy lecturers here will not survive in a corporate environment where everything is based on your performance. Here no one cares if you work hard or sit in your class and ask students to read the textbook."* It can occur that public paid employees were somewhat complacent in their jobs as they enjoyed job security (Mpehle, 2012). Samantha took pride in her job and her negative experiences affected her sense of self-worth and compromised her SOC due mainly to work becoming meaningless. Like the previous participants, she mentioned the "*facilities, buildings, health and safety conditions are unacceptable for a tertiary institution. The fumes and mould in my class make me sick. Last year I was hospitalised twice for infections. My doctor says I have a low immune system. Top management are out of touch with what we have to go through every day*." As indicated in the literature, stress can lower an individual's immune system increasing the risk of viral infections and mould can cause serious health problems (Patovirta et al., 2004). Stress often arose when a person was not sufficiently motivated to cope and balance their SOC.

She added, "*Students are not ready for tertiary education and our courses are so outdated, it's not right to offer these programmes. They are not getting jobs because we are teaching them things that are outdated."* The TVET curriculum was described in the literature as poorly designed and the post matric courses (Report 191 programmes) discussed in the introduction chapter had not been updated since 1994. This highlighted the wider problem of politics and governance as the main reasons for the lack of curriculum reform in the sector as mentioned in most of the literature. SOC and wellbeing were diminished when lecturers saw their efforts as futile and worthless. Samantha bore a sense guilt as she believed she was complicit in teaching a curriculum that aggravated students' chances of finding suitable employment. These negative feelings further compromised her SOC and she reported that her work situation was stressful. Stress affected the manageability component of SOC resulting in diminished efforts, contribution and participation particularly in a culture that was part of a wider systemically problematic education system.

Samantha related, "*I stopped reacting to everything as it helps me cope. Nothing will change. How many letters and emails I've sent. Now, I've stopped wasting my time. I have to look after myself."* She displayed a sense of hopelessness and dissonance and she felt her work domain stifled opportunities to exercise agency and academic freedom. This further eroded her motivation and commitment and maintaining the SOC was challenged when work was perceived as meaningless. The quality of education was threatened and students were on the losing end when lecturers were underperforming. Samantha was adamant that she would leave the college if a better opportunity arose. She was selected based on her age and her low SOC and intentions to leave after a short period of employment was indicative of a faculty culture where talent and effort were not appreciated and progress, development and creativity stifled.

5.2.4 Simone

Simone described her dismay and disappointment when she started her tenure at the faculty. She said, "*I was so excited when I got a job here but was shocked when I saw how this place operates*! *Decisions aren't in the interest of students and the lack of resources and health conditions are nowhere conducive to teaching and learning. This place is so unpredictable. You never know what's going to happen today, whether students will call a meeting or decide to strike, or there will be no lights or water. The photocopier will be broken when I have to run a test and management couldn't care less! It's stressful I tell you! Students don't want to come to class because there's no facilities*

for them and campus life is boring." As with other participants, similar aspects of the culture had worn down Simone's initial motivation and morale. She reported suffering from *chronic respiratory infections* and *rhinitis* which she ascribed to the insalubrious work environment and the mould in her classroom. Ill-health was shown to be symptomatic of workplace stress and would inhibit the ability to maintain one's SOC (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2017) and in the case of the data, the physical conditions at the faculty were directly causing health problems for the lecturers. The consistent message from respondents was that the workplace was not manageable due to a number of factors and therefore their SOC was highly compromised.

She spoke about the stigma of TVET and the curricula, "*We are still perpetuating black disempowerment. Do you see many Whites or Indian students here? Look at the courses we offer! They are outdated. We are not helping students! And the students we attract? No other institute will accept them. I wonder how many have fake matric certificates. No one checks. That is why the pass rate is so low."* The poor perception of TVET education was inherited from the previous Further Education and Training (FET) sector and its role in offering short skills courses to the illiterate and school dropouts as discussed in the literature section. Although the role and function of TVET had expanded to include post-school diploma courses as well as courses approved by UMALUSI, the stigma of inferior education prevailed. Studies discussed in the literature (Malale & Gomba, 2016) supported lecturers' views that the poor image of the sector was due to the curricula, inadequate resources and facilities, lack of progress and innovation and student matters. In terms of the manageability component of SOC the data showed that not only did lecturers find the immediate work environment chaotic, but had to endure systemic and endemic instability throughout the sector

Simone described the culture as "*typical government institutional culture* (as did Samantha), *the style of management is hierarchal* and *bureaucratic. We must play by the rules. They don't acknowledge our expertise and professionalism."* She added "*organisational politics is unpleasant and I try to avoid it."* When asked to clarify this, she explained "*only African National Congress (ANC) members are appointed. Most Blacks and Black women like me don't stand a chance. And the situation with (naming faculty manager and the lecturer who does his work) it's just too much!"* In this instance the data showed that the application of employment equity and affirmative action did not only exclude certain race groups but everyone as positions were reserved for friends and family or those who supported the same political ideology. Her perceptions highlighted factions amongst lecturers within the same racial group. She was selected for the study on the basis of her race and gender and her

experiences showed that affirmative action only advanced selected persons within a race group and failed to serve the intended purpose of creating opportunities for all previously disadvantaged people. While she described mostly negative experiences, she saw her work as a *beautiful place* in terms of the friendships and relations she had developed with colleagues in her subject field. She felt "*the organisation has potential if resources are provided and environmental aspects dealt with."* She appeared to be optimistic that things at the faculty could improve. Black lecturers shared similar experiences as other participants had.

5.2.5 Steven

Steven, like the other lecturers, felt the curricula was a major problem from which other issues stemmed. He began, "*The entire sector needs an overhaul! All stakeholders, lecturers and businesses need to get involved. TVET plays such an important role, yet the curriculum is so outdated and irrelevant."* He said "*I feel proud of the professionalism of the staff I work with in my department. They are really dedicated and committed and do their best for the students. I enjoy working here because I have the opportunity to help these students. They have nowhere else to go?"* The profiles of TVET students indicated those who did not have the intellectual acumen or economic capital to pursue a university degree and the low fees and NASFAS support was an attraction for many to acquire a qualification which they hoped would secure employment (Nzembe, 2018).

Steven also told of the lack of resources, the unhealthy conditions and the workload yet he showed a stable SOC and appeared to cope well with the challenges. This could be attributed to his age and previous life challenges, hence the decision to include him in the study was fruitful as he offered a valuable perceptive. He described his experiences of having worked at a private school and said "*it is sad that the situation is this way and education in this country is failing the masses*. *This is a third world institute*. *If the government gives more resources and the curriculum changes, things can vastly improve."* Steven remained optimistic and hopeful about the work culture. He believed the *college had potential and could make a valuable contribution to education* if imminent changes were made.

5.2.6 Patrick

Patrick was a foreign national and described his previous work experience at another educational institution. He reported "*the institution I worked at had much better facilities and functioned better*

even though that country is worse off than South Africa. I thought things were better here, but I was so wrong. Things like the curriculum and infrastructure need to improve. The dirt on the road and the smell is not good for us and students. My classroom is close to the informal settlement and the smell and smoke is bad on some days. That's why students are not interested in their studies." He felt, "*the job is easy. They (management) don't make demands on me and don't worry me for things. No one worries me in my classroom. Even if I'm absent or leave early no one will know."* Patrick's views on management where positive and he had experienced good treatment, possibly because he was Black and male. He stated *I don't have any problem with them*. He was in agreement with other participants on aspect such as the curricula, lack of innovation and progress, health conditions and resources but did not view the workplace as unmanageable.

Patrick's SOC appeared stable which could be attributed to his good relations with management, the freedoms he enjoyed in the workplace due to his gender and race as well as his attitude of complacency that was observed. Being a foreigner he was probably grateful for his job which shaped his expectations and perceptions of the work culture. Patrick's story reinforced views in the literature that culture was a construct of an individual's perception of the world and assumptions of a shared culture cannot be made in all instances. He felt *staff and management are open, accommodating and supportive*. He maintained a calm demeanor during his interview as compared to some participants who were visibly emotional as they described their experiences. It was also possible he was afraid to speak openly due to recent xenophobic attacks taking place and being a family man, was afraid to say anything that may put him at the risk of losing his job and therefore it was difficult to assess his SOC.

This section summarised the stories and experiences of the lecturers as narrated to and discussed with the researcher. The aim was to retain the voices of the lecturers as best as possible and the researcher's statements served to clarify meaning, establish patterns and arguments in the data as they related to the research questions. In the next section, participants' actual and direct responses to the interview questions is presented in a table format.

5.3 The Semi-structured Interviews

The table below lists the interview questions (Column One) and presents the direct and actual responses of the participants in Column Two. Data analysis reflected common topics and consistencies indicated in Column Three as they emerged in order to construct the narrative.

Table 5.1: The Semi-structured Interviews

QUESTIONS	Terms/Responses relating to the organisational culture	Common Themes emerging/consistencies and inconsistencies	Implications of findings
Question 1 **Do you think the vision and mission of the faculty speak to the culture that you experience?**	***Tony***: No. ***Annie***: No. The culture does not reflect the desired values. ***Samantha***: No. ***Simone***: No. The reality is a contradiction of the vision. ***Steven***: No. Mission statement is pie in the sky. ***Patrick***: No. Was not aware of the mission statement.	***Theme 1 Lecturers Experiences of the Faculty Culture*** Poor culture/stifling/uninspiring. Stagnant/old/outdated. Mundane. Government institution type culture. Open and friendly/ A beautiful place (good relationships). ***Theme 2 Factors Identified as Integral in the Prevailing Culture*** Health and safety.	Unique cultural settings defined by cultural factors such as the extreme health conditions. Funding and the provision of quality education in the TVET sector. Technology and innovation in TVET education. Governance, management and neo-liberalism on
Question 2 **List three things about the faculty that make you feel proud and three things that make you feel ashamed and embarrassed**?	***Tony***: **Positive:** Enjoys good relations with colleagues. **Negative:** The facilities, health and safety and lack of resources. Student protests and attitudes. Affirmative action. Management's treatment of staff. The curriculum. ***Annie*: Positive:** The opportunity to make a difference. **Negative:** The management style. The infrastructure and working conditions. Students' behaviour. The curriculum. The treatment of female staff. ***Samantha***: **Positive:** Nothing positive about the culture.		

	Negative: The infrastructure and health conditions. Management approach. The curriculum. The treatment of female staff. ***Simone*: Positive:** Lecturers are dedicated, friendly and supportive. **Negative:** The lack of basic resources, facilities and health conditions. The curriculum. Organisational politics. ***Steven*: Positive:** The staff. **Negative:** The unhealthy environment. Lack of teaching resources. The curriculum. No innovation or progress. ***Patrick*: Positive**: Lecturers are dedicated and professional. Management are accommodating. **Negatives:** The poor teaching facilities. Health and safety issues. The curriculum and lack of innovation.	Facilities and resources. Management and management style. Curricula. Student issues and preparedness for tertiary education. Workload. Academic freedom. Stigma of TVET education. Collegial relationships ***Theme 3 Lecturers' Feelings about the Faculty Culture***	institutional efficiency and academic freedom in TVET colleges. Stigma of TVET education. TVET Curriculum relevance and graduate employability of TVET graduates.
Question 3 **How would you describe the culture to someone from Finland or Japan?**	***Tony***: Lecturers are helpful and friendly. Is a third world institution. Culture is stagnant. ***Annie***: Affirmative action has many negative consequences. No recognition for hard work. Priorities are neglected**.** ***Samantha***: There is a general culture of apathy. Management has created a chaotic and uncaring	Demotivated. Despondent. Discriminated/Unfairly treated. Ignored and unappreciated. Stifled/Disempowered. Frustrated. Ashamed and embarrassed.	

	environment. There are frequent protests and unrest. ***Simone***: The management style is hierarchal, bureaucratic and uncaring. A government institution culture. There's no progress. Many challenges with students. The culture is dysfunctional. ***Steven***: There is little unity amongst staff. Management unable to make good decisions. Many rules to follow and less academic freedom. Unnecessary paperwork. Affirmative action is unfair. Good education is not a priority. ***Patrick***: Staff are friendly and accepting. No technology and progress. Curriculum is not updated. Low expectations and standards for students and lecturers.	Stressful. Physical ailments. ***Theme 4 Lecturers' Wellbeing and SOC*** Individual efforts Medication and counselling. Prayer and meditation. Detachment/Dissonance.	
Question 4 **What would you say to a new employee taking up a position in the faculty? What advice, guidelines or warnings**	***Tony*****:** Be self-motivated, learn to work on your own and adhere to rules. Do not expect help from management. Students lack basic skills and knowledge. ***Annie*****:** Be self-motivated and self-sufficient. Lots of paperwork. Don't expect change or support from management. No resources. ***Samantha*****:** Be resourceful. Do what you can. Management are unhelpful. Few teaching resources.		

would you give them?	***Simone*****:** Have a service mind and avoid organisational politics. No career progression and recognition. Student performance is low. Do what was expected of you and nothing more. No technology. ***Steven*****:** Follow prescribed rules. Comply with checklists. Do what you can with what you have. Do not expect more from management. ***Patrick*****:** Be flexible and adaptable. Lecturers are helpful. Performance of students affected by many factors. Poor attitude of students. Curriculum is old. Poor teaching facilities and no technology.		
Question 5 **Describe how the working culture affects your emotional, physical and psychological health and how do you cope with these?**	***Tony*****:** Suffers with chronic stress and hypertension. Is demotivated. ***Annie*****:** Frequent illnesses. Stressed. Frustrated and detached. ***Samantha*****:** Frequent colds and infections. Feels ignored and unappreciated. Discrimination was demotivating. Efforts are futile. Students are unappreciative. Frustrated that important issues ignored. Environment is stressful. ***Simone*****:** Feels frustrated and stressed. Suffers with headaches, exhaustion, asthma and infections. Political infighting is unpleasant.		

	Steven*:** Is frustrated, stressed and demotivated. No provision for disabled. Frequently sick with flu. ***Patrick: Did find work demanding or stressful.		
Question 6 **Would you encourage someone to take up a job offer at the faculty or to send their child there to study**	***Tony*:** No but students have no other options. ***Annie*:** No. Student qualifications are worthless. ***Samantha*:** No. Courses are outdated. Students won't get jobs. ***Simone*:** No. Poor black students come here as they have no options. ***Steven*:** As a last resort only. The curriculum is irrelevant, they will be wasting their time. ***Patrick***: Some students have no option. The curriculum is old.		
Question 7 **Are there any other questions, statements or comments on the topic that you wish to add?**	***Tony*:** Management are weak and not focused on priorities, need training. Poor attitude of students. Experience and good performance is not valued. Nothing changes. ***Annie*:** Health and safety need attention. Managers need training and development. New managers who are forward thinkers is needed. Unfair treatment and discrimination must be addressed. ***Samantha*:** Infrastructure, aesthetic appearance and health and safety must be addressed. Management		

	are responsible for the poor culture. Discrimination and treatment of staff is a big problem. Students are not motivated and difficult to teach. ***Simone*:** Enjoys good relations with peers. Infrastructure and unhealthy environment is not conducive. Affirmative action is a problem. It is a disservice to offer courses which are worthless. ***Steven*:** TVET needs an overhaul. Students are being disadvantaged. ***Patric*k**: The conditions not conducive to teaching and learning.		

The analysis of the data suggested that most lecturers perceived the work culture as disempowering and stressful and showed compromised SOC's. Steven and Patrick stories reported similar challenges but were optimistic and accepting of the culture and maintained stable SOC's. Patrick agreed with most aspects mentioned by other participants but his experiences with management were good. The data reports levels of stress, lack of motivation and a general sense of despondency amongst most of the participants and they identified factors such as the infrastructure, unhealthy conditions, and the curricula and poor management as negative cultural factors. They reported that management's inattention to these factors hindered their ability to effectively carry out their duties and the quality of education they were able to provide was compromised. Their inability to be effective lecturers was particularly stressful and frustrating for them. Lecturers reported that the unhealthy working environment affected their health and made teaching and learning challenging. Some lecturers reported illness as a direct result of the unhealthy conditions, while others indicated stress related health problems. Student unrest and challenges with teaching students who were unable to cope academically also factored in with the workplace demands lecturers had to cope with.

Except for Patrick and Steven, participants' SOC was at risk by their accounts of work related stress, negative emotions and poor attitudes towards work which manifested in range of physical, mental and emotional ailments. The opportunity to be of service to students and collegial relationship as they

reported where positive aspects and mediated their SOC to a certain extent. Steven enjoyed his job and experienced work satisfaction despite reporting that changes in the faculty were necessary. Patrick perceived his job as easy and felt that management was supportive. Simone enjoyed good relationships she had forged with her colleagues. Many lecturers reported that the persistent challenges made it difficult to manage and maintain positive attitudes to work and they had developed a sense of hopeless and defeat. The findings showed that the work environment failed to provide resources which could promote lecturer wellbeing and SOC and was in fact uncaring by the thoughtlessness shown to lecturer welfare. The data and findings will be further evaluated and reported on under the themes and topics that emerged from the data analysis and interpretation process. Participants' responses are indicated italics.

5.4 Themes

The themes report the data, findings and conclusions in accordance with the research questions. Common topic, factors or aspects that emerged from the data analysis were evaluated. It was important to note that although common topics were grouped under a specific theme, they had different meanings to participants and will be reported as such.

5.4.1 Theme One: Lecturers Experiences of the Faculty Culture

Lecturers in the study used mainly negative tones and language in describing their experiences of the faculty culture and the conclusion was a generally poor faculty culture prevailed. Respondents used words such as *stifling*, *uninspiring*, *stagnant* and a *typical government institutional style culture*. Many of the negative experiences reported where from lecturers' interactions with the faculty manager and his management approach. Relations with immediate line managers or the senior lecturers were *not as bad* as those remote leaders in the faculty and institution but lecturers felt the line managers had become *apathetic* due to the faculty manager's approach and their loss of power, as senior lecturers faced the same challenges as lecturers. Lecturers reported that some of their line managers *did the best they could*. One senior lecturer was reported as being absent for long periods of times or at *critical times of the semester when work needed to be done* and the times when she was available she *had no idea what was going on* and lecturers who worked under her said *we have learnt to work on our own*. Lecturers reported that the faculty management had become *apathetic and did*

as they were told by upper management without questioning, and that the faculty was *poorly managed*.

Lecturers reported that a *typical government institutional culture and third world institution* prevailed where values such as efficiency, accountability and quality from management where not advocated and an attitude of *indifference* and *apathy* was adopted amongst lecturers and management as lecturers noted, *no one cares! Who do you complain to?* Lecturers' reported that the faculty manager *doesn't communicate clearly and timeously* causing *uncertainty and confusion* of what was required of lecturers which added to the *chaotic* and *dysfunctional* atmosphere. Lecturers indicated his meetings *where a waste of time, nothing comes of it* and were only held because *he had to show he was doing something*. Lecturers' descriptions of the culture as *mundane, stagnant, and lacking in progress, oppressive, uninspiring and never-changing* concluded that a stifling and uninspiring culture was the norm in public-run institutions and therefore in the faculty as well.

One lecturer felt *the faculty manager was accommodating and open* and his experience could be attributed to his race as the data had shown the manager was *afraid to take action against Black female lecturers and male lecturers*. Reports of gender and racial discrimination, nepotism, favouritism and unequal and unfair treatment of lecturers concluded a disparate culture existed. Indian and Coloured females experienced victimisation and poor treatment from their manager whereas he was lenient towards Black and male lecturers. Accounts already discussed showed victimisation and unfair treatment against those lecturers who questioned the faculty manager and privileges given to those who allied with him and did his work for him. Tony reported that the *culture was not inclusive* and *we are not treated the same* and when asked to clarify he described how some faculty managers were content with certain lecturers doing their work for them and allowed them authority to direct and instruct lecturers on faculty operations. Simone also referred to the situation when she said *the organisational politics is unpleasant and I try to avoid it.*

These accounts suggested that situations had been created where lecturers where being instructed by their own colleagues who had no authority over them and these *favourite* lecturers were given certain freedoms such as leaving their classes unattended while other lecturers where chastised for the same thing. These management practices were likely to have created divisions in the faculty and would fuel suspicion and distrust amongst lecturers. Lecturers in the study confirmed the prevalence of this situation and reported that it had become an acceptable state of affairs in their faculty and some

lecturers even accepted taking orders from their colleagues. Other lecturers reported that the situation had become untenable for them and that they had repeatedly approached management to rectify the problem by ensuring all *lecturers stick to their job descriptions*. Lecturers confirmed that the situation was never addressed by the faculty manager and in fact *those level one lecturers now run the faculty*.

Lecturers' spoke of the unfair and inconsistent applications of affirmative action they experienced. Black lecturers reported that affirmative had not benefitted them in any way and they felt that appointments and promotions were based on nepotism, tribalism and political affiliations. Older lecturers were resentful due to affirmative action being an impediment to their career progression in the college and sector and reported that their *years of experience, performance and loyalty to the faculty counted for nothing* when it came to promotions. Lecturers felt that affirmative action was responsible for the appointment of people who did not have the necessary qualifications for posts in the sector and that this was responsible for the declining quality of education and working conditions. Based on the data it can be concluded that affirmative action was not serving its intended purpose and in fact was responsible for not only acrimonious work cultures due to perceptions of unfairness but also the declining state of education in the faculty, college and sector. This finding confirms similar discussions in the literature section on the appointments of people in key positions who had little knowledge of the sector and the poor decisions and policies was evidence of this.

The erosion of academic freedom in the faculty was reported by lecturers and this characteristic reverberated throughout the sector (Terblanche, 2017). Corporate values had introduced more monitoring and evaluation measures. Lecturers reported feeling *stifled* and had succumbed to *following the rules and just do what is required* as they experienced constant defeat and *disappointment* in their efforts to initiate positive changes or when *promises of change failed to materialise*. In these instances lecturers adopted an attitude of compliance and *just do what you have to and nothing more.* Lecturers felt that their creativity, agency and initiative was not incentivised, appreciated or encouraged and the *mundane* and *stagnant* culture continued. Progress and innovation were dissuaded by management, even though such opportunities were presented and available to them. Lecturers reported that management may actually prefer the status quo as change required exertion, energy and effort from them and they had become obsequious in their positions as indicated in some of their work practices and implementing corporate measures was easier that being innovative and creative.

Lecturers' poor impression of their management was apparent in the data. *Supervision and policing of lecturers* was easier for managers rather than *working with lecturers to come up with ideas* that would take the faculty forward. Samantha said *the constant supervision makes me feel like a factory worker*. Lecturers had *come up with ideas and opportunities* in the past that would have benefitted the faculty but were *dismissed by management*. They felt their creativity, knowledge and expertise was unwelcomed and suppressed in the culture of surveillance and compliance. The data showed that for some lecturers their work had become meaningless. These experiences would threaten their SOC and feelings of wellbeing and was confirmed in their feelings of dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and commitment in the data. Based on the stories told, it can be concluded that aspects such as professionalism, collegiality and academic freedom which are integral academic standards of behaviour in most educational institutions, were extraneous in this faculty culture due mainly to the management style and confirms the views in the literature (Buthelezi, 2016).

Lecturers reported the culture to be *suppressive* and *hostile* when they *dared to voice their concerns* or *question management's decisions*. Free and open discussions where staffs' views were acknowledged, valued and encouraged promoted positive behaviors and attitudes to work (Mmako & Schultz, 2016). Consistency, support and recognition in the workplace were key factors for SOC in the manageability and motivational components of it. Lecturers reported stress, dejection and low levels of self-worth due to the negative experiences described. It was noted that lecturers who reported experiences of discrimination and unfair treatment displayed more negative feelings and stress and showed lower levels of SOC as compared to those who received better treatment. Lecturers expressed disillusionment, low morale and motivation which could lead to poor performance, faculty inefficiency and mediocre quality of education. These aspects of the data further confirm earlier conclusions that not only was the faculty culture not inspiring but was also hostile and suppressive to lecturers.

Lecturers reported some positive experiences in the faculty culture and although they had differences amongst themselves, elements of unity and commitment to the faculty was shown in the data. Simone saw aspects of the culture as *beautiful and I look forward to seeing my colleagues every day,* and other lecturers expressed admiration and professional respect for one another which enhanced their SOC and these relationships also acted as a support and coping mechanism for them. The data showed that lecturers had shared values mainly in their respective disciplines as well as in aspects such as such as religion or political ideology. The data suggests that the unique challenges they shared such

as the health conditions and neglected facilities also served to strengthen their allegiance to the faculty. Lecturers reported they had little interaction with colleagues at other faculties of the college due to decentralisation, specialization and the independent functioning of faculties and it was their faculty culture that dominated their daily work lives. College gatherings were met with poor turn outs by lecturers, possibly as acts of rebellion against senior management whom they perceived as being *out of touch with the realities we face*. The data confirmed the predominance of the faculty culture over the college culture as these arguments emerged in the literature in the conceptualisation of TVET college cultures.

The theory of SOC emphasised the need for workplace support and resources as essential components to help employees cope with negative aspects in the work environment. The data showed that lecturers faced and described the many challenges in their workplace yet they could not name or identify any resources in the faculty provided by management which could make their work lives easier. They reported that management had failed to address important issues such as health and safety or the lack of necessary resources and showed little concern for their welfare thus lecturers would not expect management to provide resources that would promote their health and wellbeing. Lecturers reported physical illnesses such as hypertension and chronic rhinitis, headaches and exhaustion as well as mental fatigue and emotional drain due to the stressful work environment. Stress was shown in the literature to manifest in the symptoms reported by the lecturers and their behavioural changes noted such as detachment and dissonance affirmed the possibility of stress (Kamil, 2014). SOC also required a degree of consistency, orderliness and structure in the work environment for work satisfaction and wellbeing and lecturers told of a work culture that they experienced as chaotic and dysfunctional. When asked if there was a time when they enjoyed working at the faculty, lecturers replied *a long time ago*, another *not since I've been here*, and another *never!* The data affirmed the earlier conclusion made that the workplace was not enabling to lecturers SOC, as many stress factors were reported as well as the non-availability of resources from management that would have been helpful to them in their efforts to deal with workplace challenges.

Lecturers reported their experiences on the stigmatisation of TVET education in their faculty. The literature confirmed that the poor status of the sector was an embedded problem in the sector. The literature indicated that TVET colleges and the type of education offered were not particularly attractive to academics and to students who realised that. The data indicated that this negative perception invariably permeated in the faculty culture from lecturers' perceptions and descriptions of

the quality of education, the curricula, the general dysfunctionality and counter-purpose practices and policies. Lecturers reported *biding their time as they are close to retirement*, others were hopeful that change was imminent. Some lecturers indicated they were hoping for *better opportunities* at more prestigious institutions which would result in the loss of talented staff. The *lack of opportunities for growt*h and *development* and the *slow pace of technology and innovation* perpetuated the negative image of the sector according to lecturers and these accounts were in agreement with the literature. The 2011 COTVET (Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training) report confirmed public perceptions that TVET programmes were patronised by people who had low intellectual ability and by school dropouts or illiterates (Essel et al., 2014). Lecturers reported they *were ashamed to tell people where they work, would not suggest any student to study there unless they had no other option.* The conclusion from the data was that lecturers struggled to maintain a sense of pride in the college and sector that was perceived as disreputable and as offering inferior education by the community.

The literature explained that DHET policies were intended to highlight the role of TVET in the up-skilling and education of the masses for the development of labour capital necessary for economic and social development. Funds were directed to achieve these ambitious goals, however for reasons discussed in the literature, better quality education, access and student employability remained an illusion in the sector. Lecturers reported their views on the DHET in the study. Simone said, "*Black, disadvantaged students continue to be oppressed because of the poor curriculum."* Tony added, "*There's no social development, sporting activities and support for students. They come to class when they feel like it or exams is around the corner. Campus life is boring for them that's why they are absent so often and not interested in class*." Lecturers spoke of the lack of facilities, resources and insufficient materials and equipment limited what they could do in the classroom. The use of various teaching methods, teaching resources and media that would facilitate learning was vastly restricted and the meeting of DHET's policy aims was almost impossible. The lecturers growing despondency had much to do with students not receiving the type of education that was necessary for employment and DHET policies failed to consider the realities of the sector. The study concluded the DHET had failed to provide TVET colleges with sufficient funds, resources and updated curricula that would make faculties more accoutered in meeting the skills provision aims and the data was congruent with the criticisms of the DHET in the literature.

The data indicated that consideration for faculty realities where not only pretermitted in DHET's policies but also the colleges' vision and mission. Mission statements were fundamental to defining

the organisation's identity and for setting out the shared vision for all college lecturers. The data supported the view of (Morphew & Hartley, 2006) of mission statements as mere artefacts negated by actual practices in the organisation. Steven spoke of the mission statement as *a pie in the sky*, and others saw it as a form of *window dressing*. Lecturers expressed ridicule and mockery when asked about the colleges' mission statement. Some did not know what it was. This disconnect between the colleges' vision and the actual experiences reported by lecturers indicated that the college failed to provide the structure and communication needed to unify lecturers such that the realization of a shared vision was a possibility. The conclusion was that college vision and mission statements were shown to be illusionary manifestations of the college culture and failed to establish a set of guiding principles which further confirmed the dominance of the faculty over the college with regard to lecturers' allegiances.

Lecturers noted the *lack of management capacity* and a *government institutional culture* repeatedly in their accounts and many of the negative experiences and challenges they faced stemmed from *poor management*. Government institutions were generally characterised by poor service delivery, lack of capacity, corruption and the systemic problem of lack of accountability (Akoojee, 2007; Buthelezi, 2018). The data showed that faculty managers failed to exercise authority and control and were seen merely as messengers between lecturers and top management. Lecturers reported that they *lacked leadership qualities* and were *poor role models* as they often displayed *unprofessional behaviour*. Furthermore lecturers indicated that they were dissatisfied with *the lack of communication and feedback* they received from their managers. The literature emphasised that one of the roles of the leader was to demonstrate acceptable behaviour, values and attitudes for others to follow. This was not the case in the data as lecturers' reported apathy, poor attitudes, derogation, and dissension due to the management style. Good leadership was crucial to the SOC as managers had the legitimate platform to give the necessary support and direction and as the data showed, SOC was further augmented by the *uncaring management*.

The data revealed certain aspects of the culture that lecturers enjoyed and which enabled their SOC. Lecturers showed a passion for teaching and sought meaning from their work. Annie *enjoyed teaching and wanted to help her students*. Tony was *grateful* for the opportunity to help students and make a difference. This strengthened their ethical conscience and resolve which helped to sustain their wellbeing. The data showed that their perceptions of being able to contribute to something that was of great significance helped to enhance their commitment and motivation to a certain extent. Their

SOC would be strengthened when they were able to exercise some control over their work (Jenny et al., 2017). Based on the data the conclusion was that although lecturers received some satisfaction from their work, maintaining their wellbeing was a constant challenge in what was shown to be a chronically chaotic and dysfunctional work culture.

This section gave the descriptions of the experiences of lecturers of their faculty culture. The data was evaluated and the findings and conclusions drawn were discussed. The next section describes the factors identified from evaluating the data that lecturers felt were integral to the faculty culture.

5.4.2 Theme Two: Factors Identified as Integral to the Prevailing Culture

The data revealed the following factors that affected lecturers' experiences of faculty culture. The analysis showed that these factors were interrelated and acted symbiotically in the workplace. Many have already been mentioned and discussed in earlier sections.

Health and Safety

Lecturers reported a number of healthy and safe conditions which they felt had caused their illnesses and frequent absenteeism resulting in loss of teaching time and added medical expenses. Samantha had been hospitalised twice for serious viral infections while Simone reported frequent lung infections and a compromised immune system which they had attributed to the toxic air at the faculty and its surrounding location. The toxic fumes they referred to emanated from the burning of waste and dumped material by the dumpsite and residents of the informal settlement. They reported that dirt, dust, toxic smoke, mould, rodents, swarms of flies and mosquitoes had invaded the faculty. They spoke of the frequent flooding at the campus due and aged draining system and how this had exacerbated their health issues. They described the asbestos ceilings in their classrooms, which was banned due to its toxicity to humans, and the mould and moisture in the walls. The health and safety aspect was pertinent to all lecturers as it was an issue that was particularly stressful for them as indicated in the data. Jenny et al. (2017) explained that work stressors and poor health conditions had a detrimental effect on the SOC, performance and attitudes to work and therefore the provision of a healthy and safe environment was essential for wellbeing.

Occupational health and safety rights were stipulated in legislation and lecturers indicated a number of health and safety offences on their campus which directly hindered their performance and productivity. Lecturers were resolute and criticised management for failing to meet their legal obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment. Lecturers reported making a number of pleas to management and DHET via their unions to address urgent health issues but were unsuccessful. They had made a request for relocation years ago and promises of change had yet to materialise. Tony and Samantha both concurred *that management has done nothing about our health issues as they simply do not care*. The conclusion reached was that lecturers at this faculty experienced serious and some extreme health and safety issues and genuine work-related health problems.

Facilities and Resources

Lecturers spoke at length on lack of resources and adequate facilities which impeded their teaching efforts and the subsequent effect on the culture of teaching and learning at the faculty. They reported that the state of the buildings, and unhygienic conditions were *embarrassing* for them as lecturers and that they refrained from telling people where they worked. The physical appearance of an organisation can be instrumental in creating first impressions to outsiders and determined the extent to which people are attracted to or repelled by it. Aside from the poor aesthetic appearance of the buildings and grounds, the lack of basic resources was a constant source of frustration for lecturers as it directly impeded their ability to perform effectively according to the data. Lack of space, desks and chairs for seating, classrooms that are not too hot or too cold were aspects that directly affected teaching and learning. Lecturers indicated that the only tools provided were overhead projectors and white boards which restricted the use of diverse teaching methodologies and limited learner interaction.

Lecturers told of learning materials such as photocopying paper being in short supply and that some used personal funds to purchase materials to facilitate learning in their classrooms. Tony taught accounting and mentioned "*my subject requires lots of paper. They give me two reams. It's a joke. I buy my own paper and do my own printing for students. I'm tired of begging for things!"* Steven indicated, "*I buy extra paper at sales to make notes and worksheets for my students. Whenever I ask for things I get the run around!"* The photocopying machine, an essential resource in an educational institutional was old, constantly broke down as it was a small machine for office use. Samantha reported, "*My brother makes copies for me at his workplace because I can't rely on the photocopier*

being in working order when I need it." Lecturers complained about the unavailability of computers for them to prepare lessons and assessments or check their work e-mails due to constant technical problems or internet connectivity. Annie taught computers and expressed, *"I spend most of the lesson fixing the computers and printers than actual teaching!"* The lack of wifi and laptops restricted what staff could do in terms of innovative teaching. Student attendance, motivation, performance and attitude could improve if they were receiving better education in well-equipped facilities, and there would be less student unrest.

Lecturers spoke of their staffroom and other facilities. They described that there was insufficient furniture for the number of staff, the cupboards were damaged by floods and mould had spread up the walls. Annie indicated, "*The staff room is filthy with cockroaches and ants running around. I don't eat anything in there!"* The library lacked updated and useful resources and lecturers indicated they hardly ever used it. Samantha reported, "*Students don't have facilities to complete projects and assignments and some submit hand-written work. But I can't mark them down. It's not their fault!"* The issue of funding resurfaced as the reason for these problems and the literature confirmed funding as the main problem in government institutions in South Africa.

Simone complained, "*Everyday there is some or other problem that affects the lesson I planned, but what can I do? I do the best with what I have."* Samantha felt, "*What is the point of trying to even make an effort for the students if management themselves don't care*?" and Tony said "*No one cares about the students, who do I complain to? There's only so much I can do."* The lack of motivation, frustration and diminished effort of lecturer due to a culture where it was the norm to perform without the basic resources was detrimental to their wellbeing. Lecturers' apathy and acquiescence of such unacceptable situations showed their despondency, stress and their diminished SOC and was evident in the data.

Management, and Governance and Neoliberalism

Lecturers reported many experiences with management and these have been already discussed in much detail in earlier sections. The conclusion was that lecturers had poor experiences due to the management style and that the faculty was generally poor managed. Some lecturers reported good relations with management and these accounts were from male lecturers. Female lecturers, excluding Black female lecturers, reported unfair treatment. As in the literature, perceptions of the same

situation were different due to many dynamic and contextual factors and in the data gender and race emerged as significant as to how managers perpetuated a culture where gender and racial discrimination prevailed.

Lecturers were critical of middle management portfolio holders, or the corporate managers, at the college namely the quality, curriculum and human resources managers who had brought in the new managerialism values. They spoke of how these managers constantly enforced record-keeping and accountability measures, without offering support, which added to their work-loads, put them under pressure and took up precious teaching time. They felt that these new neo-liberal ideals where incompatible with their educational contexts, had invaded their academic spaces, undermined their expertise and added little value.

Annie indicated, "*I comply with the curriculum requirements from DHET, but all these other departments want me to have these different forms and then HRM wants the same information on another form. This is not my job. They want all this paperwork but can't give us enough paper, files and cupboards. Every semester they implement something new yet it's the same thing in a different format!"* Steven said, *"No one sees what I do for my students every day and yet they write long reports from a five minute class visit. They don't even understand what my subject entails!"* Samantha reported, "*These managers come whenever they want without giving us notice. They tick their checklist and we never see or hear from them again until the next semester."* Simone spoke cynically about her class visit, *"it lasted five minutes and I was not told anything about it. I never received feedback!"*

The data indicated that lecturers were skeptical and resistant to the performance appraisal and quality measures imposed on them as no remedial actions such as further training and development resulted from their use. They viewed these processes as simply a checklist with a tick box including items such as file check, assessment plan check, use of board check, etc. Furthermore, lecturers reported that these checklists were extremely flawed as there were no items on the deleterious teaching environment or lack of resources to check-off and therefore the results were meaningless and *failed to consider the many factors affecting students' performance*. Neo-liberal values served only to create a climate of surveillance and compliance for lecturers and the data showed how inadequate and inappropriate such processes were for the educational purpose. Lecturers felt the curriculum and quality managers added no value and that the college could function without them.

Lecturers expressed their discontent of the college management and their *poor decision-making*. The college management comprised the college council and senior managers. Simone indicated, "*They don't make decisions that are in the interest of the students*." Tony and Simone indicated that *equity, affirmative action and affiliation with political organisations* precluded the appointment of experienced and knowledgeable people at the top. They described that transparency and democratisation of decision-making had slowly eroded and was now almost non-existent. Polarisation between college management and lecturers was evident as Samantha felt "*they are not in touch with the realities we face. We see them once or twice a year. They sit in their ivory towers the whole year. I wonder what they actually do. They don't want to drive their expensive cars to this dirty place!"* The data indicated that the college management was perpetuating an uncaring culture by failing to address significant issues at the faculty which had caused a loss of confidence amongst lecturers. SOC and wellbeing were reinforced in a culture where managers embrace their positions as leaders by taking decisions that show concern for employees as discussed in the literature. The lack of respect and confidence in the management was a major factor in the gradual breakdown of the employer-employee relationship and the subsequent hostile culture shown in the data.

The Curricula

Lecturers were critical of the DHET and their governance of the sector and hypercritical of the curricula and programmes they were mandated to teach. They described the curricula as *poorly designed, vague, outdated, irrelevant and not holistic*. Samantha indicated "*our students are not employable as the curriculum is so old."* Tony felt *frustrated at teaching outdated content* and saw his efforts as futile as the content was obsolete. Simone felt the *outdated curriculum contributed to the poor image and the disempowerment of black students.* The perceptions of inferior quality education in the sector was documented in the literature and the data confirms this view. Steven noted, "*We as subject experts should be involved in curriculum development, but nobody asks us. All stakeholders need to be involved in curriculum reform."* It was evident that there were many aspects to the issue of the TVET curricula that the DHET needed to address. Lecturers' participation as subject experts was crucial in curriculum reform and the data supported the literature that lecturer participation was almost non-existent (Buthelezi, 2016). The negative views of the curricula and lecturers association with a sector that had a poor image compromised their SOC as shown in their lack of pride and professional identity and feelings of futility and worthlessness.

The data supported the literature in confirming the inadaptability and incongruency of the TVET curricula to changes in the economy. The problematic curricula, lack of progress, technology and innovation mentioned in the literature and the data, again drew attention to the sore issue of funding. The sector was *stagnant* as curriculum reform and improved technology would require recapitalisation from the DHET who stood firm on its position on the non-availability of funds. The literature described that government cutbacks in tertiary education had left institutions in dire financial situations and attempts at making education a viable commodity by forcing institutions to seek alternative streams of funding had compromised the national goals of providing quality education to the masses in a developing country (Terblanche, 2017). The lack of funds accompanied with an ineffectual management capacity had resulted in the current impoverished state of the sector and the data confirms the views in the literature. Lecturers' reluctance to refer their children and others to study or work there further confirmed the penurious culture of the faculty, college and wider sector. Their SOC was weakened by their disappointments in the state of education in the sector and the failure of the DHET to act decisively on the issue of curriculum reform. Lecturers felt that that the college and sector was doing a disservice to students by offering courses that were irrelevant in the current economy.

Students

The data found that the types of students attracted to the faculty and their lack of readiness for tertiary education were taxing for lecturers SOC. Samantha cited *the screening and enrolment processes and low entry requirements* as problematic. *Second language students take their exams in English and there is little support for them* added Tony. Simone felt, "*NASFAS and the promise of free education attracts mainly poor black students who are not prepared and it is difficult to teach them. You don't see many Whites or Indian students here? Black students can't read and have little exposure. It is stressful and demotivating teaching these students."* Steven indicated *students choose any course that has space, they don't even know what the course is about."* The data indicated that the many issues regarding TVET students were challenging and stressful for lecturers who had to teach them without proper resources and support.

The data evidenced that lecturers' SOC was particularly affected when dealing with problematic students in a daily basis without basic resources. Most lacked basic skills and lecturers struggled to keep them motivated. Lectures' reported that many students came from impoverished backgrounds

and that some lived in the nearby informal settlement. Frequent and unplanned student unrest due to outstanding NASFAS payments, demands for more money or any issue they were unhappy with created a volatile and threatening environment. High failure rates, absenteeism and drop-outs added to the chaotic and unstable teaching environments for lecturers. Student unrest and its repercussions was a phenomenon that characterised the higher education system in South Africa and was well documented in the literature (Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2016). The study showed that student strikes, the accompanied violence, destruction of property and threats to lecturers' safety affected their SOC as they felt disillusioned and unsafe in a comminatory educational culture.

The workload

Lecturers reported that the increasing workload and having to meet deadlines in an environment with constant disruptions from having to take sick leave and student unrest was stressful and challenging for their SOC. The literature mentioned that lecturers do not have a clear job description and this was often exploited to include a number of non-academic tasks. Lecturers' core duties included lesson preparation, setting and marking assessments, monitoring students' attendance, capturing students' marks, keeping records of students' assessments, updating daily and weekly log sheets, attending subject committee meetings and staff meetings, giving students individual attention or extra lessons, researching trends and many others. The extra-curricular duties included counselling students, arranging sporting activities and serving on a range of committees, to mention a few. Tony indicated, *"Capturing marks, calculating students' attendance and doing registration is not in my job description. We have been fighting this for years. If they want us to do these things they must provide us with laptops and wifi and reduce our teaching time."* Steven indicated "*everything here doesn't work and I can't do much prep here. I can't use contact time to do admin work. I spend evenings and weekends doing this at home on my laptop."* Simone indicated, "*I spend hours in the evenings catching up on my paperwork and marking and I have two small children to look after as well!*" Having to work under constant time constraints without resources was exhausting and stressful for lecturers. The new managerialism demands discussed earlier added to their workloads.

The data showed low levels of lecturers SOC due to the workload and other factors, which manifested in physical and mental fatigue and affected their ability to cope in a highly demanding environment. While lecturers described a range of physical ailments, their emotional and mental dispositions were also shown to be weakened and their wellbeing was further compromised due to the highly inimical

culture. The workload and other salutogenic factors mentioned had lowered their SOC and therefore their performance. While Patrick and Steven showed some resilience to the environment, most lecturers were shown to be in constant states of vacillation and tension between sustaining their motivation to meet their responsibilities productively or merely complying with what was necessary to get the job done and thus maintain their wellbeing. The literature disclosed the concerning increase in the number of academics suffering from stress or the symptoms of it and the accounts of stress and stress-like symptoms reported in the data confirmed the link between lecturers experiences of the faculty culture and their wellbeing this study sought to explore. As lecturers reported negative and stressful experiences, the conclusion was that they did not experience optimum wellbeing in their faculty culture.

Academic freedom

The data brought forth the issues of academic freedom and the threat to college lecturers' professional status and identity mainly by the corporate managers and their quality and measurement values. Annie said, "*I must comply with these rules by people who have never been in a classroom. They think they know more than me so it's useless to argue with them."* Steven said, "*We are not treated as professionals. Managers speak to us like children!"* Samantha said "*I feel more like a factory worker than a lecturer with two degrees!"* The sense of being under surveillance derailed trust and vetoed opportunities to exercise agency or creativity for lecturers. Steven said "*decisions are made about my subject and teaching, yet nobody asked me about it*!" Tony said "*It's frustrating and pointless to argue with people who don't understand what I do and have never been in a classroom. It's stressful and exhausting to explain to them all the time why I need certain things to teach accounting. They don't get it!"* Simone felt, "*they don't treat us as professionals. They worry about petty things like designing new forms and templates than on important things like the curriculum or finding ways to improve teaching and learning!"*

The erosion of academic freedom and the invasion of academic spaces due to the implementation of their new managerialism values in the TVET and other educational sectors, had the effect of undermining and devaluing lecturers and threatening their professional identity. Lecturers also reported their non-involvement in curriculum design and development further indicated a disregard for their status as academics. They were unable to use their expertise and skills when they identified gaps in the curricula and had no control over the content they were given to teach. Furthermore,

lecturers perceived that the community and academic society did not hold them with the same degree of esteem as their counterparts in schools and universities. Lecturers were disillusioned by this and developed attitudes of apathy and detachment. Their subsequent low SOC was detrimental to morale and effort and would impact the quality of education provided in these circumstances.

The loss of academic freedom was a threat to lecturers' SOC and professional identity, particularly in academia where it was assumed that expertise and creativity would be encouraged and valued. Teaching was generally regarded as 'a calling' or the 'noble profession' as indicated in the literature and in some ways these views sanctioned the acceptance of college lecturers to endure poor conditions and low salaries and new lecturers entering the profession were willing to accept these conditions on the premise of having the academic freedom to use their skills for the greater good. However, the realities soon quashed these ideals. The literature and data refer to the growing disillusionment amongst college lecturers due to the loss of academic freedom and status.

Collegial Relationships

Most lecturers in the study experienced strained relationships with managers, but had good relationships and professional respect amongst certain peers. Factions, divisions, allies and rivalry did exist amongst lecturers and this was not uncommon in a multicultural workplace (Tabensky & Matthews, 2015). Tony spoke of divisions based on shared racial and religious ties. The data revealed factions between supporters of the manager and those who were critical of him. Forms of discrimination based on gender and race was prevalent from lecturers' experiences with their manager. The data showed that collegial relationships were comprised mainly due to unhealthy management practices which contributed to the disunity amongst lecturers, discouraged teamwork and threatened faculty coherence.

In terms of collegiality, the data also revealed the dominance of faculty culture over the college culture as discussed earlier in this chapter. The faculty culture was reinforced by the evidence of collegial peer relationships and allegiances to disciplines and the apparent dissonance from the college and confirmed this view in the literature. Graduation ceremonies, for example were, attended by lecturers who indicated they did so only to show support for their students. Faculty allegiance was further confirmed in lecturers' commitment to their students and subjects, whereas their criticisms of the college management for not providing resources and attending to health issues allayed loyalty to

the college. The data showed that while interpersonal relationships amongst lecturers were dynamic and despite the inconsistent and unfair treatment of staff by the faculty manager, collegiality was upheld by their professional respect for each other and commitment to their disciplines though not in the same way as in universities as university lecturers enjoyed more academic freedom and status.

This section reported in as much detail from the rich data generated on the factors lecturers experienced in their faculty culture. In the next section, lecturers' feelings of work culture are evaluated and reported as emotions are integral to the SOC and how lecturers orientate to their experiences.

5.4.3 Theme Three: Lecturers' Feelings about the Faculty Culture

The data revealed that lecturers expressed a range of feelings from their experiences of the faculty culture with more negative than positive feelings. Lecturers described feeling demotivated, despondent, discouraged, ignored, unappreciated, stifled, frustrated and disempowered. Some felt unsafe and uncertain during times of violent student unrest. They related that the faculty showed little concern for their wellbeing when management failed to address health and safety conditions that directly affected their health and that made them feel dejected, uncared for and devalued. Simone described feelings of pleasure and comfort from the relationships with her peers despite the mostly negative experiences of the faculty culture. Tony felt encouragement from the relationships with colleagues in his discipline. The data showed that lecturers were commitment to their subjects and cared for their students. They also maintained a sense of pride in their work despite not having resources, recognition and status. The undermining of their expertise and general lack of respect they received as lecturers had affected their professional identity and self-concept. The negative feelings eclipsed positive feelings as the culture had spiraled to one of disempowerment and chaos as shown from their experiences.

5.4.4 Theme Four: Lecturers' Wellbeing and SOC

In terms of the comprehensibility component of SOC, having cognitive control of the environment lecturers worked in was an important element in the perceptions of it and their subsequent coping mechanisms (Geyer, 1997). Within their classrooms and subject areas, they were able to exercise a

degree of initiative and creativity which gave them meaning and purpose and helped maintain SOC. The data showed that they comprehended and understood which aspects they could change and control and those they could not. Tony purchased materials and made workbooks for his students while Annie sought new ways to make her subject more interesting for students as they both understood these would not come from the workplace. However, the loss of academic freedom and the emphasis on compliance undermined their expertise and professionalisms which left them feeling devalued and overtime they understood they had no control over these aspects. The theory of SOC emphasised the need for orderliness and structure in order for individuals to adapt coherently to their roles and expectations, and the findings showed that lecturers perceived their workplace as chaotic and uncaring and therefore were unable to achieve improved wellbeing. While no organisation can be considered completely structured and orderly, the theory of SOC maintained this was an ideal and that the workplace should have some degree of established ways so that individuals can navigate their SOC from a particular starting point. Lecturers' descriptions of a chaotic and dysfunctional workplace affected their ability to comprehend complex situations and therefore undermined their ability to make suitable decisions to manage them.

The manageability component of SOC denoted the extent to which individuals considered resources were available in the workplace which they could utilise to cope adequately with work demands (Antonovsky, 1987). Manageability was possible when the lecturers understood the extent of a situation and could then decide what resources were required to deal with it. Resources constituted the individual's internal coping abilities acquired and developed over time and external resources which institutional theorists believe were the responsibility of the employer to provide resources that facilitate employee wellbeing (Verbos et al., 2007) The data showed lecturers had good internal coping skills, however, they could not identify any resources provided by the employer to promote their wellbeing. Their internal coping resources were stretched to the limit and the resultant stress became apparent in their accounts of mental and emotional strain and physical ill-health.

Tony's stress had developed into hypertension. He had suffered a heart attack and was on chronic medication. Simone and Samantha reported respiratory problems and frequent infections due to low immunity. The emotional strain they reported was likely the cause of their chronic stress, exhaustion and in Simone's case, depression. Simone related, "*It becomes too much sometimes. I am seeing a counsellor and my doctor has put me on anti-anxiety pills, but I try not to let things worry me. My health is more important. I do what I can and if I can't, then that's too bad."* Samantha said "*I have*

to remind myself this is just a job. I come to work, do what I can and go home." Lecturers chose to disengage themselves from the toxic work culture as a means to cope and maintain their SOC in the absence of work-place support. While detachment was necessary for lecturers to maintain their wellbeing, it was detrimental to the aim of providing quality education as the culture had subjugated their abilities to be fully competent in their duties. Their subjacent SOC was mitigated, to a certain extent, by personal efforts made to strengthen their internal coping skills and the supportive relations with colleagues were also helpful. With regard to the manageability component of SOC, the conclusion was that the work culture failed to provide resources necessary for lecturers to maintain wellbeing.

The third component of SOC represented the motivational component and determined the extent to which an individual appraised a situation as challenging and whether it was worth making commitments and investments to cope with it (Antonovsky, 1987). Chronically poor cultures caused employees to diminish their participation and contribution over time as was suggested in the data. The attitudes of dissonance and withdrawal of efforts and participation that lecturers described indicated that although they were not sufficiently motivated and committed, they had made efforts to cope. Annie said "*I have to motivate myself every day because my students need me and I want to help them."* Steven said "*I'm grateful for the opportunity to be of service to the students."* Simone reported "*I'm living my dream of being a teacher. Nothing is easy in this country. I don't think it is better anywhere else."* Tony indicated "*I work for the sake of the students."* As the data indicated, lecturers made attempts to cope mainly due to their work being meaningful to them and also their apparent acceptance that the faculty culture was disempowering.

Lecturers' strong sense of ethical responsibility overrode their feelings of indisposition to the negative elements and they made efforts to cope and be better at their jobs such as giving extra lessons to ensure their students where adequately prepared for examinations. Furthermore, being able to make a difference to people's lives and of finding meaning in their work provided reasons for them to find ways to cope. The challenging situation itself could be the impetus to overcome hardships. It is possible that people can thrive in difficult situations and therefore assumptions in the literature that difficulties should be avoided because they could be damaging to human development were unrealistic. The study showed that lecturers found ways around certain challenges and used their internal resources to cope and sustain their SOC as it would also impact their coping abilities to situations outside of the work environment and on the general quality of their lives. They had done

their best, wanted their students to succeed and were motivated enough to find meaning in their work even if it meant taking *medication, seeking therapy* or *meditating* to maintain their wellbeing. Workplace cultures and their effects on wellbeing are therefore reflections of the general health of an organisation, community or society (Vos et al., 2012)

Lecturers must be commended on their motivation to cope, however their stories do not end with the study. The prolonged effects of negative work cultures on self-concept, self-efficacy and low SOC presented in symptoms such as anxiety, depression and chronic fatigue (Gemzøe & Einarsen, 2002) and ill health cannot be leveraged over them *"getting the job done*" or just managing to cope and maintain SOC. Lecturers' accounts of respiratory problems; infections; lowered immunity; asthma, hypertension; heart attacks; having to take sick leave and frequent hospitalisation cannot be extenuated as some of the reasons for the poor work culture were inexcusable. The varying levels of stress described were cause for concern as prolonged stress that's left untreated can lead to depression (Kamil, 2014). Depression was known to reduce an individual's SOC and lecturers' descriptions of detachment and isolation, chronic fatigue, and emotional vulnerability and the findings confirmed the research problem of the need for salutogenesis with the view to finding ways to create workplace cultures that promote employee health (Pitsoe, 2013).

Aspects such as aspiration, autonomy, competence and integrated functioning were identified in the literature as important elements lecturers sought in the workplace that were essential for optimum job satisfaction and wellbeing. In the data, lecturers' aspirations and dreams were subdued by the harsh culture. Their accounts of loss of academic freedom, unfair promotion practices, lack of recognition and the lack of opportunities for growth and self-development contributed to the *mundane*, *stagnant* and *oppressive* culture they endured. While they were competent, resourceful and motivated enough to cope with challenges in their environment, their functioning in the workplace failed to encompass their true potential which were fundamental to achieve self-actualisation and optimum wellbeing (Pitsoe, 2013; Tselebis et al., 2001). The extent of their wellbeing and SOC cannot be measured in this study however the data generated propounded a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Essentially, wellbeing was sustainable when lecturers experienced sufficient positive emotions from gratifying and meaningful experiences in their work environment which facilitate their optimum functioning over a period of time (Hansen et al., 2015). The study concluded that lecturers experienced more negative feelings than positive feelings in their experience of the workplace over long periods of time and therefore optimum wellbeing and self-actualisation were difficult to achieve

and supports the views in the literature that TVET college lecturers worked in highly stressful environments (Vazi et al., 2013).

This section reported and evaluated the data to reflect the findings and conclusions reached. The data was reported in three sections. The first section gave the accounts of each participant's experience of the faculty culture. The next section presented the stories in the form of a table which showed participants' responses to the interview questions. The last section reported and evaluated the data under the themes to address the research objectives. The implications of the findings and conclusions are discussed in the next section.

5.5 Implications of the Findings and Conclusions

The findings reflected the unique nature of the faculty culture and the various views, findings and conclusions from the data had implications for researchers who sought to undertake such studies. This study revealed findings similar to the literature but in the context of the study, the data had unique meanings. Therefore, any study that seeks understanding of individuals in their culture need to be explicitly and implicitly clear in their agenda and the context. This implied clearly identified research objectives and unpacking the tangible and intangible layers of a cultural setting. Consideration needs to be given to the influences of sub-cultures, multi-cultures, the college culture, the community and even global cultures as the individual's construct and experiences of the culture as in the case of this study can show a range of perspectives and meanings. Thus, cultural findings cannot be generalised but can offer understanding in similar contexts. Furthermore, any study of culture can best be understood from the standpoint of the individuals in that setting as it was the lecturers who constructed the perceptions of their experiences which produced the understanding and knowledge of the particular reality in this study.

Another implication of cultural studies and qualitative research was the role of the researcher in analysing, evaluating and reporting the stories told meaningfully and accurately in order to provide credible information to understand real word situations. This implied the removal of biasness and subjectivity by the researcher in the data analysis and reporting so that the narrative tells the stories of the participants and not that of the researcher (Cresswell, 2012). Aspects that emerged from the data such as discrimination can be assumed to have similar meaning in similar studies, however

experiences may not be the same as behaviours and practices of discrimination could take on many different forms in different contexts and therefore meanings were also subject to change and contrast. The findings in the study implied that in cultural studies the researcher had to be careful not to make assumptions, to have realistic expectations and in the case of the narrative inquiry a disciplined approach to data analysis and reporting were integral. While descriptions in this study can provide a basis for understanding of the phenomenon, context specific dynamics at the time implied the possibilities of different interpretations of the same phenomenon (Silver, 2003).

The findings of poor physical and mental health of the lecturers and the conclusion in the study of the non-provision of resources by the employer to help lecturers deal with work challenges had implications for the employer's neglect and concern for the lecturers' welfare and therefore their performance, output and ultimately on the quality of education that was being provided. The implications were that in increasing number of lecturers were considering leaving the profession due to the growing disillusionment and stress of working in TVET colleges. This also implied that the sector would be unappealing to new lecturers. The implications were concerning as a scenario can be imagined where demotivated and underperforming lecturers remained and therefore the quality of education would be further compromised. Poor health of lecturers implied increased health care costs, changes in lifestyles, early retirement or medical boarding and the loss of good lecturers. The loss of lecturers also had cost implications on the college and sector in having to recruit and train new lecturers. The quality of education due to these reasons had implications for the wider labour market and economy in that employers remained reluctant to take on TVET students due to the perceived inferior quality of education that stigmatised the sector (Essel et al., 2014). The implications for the wider community and economy would be multifold; graduate unpreparedness, higher levels of unemployment and an economy that lacked the capacity to compete and participate on the global arena and confirmed the views in the literature (Akoojee, 2008).

The findings of the growing emphasis on neoliberalism and market related values such as, competition, greater productivity and profit drives implied an inadvertence to education itself and to the attainment of educational goals. The neoliberal values, as found in the study, had changed the profile of college lecturers keeping them busy with meaningless paperwork which had increased their workloads. The endless performance and compliance checklists and were shown to be ineffectual and inconsequential in the college contexts and had implications on the degree of academic freedom and professional status that college lecturers had. Neoliberal values were shown to be incongruent to

educational values and their usefulness in educational contexts needed to be reconsidered. The implications were that policies driven by neoliberal values which guided education provision in the sector needed reform on the pretext of improving education and not compromising it.

The lack of resources and facilities had implications on the quality of education and highlighted the pervasiveness of the funding problem in the sector. Reports and studies on funding as well as promises of increased funding by the DHET had obfuscated expectations for more resources as the sector retained its characterisations of deficiency, poor management capacity, corruption and the lack of accountability confirmed in the data and literature. The lack of funding had serious implications on the sectors' role and relevance for its future as tertiary education was quickly becoming a viable commodity for the growing number of private and foreign companies setting up tertiary institutions in South Africa and these institutions were more accessible, offered a range of relevant programmes and were more accommodating in the modes of learning they offered consumers as shown in the literature. Many of the findings in the study were the direct the result of the lack of funding in the sector. Universities in South Africa faced the same situation a few years ago and took steps to establish partnerships and alternative streams of funding (Buthelezi, 2016), however TVET colleges have failed to explore extraneous funding models and the reliance on public funding has created the dearth of finance in the sector.

The findings on the governance and management of colleges and the sector presented a number of implications. The pertinacious corruption and mismanagement of funds, political appointments and nepotism in key positions shown in the study implied that the rampancy of poor governance and mismanagement in sector was a serious threat to the sector's role of skills development and therefore the economy as the shortage of skilled labour remained a problem in South Africa (Buthelezi, 2016). The shift to neo-liberal values failed to improve the efficiency of colleges due to the lack of knowledge and experience of the DHET, college councils and senior managers on exactly what was required to achieve this. Also, the proscription of the service role of TVET colleges in favour of neoliberal ideals, lack of funding and the governments' lack of prudence had implications on meeting the expectations and promises of making education accessible to the masses. The reality was that colleges were restricted by their dependence on DHET funding and were unable to increase their capacities to service more students. This had implications on the growing youth unemployment issue and the accompanying problems of crime and poverty in the country.

Another issue raised in the data and literature which had implications on the role of the sector in achieving its aims was the lack of coherence in the DHET's policy aims and its articulation at college and faculty levels resulting in inconsistencies and dysfunction. New policies were ineffectual as lecturers *continued doing what we've always done*. Another implication that re-emerges was the attrition of qualified and experienced lecturers from the sector due the dysfunctional governance and management and the recruitment of unqualified lecturers implied further disastrous effects on an already compromised and weakened education sector (Day, 2008). The above-mentioned problems implied the need for building governance and management capacity in the sector through innovation, training and development. Only then can changes such as curriculum reform be considered. As one lecturer explained it, *the entire system needs an overhaul*!

The stigma of the TVET sector, which was raised in the literature and in the data, circumscribed its role and relevance in society and economic development and was linked to the other findings and had the same implications already discussed. The negative perceptions of the sector and the quality of education offered presented a number of other implications. One was the morale of academics who worked in a sector where their status was undermined by the poor perception. Students whose only access to education was acquiring place at a TVET college also bore the stigma that accompanied a TVET qualification. The curricula and programmes offered, poor facilities, lack of progress and the general dysfunctionality at some colleges augmented the questionable and inferior education provided which only further served to demonstrate the poor image and dysfunctionality of the sector. The implications were that students' qualifications were of little value in a rapidly changing world and the majority were unemployable. Employers were critical of the quality of education provided in the sector and TVET graduate employment remained low (Terblanche, 2017). The implications are clear that TVET qualifications had little impact on the growing skills shortage and employment rates. Although South African had an admirably growing economy and its image as an economic competitor to other developing countries in the world such as India was recognised (Essel et al., 2014), TVET colleges had failed to take on opportunities and drive its role as an integral contributor of the economy. The findings in the study implied with concern that TVET education faced redundancy should the factors that perpetuated the stigma and status of the sector were not imminently addressed.

This section addressed the implications of the findings and conclusions reached from the analysis and evaluation of the data. The next section gives a summary of the findings and conclusions reported from the data.

5.6 Summary of Data

The purpose of the study was to understand lecturers' experiences of their faculty culture and its effects on their wellbeing. The research aims and objectives were set out in the introductory chapter. The findings and conclusions from the data is summarised in this section in no particular order as all the findings were considered significant to the research objectives. The data found that college lecturers' experiences of the faculty culture were mostly objectionable and negative. The culture was found to be debilitating, uninspiring and dysfunctional. Factors identified that were contributing to the culture and the negative experiences of lecturers were: the poor infrastructure; inadequate facilities and resources; poor management, health and safety conditions and the irrelevant curricula. The health and safety issues in the data were concerning as many were a violation of lecturer's rights and the employer was guilty of breaching its duty to provide safe and healthy conditions for employees.

The management of the college were uncaring of lecturers' concerns and some managers were inconsistent in their treatment of staff. The faculty management were discriminatory in their approach to female lecturers whereas Black and male lecturers were treated with more respect and the conclusion was that gender and racial discrimination existed in the culture and the understanding thereof was unique and contextual. The general management of the college were considered incompetent and inefficient and failed to provide a culture which was conducive for teaching and learning. The college's mission and vision statements failed to consider the realities lecturers faced and was inconsequential in its purpose to create a unifying vision and ethos which had the potential to create a culture that could improve lecturers' experiences and perceptions. This also led to the conclusion that the faculty culture was more dominant than the college culture.

The findings revealed that many of the factors which contributed to lecturers' unpleasant experiences were due to the lack of funding. The lack of resources and proper teaching facilities impacted lecturers' effectiveness in the classroom and thus the quality of education that was provided. Failure to update the curricula also stemmed from the funding issue as curriculum reform would require new technology, facilities and training of staff and the DHET was simply incapacitated due to insufficient funding. These factors eternalized the stigmatisation of TVET education.

Due to these factors lecturers experienced stress, frustration and despondency. They had developed attitudes of apathy and detachment towards their work. It was concluded that lecturers' stress stemmed poor relations with management and in their failure to provide resources and a healthy work environment. The work challenges and highly stressful culture had compromised their SOC and coping abilities and this was further compromised by management's failure to provide resources that would be helpful to lecturer wellbeing. The study found that the chronic stress and unhealthy work culture had compromised lecturers' physical, mental and emotional health as shown in the work-related illnesses and health problems they suffered from.

The study concluded that regardless of the adverse culture, lecturers found their work meaningful enough to make attempts to cope with demanding situations and preserve their wellbeing. Lecturers were dedicated, committed and resourceful even in these unpropitious work conditions. They enjoyed collegial relationships, shared similar values with colleagues in their disciplines and the job of teaching gave them a degree of satisfaction. However, the constant negative experiences derailed efforts to cope and overall dissatisfaction amongst lecturers were preponderate to the minimal episodes of satisfaction they experienced. The findings served as an admonition that should the faculty and college conditions remain in its current state of declination, the lecturers would be unable to maintain their SOC at acceptable levels and the result might be an increase in more serious and threatening illnesses and diseases amongst college lectures.

The study concluded that culture was not a shared set of beliefs, values and experiences and refuted these claims in the literature. The views in the literature that cultural experiences included both individual and collective experiences was confirmed in the data. While most aspects of the faculty culture were shared by lecturers this was not the case in all instances, situations and circumstances in the context of the study. The study confirms the assumption made in the introductory chapter that lecturers experienced the faculty culture in ways that were contrary to their wellbeing and was supported by similar views in the literature. However, this study, unlike the literature, demonstrates the extent to which TVET college cultures were deteriorating, neglected and in fact harmful to lecturers' physical and mental health, not by simplistic or cursory examinations of the research phenomenon, but through the in-depth and disciplined approach the study undertook to reach these findings and conclusions. The findings of this study should raise some trepidation for the state of TVET colleges and the sector.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter reported and evaluated the stories of lecturers in a TVET college faculty from the data. The narrative was presented in three sections to retell their stories and to evaluate the findings and conclusions made from the data in order to address the research objectives and questions of the study. The implications of the findings and conclusions reached are discussed. A summary of the data, the findings and conclusions is provided.

The last chapter of the study follows and presents a discussion of the findings, recommendations and a final conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to seek knowledge and understanding of the experiences of lecturers of their faculty culture in a TVET college and of the effects on their wellbeing. The aim was to capture the stories of the lecturers and evaluate and report the findings and conclusions reached that will address the research aims and objectives in a manner that provides the knowledge and understanding of the research phenomenon. This chapter begins with a discussion on the findings and conclusions drawn from the reporting and evaluation of the data in the narrative inquiry. Included in this chapter is a discussion on TVET college cultures as well as the wellbeing of college lecturers. The limitations and strengths of the study will be discussed. This is followed by the recommendations and the final conclusion of the study. The research questions that guided the study are:

1. *How do lecturers describe the culture in their faculty?*
2. *What factors of the culture do staff feel affect their wellbeing?*
3. *How do lecturers feel about the culture they describe?*

6.2 Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions

This section discusses findings and conclusions from the data in relation to the research aims and objectives of the study.

The study found that lecturers' experiences were reflected in some ambiguity, ambivalence and even antithesis to the work culture. Many factors identified in the workplace were contributing to mostly negative experiences and to an extent they were suffering with stress and ill health. Workplace stresses were highly unfavourable to their wellbeing and due to the accumulated effects of constant challenges during most of their work life at the faculty they would struggle to maintain SOC and sustain their coping abilities over time. Dealing with workplace demands relied mainly on their internal coping resources which were stable and well developed. The reason for this was that the workplace had not upheld staff wellbeing as priority and the faculty culture and ethos was not based

on satisfied and productive staff. This tacit manifestation of culture was shown in the absence of resources that would support lecturer wellbeing and in managements' inadvertences for their welfare. The study and the literature are in agreement the faculty and college culture are in a concerning state of decline and that lecturer welfare would probably not feature as a priority as teaching resources, facilities and health and safety would more likely be attended to first.

This finding was consistent with the literature of neglected employee health in the education sector and therefore stress and workplace related illnesses amongst educators is a growing concern in many educational institutions in South Africa (Buthelezi, 2018) and in particular those in public educational institutions. TVET college lecturers are facing similar challenges as their counterparts in schools and universities, but it appears from the study that the TVET sector is a particularly neglected sector. This is evident in the literature as studies conducted in schools and universities had to be referenced to identify similarities that would be relevant to the TVET sector and the purpose of the study. College environments and lecturer welfare is an area that requires further exploration as some of the findings in this study are concerning. It is understood that the findings and conclusions cannot be generalised but similar studies would help to confirm or refute the findings in this study although as it stands, the findings in this study stand firm in their legitimacy of the need for urgent reform in the sector.

The conclusion that college lecturers experience high levels of frustration and stress due to an increasing number of negative factors in TVET colleges and that college cultures are in a state of decline is significant to the state of education, skills provision and the labour market and to economic development and growth in the country. Many of the findings emanated from two major factors: governance and management and funding, both of which originate from the political milieu in South Africa (Terblanche, 2017). Governance and management will be discussed first and will include the other findings that relate back to this factor.

Generally poor, incompetent and inefficient management is found on all levels in the sector. College management were unable to manage transformation, diversity and massification of education during the early part the first decade of the century (Jansen, 2004). Since that time many changes have taken place in the social, economic, technological and political sphere in the country and yet college management appear to be out of touch with the realities lecturers' experience. While directives and policies are received from the DHET, college management together with college council are presumed to possess greater decision-making powers in an attempt at decentralisation and

democratisation of institutions (Franzsen, 2003). College councils, like governing bodies in schools, are made up of elected members from the community and together with the senior college managers namely, the rector and deputy directors, manage the key functions of the college (Akoojee, 2008). The study found that college council members are usually elected members of a political elite establishment with little or no experience of the sector. College management's main task is the allocation of funds in accordance to the needs of faculties and the programmes offered and yet the study found that faculties saw little or no funds come their way in terms of more resources or improvements to facilities and the negligence of buildings and equipment is rampant and unattended to year after year. Buthelezi (2016) alluded to the mismanagement, corruption and lack of accountability of college management. The study is unable to make this claim of the college management but transparency by publishing financial and audit reports can help clarify the situation as with the current status quo lecturers are not privy to this information and there is much resentment amongst lecturers towards the college management as suspicion of mismanagement and corruption pervades the layers of the culture.

The middle managers or corporate managers and the yield to neoliberal measures are the bane of lecturers. The study found that these managers offered almost no educational value and their functions actually undermined lecturers and their academic freedoms and their new managerial actions were counterproductive to lecturers' performance or the quality of education. In light of the funding problem, the DHET should reconsider these positions. Lecturers suggested that if all managers actually manage that is lead, organise, coordinate and plan there is no need for corporate managers in the sector and the funds used to pay their salaries can be put to better use such as providing resources or improving facilities.

The study revealed some concerning interactions between lecturers and their immediate managers. Poor management, unprofessionalism, unfair practices and a general stoical management style surmised lecturers perceptions of them. The outdated, authoritarian management style proved to be unsuitable to the faculty's diverse lecturer population. Changing situations call for new skills and attitudes from managers in colleges (Wedekind, 2010). The managers are blamed for not being more zealous in their approach as they perceive that being good administrators equates to good leadership and this attitude maintains the stagnant and mundane feature the faculty. The DHET should consider including more innovative, critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills in the job specification of managers for future recruitment. Apartheid and redress set the conditions for the

expectance of a diverse workforce and possible problems that could arise such as racism or discrimination, but after more than two decades managers remain incapable and unqualified in dealing with transformation and managing multiculturalism (Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2016)

The findings show much criticism of the governance of the sector and of DHET policies as well as in the literature (Buthelezi, 2016; Wedekind, 2008, 2010; Terblanche, 2017). Some of the common judgements of the DHET are that the incompetence and poor policies are due to political appointments and that the main drivers have little understanding and foresight of the sector. Maladministration and the adoption of educational models, in the case of the NCV curricular, from other countries in a cut and paste fashion without consideration to the South African situation warrant these criticisms (Malale & Gomba, 2016). The DHET has a history of endless policy failures as they fail to consider a weakening education system.

The second major finding of inadequate funding in the sector is directly linked to the DHET discussed above. The lack of funds relates to the factors identified in the study that are responsible for the disempowering, uncaring and uninspiring cultural descriptors of college cultures in the data and literature. The alarming health and safety issues at this faculty were not addressed stating there are no funds but that these issues are included in future strategic plans of the college. Essential teaching resources and tools needed to do the job are not sufficiently provided and yet lecturers are expected to perform and are subject to performance appraisals structured to selectively include only certain criteria and not others such as the lack of resources. Teaching and learning facilities are not maintained or upgraded and therefore traditional teaching methods and teacher centred learning are the only options for lecturers and yet the curricula include practical components showing the misconfiguration between policy expectations and college realities (Buthelezi, 2018). Lack of funding is also responsible the slow pace of progress, lack of innovation and new technology and the outdated curricula. The funding problem stops with the DHET and the failure to maintain, upgrade and expand TVET colleges has augmented the stigmatisation of the sector and is the fundamental cause of the poor cultures in TVET colleges

In the study the faculty, like other TVET colleges, are expected to meet the formidable policy aims set out by the DHET and its responsiveness and adaptability to economic and technological changes can only be described as laggard (Wedekind, 2008; Terblanche, 2017). Lecturers are cynical about their roles and regard their efforts as futile in their awareness that the content they are teaching, and

which students have to study and pass, is no longer relevant in the real world. These are the key factors for lecturers' frustration and stress as the provision of quality education is vastly compromised making it impossible to shake off the stigmatisation of the sector. The lack of wifi and technology necessary for preparing students to function in a digital world restrained attempts to provide the type of education suitable for the employment of graduates and yet the DHET is able to project the fallacy that the aims of skills provision are being met and goes even further in its plans for the sector in light of the fourth industrial revolution (Nundkumar & Subban, 2018). The unrealistic expectations of the DHET year after year fail to consider a weakening system which is in need of radical reform (Terblanche, 2017). It is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect TVET colleges to be more responsive to economic changes when the current system reflects a retrogressive state of affairs.

Within the faculty and it's culture, if interpersonal relations between management and lecturers were be more formidable and teamwork fostered, the internal culture could be more like "us against the world," rather than the current "them and us," and an enduring culture is possible. Peer relationships are pleasurable and professional respect is valued by lecturers and these positive qualities of the faculty can provide a foundation from which support structures for lecturers can be created and made available to help cope with challenges. "New" types of managers discussed earlier can facilitate such attempts. Although many of the factors mentioned are beyond the control of management and the college and are systemic problems of a larger educational system (Zungu, 2015), it is within the power of management and lecturers to work towards making the workplace more tolerable, which could mediate the SOC to some extent. A supportive internal culture could make a difference to staff motivation and performance, particularly in an environment with many external threats.

This section discussed the main findings and conclusions within the research objectives of the study. The next section discusses the findings and conclusions relating to the culture of the faculty.

6.3 The Culture of a TVET College Faculty

The literature grounds the understanding of workplace culture on the basis tangible and intangible manifestations (Vazi et al., 2013). In the study the appearance of the buildings and facilities at the faculty are described as old, neglected and hazardous thus, these tangible manifestations would confirm perceptions of an uncaring culture and also excoriate any sense of pride lecturers may have

of their workplace. Visual appearances are importance in creating first impressions but are also reflective of the type of culture inside the institution that is perceived. Lecturers' unwillingness to encourage students to study or work there meant the existence of some dubiousness about the faculty. The deplorable health and safety conditions visible to all would be enough for prospective students or lecturers to avoid the place. Respiratory illnesses are common amongst the lecturers at the faculty and an absentee audit conducted showed that absenteeism at the faculty is higher than normal in other faculties. The toxic air, mould and asbestos roofing are health violations which the health department are aware of and yet not action has been taken to address these offences. The health conditions would impede lecturers' efforts to deliver an effective lesson when one is nauseous or has a headache. Relocation of the campus was once considered but is unlikely to take place due to funding and the external appearance and visible health conditions set the tone for the faculty culture.

Behavioural manifestations of culture are reflected in the attitudes and conduct of the lecturers in response to aspects of their environment (Vos et al., 2012). The attitudes of apathy and dissonance due to persistent stressors are actually coping strategies lecturers used to preserve their mental health and not an avoidance of their duties. Depersonalisation from work will not only affect efficiency and the attainment of educational goals, but also undermine the SOC and wellbeing. Ultimately the quality of education is compromised with students, the community and economy having to bear the consequences. Lecturers like Samantha feels "*it is futile to argue or complain* as *nothing changes, promises and decisions to improve never materialise."* Such attitudes of defeat and hopelessness are manifestations of stress and depression, which is a growing concern amongst educators in South Africa (Theron and Theron, 2014). Simone indicates "*I come to work and try not to get involved in everyday drama as it is too stressful and anyway no one even listens to anything I have to say. It's not even worth complaining anymore."* These negative perceptions confirm that lecturers' attitudes, conduct and SOC are shaped by the type of culture and their dissentient dispositions are indications of stress.

The finding of lecturers' challenges with the students they teach as a distressing factor of the job brings to light the results of the lack of configuration within the entire education system in South Africa (Vally & Spreen, 2014) and DHET is part of this system. The GET system has its own set of challenges and the declining state of education in that sector is well documented in the literature. University education remains inaccessible to the masses and TVET education is the only option for many (Tabensky & Matthews, 2015). Lecturers find that students fresh out of matric are generally

unprepared and lack acceptable levels of educational skills to cope in a tertiary environment (Sabanci et al., 2017). The TVET curricula itself is responsible for students' loss of interest. There is little career counselling, students choose courses based on availability of space rather than on their interests and acumen and choices are limited. Entrance tests and screening could help place students in suitable courses but enrolment is based on a first come first serve basis. Besides the sub-standard cognitive and study skills, discipline is a problem and students lack the maturity to take responsibility for their education. Lecturers' jobs are made more demanding and stressful when they have to assess student' basic knowledge, prepare learning materials to cater for students with varying levels of competencies, explore what teaching methods would work best and maintain an engaging learning environment, without the necessary resources and support. Many students lack exposure and experience of real world situations making teaching even more challenging. The literature documents the issue of TVET students as products of the GET system and for the most part tertiary education remains a formidable undertaking for students resulting in high failure and drop-out rates (Modisaotsile, 2012).

The finding of rampant student unrest in the study and literature is yet an added challenge for college lecturers. Protests have become a reactionary and radical weapon that students have become accustomed to using when something is perceived as unsatisfactory to their sensibilities, yet most are subsidised by NASFAS. The outdated curricula, poor facilities and a dull campus life further amplifies students' dispassion for their studies making them susceptible to the persuasions of politically motivated student bodies (Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2016). Frequent student unrest and disruptions makes for an unpredictable and fractured teaching environment. Exposure to violence and threats to safety further impairs lecturers SOC especially when lecturers have to teach the same students who threatened them during strike action. Lecturers' question whether their efforts are wasted when students show not only an unwillingness to learn but also an incivility to them. Teaching equipment and facilities destroyed during strike are often not replaced.

The tacit manifestations of culture are the underlying, unconscious elements of culture that are not visible to outsiders or the taken for granted notions and include the tones, feelings, underlying perceptions (Vazi et al., 2013). Lecturers' feelings of vulnerability, uncertainty, disillusionment and despondency are sign of a callous culture. These type feelings are symptomatic of internal stress, anxiety, trauma and depression. While lecturers receive minimal yet helpful degrees of satisfaction from teaching, liaisons with colleagues or when students perform well, the struggle to maintain their SOC is found to be persistent in the declining culture. The basis for SOC is the existence of a

consistent and structured environment and the faculty is perceived as dysfunctional and chaotic by lecturers. Furthermore, proponents of SOC such as (Jenny et al., 2017) emphasise the need for workplace support and resources to help employees cope and the conclusion that external resources from the employer in support of staff welfare are non-existent further confirms a disregard for lecturer wellbeing. The extent of negative feelings reported, the prolonged exposure to stress, and the tacit manifestations indicate the prevalence of depression and ill-being amongst TVET college lecturers. One lecturer openly reported suffering with depression, another with hypertension which is symptomatic of stress (Steinhardt, Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011). Most people are unwilling to disclose a mental health diagnosis such as stress and depression, but such conclusions are possible from the data and would be concerning.

The findings of gender and racial discrimination is not unexpected however this needs to be understood in its context and within the current political and social climate. Further evaluation of the data can conclude that certain race groups may actually be accustomed to preferential treatment such as they may have experienced in the past. The idea is not to negate the experiences of the lecturers but to discuss possible perspectives of the reality. It could also be a case where Black lecturers may have a sense of entitlement and feel protected in the current political climate and therefore are rebellious to the rules. Another perspective is that the faculty manager may not really be a male patriarch but more of a narcissist who knows when and with whom to exercise his perceived dominance. It is possible that identity politics is prevalent in the faculty culture as power and privilege previously held by certain groups of people have shifted and this could affect experiences and these perspectives need be considered in a study on culture in South Africa (Hofstede, 2011).

The finding of unfair treatment of certain female lecturers also revealed they have a lower self-concept and SOC than other lecturers. Lecturers are unwilling to address these issues such as racism as the culture of silence and acceptance deters attention to controversial issues and they may fear further victimisation and isolation. To add to this, lecturers' lack of confidence that management will deal with these issues fairly and in a non-discriminatory fashion means that provocative or contentious issues remain concealed particularly as 'woke culture' deters people from speaking against uncomfortable truths (Sobande, 2019). Affirmative action is another practice lecturers deem unfair and its effects together with identity politics and critical race theory is well documented (Burger & Jafta, 2010) and could be significant to understanding the findings further. While affirmative action and employment equity policy requirement impacts all organisations in South Africa, lecturers report

that affirmative action is not addressing its intended purpose, rather nepotism, tribalism and political affiliations pre-determine appointments and promotions (Tabensky &Matthews, 2015). Merit, experience and good performance of lecturers go unrecognised and the ensuing resentment and disillusionment at these systemic issues violate lecturers' SOC and would ultimately see their attrition from the sector. Race and gender inequalities are still prevalent in TVET colleges as redress policies have served only to create new classes of elites as in those who hold senior positions in the college, the college council and the DHET policy-makers.

The finding that the faculty culture is dominant over that of the college has significance to understanding individuals and their environment. The college's mission statement is a symbolic manifestation of the culture and is found to reflect more of an institutional ideology which is far removed from the realities lecturers face (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Lecturers' viewed it with cynicism as it represents meaningless slogans lacking substance, usefulness and practicality. The actual practices belie the vision and mission and serve to confirm managements' detachment from faculty realities. These views further strengthen the domination of the faculty culture and lecturers' allegiances to it and the subjugation of the college culture due to the polarisation between management and lecturers. Lecturers are more likely to identify with colleagues in their discipline by being able to share common views and concerns with subject peers than with the college and college management who had time and time again failed to attend to their concerns and the study confirms views of Silver (2003) with regard to academic cultures and allegiances and disavows the views in the literature that cultural experiences are shared by all in and organisation (Umbach, 2007). On this basis cultures would be best understood by uncovering the embedded layers of cultural networks and analysing the underlying forces at play in a contextual setting to truly understand an organisation's culture as symbolic manifestations of culture could obscure the reality.

One of the aims of the study is to understand whether experiences of culture is a collective or individual phenomenon as the literature espouses these two ideals (Silver, 2003; Umbach, 2007). The findings uphold both these views. While most lecturers share common experiences, values and beliefs, this would not always be the case. Some lecturers have no problem with the management and enjoy good relations with them while others have negative interactions with them. All female lecturers do not experience discrimination. Black lecturers have different views on affirmative action. The study therefore obfuscates the idea of assuming that culture was a shared phenomenon in all situations. The study expostulates the dynamic nature of the faculty culture and individual lecturers'

construct of it and on this basis, the existence of multiple realities of a situation would be accepted. Aspects such as race, gender, age, background and personalities could obscure perceptions of a situation thus, as mentioned in the literature, understanding the concept of culture could not be compartmentalised and would include both collective and individual perspectives.

The study brought to light the problem of TVET governance, discussed in earlier sections and the endless policy reform failures such as the NCV ignominy (Sixabayi, 2016) as well as the quality of education provided. This issue personally affected lecturers as they reflect on their participation in the type of education that is provided in the sector. They felt defeated, complicit and disillusioned by this and these feelings do not bode well for their SOC. A lecturer reported *nothing will change in the sector and the whole system needs an overhaul!* The crumbling state of education in the sector due to political interference and politically based appointments, generally poor management capacity and the lack of accountability are matters of contention raised by lecturers (Sebele, 2015). While there is evidence of monitoring and audits by the DHET of colleges, these reports reveal little on how funds are used. The researcher's initial choice of funding as a research topic was thwarted when requests for audits and financial reports from the college were met with a subtle threat not to pursue the issue. The DHET is ultimately answerable to the findings in the study and TVET is fated if nothing changes.

Given the DHET's position on funding, its policy goals stating that TVET is the solution to the labour market crisis and that skills development is a priority (Akoojee, 2012) is paradoxical to say the least. The failed NCV curriculum implemented in TVET colleges aimed at school dropouts is a failure and rejected by lecturers yet colleges are incentivised to offer the programme as colleges receive more funding for the NCV programme than the post-matric Report 191 diploma courses. There is no rationale from the DHET for this, other than a particular political motivation is being met. Lecturers at the faculty refused to implement the NCV and fought to retain Report 191 courses even though they are outdated and receive less funds. The urgency for curriculum reform should be antecedent to any other changes if and when funds are available. Annie said, "*I am teaching the same curriculum since the 90's, it's unacceptable that it hasn't changed."* Lecturers are undeterred in their views that the current curricula would continue to reflect the poor image and notoriety of poor quality education in the sector, and the onus is on DHET to prioritise reform in the sector. The national imperatives of economic growth, social development and of augmenting the country's standing in the global sphere ultimately depends on a labour force that is equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills that are easily adaptable to new trends and demands (Terblanche, 2017). The current TVET curricula is

essentially anachronistic in its content, rendering student qualifications mostly ineligible in the current economic environment. The literature indicates that curriculum reform requires a coordinated approach from curriculum design teams including lecturers as subject experts, input from the business sector to identify relevant content and essential graduate attributes and funding by the DHET to provide the supporting technology and infrastructure needed (Buthelezi, 2018).

The study highlights the tensions in the sector and the highly demanding faculty cultures college lectures endure. An increasing number of TVET lecturers are reporting their work cultures as highly stressful and unsatisfying (Buthelezi, 2018). Teaching in the sector is no longer the attractive career calling it once due mainly to a declining and weakening system and the attrition of experienced and skilled lecturers is evidence of a broken system (Pitsoe, 2013). Lecturers who choose to remain will have to exercise resourcefulness in order to achieve some satisfaction and find ways to cope in what is now accepted, based on this study and the literature, as a highly dysfunctional and aggravating work environment with little hope for change.

This section discussed the findings and conclusion of TVET college culture in relation to the research objectives and questions. The next section discusses the wellbeing of TVET college lecturers.

6.4 The Wellbeing of TVET College Lecturers

Wellbeing is a complex blend of motivations, behaviours, skills and positive feelings primarily influenced by an individual's immediate environment (Stoll et al., 2006). The study concluded that the work culture is deficient in salutogenic aspects and would therefore counter lecturers' wellbeing. Most lecturers experience overall dissatisfaction and endure many obstacles in being effective in their jobs. The work culture offers few opportunities for growth, development and self-realisation which would be essential for optimum wellbeing. The management style and the treatment of lecturers indicate a culture of in difference to staff wellbeing. Their SOC is continuously disrupted by negative experiences and health threatening situations in the workplace. Their compromised wellbeing would be reflected in poor attitudes to work, despondency, depersonalisation and general absenteeism. Some lecturers display a more stable SOC in their acceptance, indifference and complacency of situations in the work culture. Lecturers at the faculty do not experience wellbeing and this is concluded by reports of physical and mental stress. Accounts of physical illnesses such as asthma; rhinitis; infections; physical and mental fatigue are shown in the literature as symptoms of stress and

depression (Steinhardt et al., 2011) Ill-being would have implications on lecturer performance and their ability to sustain the SOC and coping abilities when challenges persist over time.

Lecturers' wellbeing is compromised by a number of negative factors in their work culture. They are required to work according to strict time schedules, term and semester plans which have to be abandoned due to persistent and unpredictable disruptions. The academic year is generally disrupted by student protests, which can continue for weeks, union protests and community unrest which occurs frequently by the residents of the nearby informal settlement. Lecturers at the faculty suffer more frequently with illnesses due to the unhealthy conditions and sick leave absences also disrupts teaching schedules. The lost time makes for a highly pressurised work environment when students decide to return to class just before assessments are to take place. Due to the lost time, only the essential parts of the syllabus could be covered and standards for the setting and marking of assessments would be curtailed so as not to disadvantage students. Lecturers would be accustomed to the pressurised and counterproductive environment semester after semester and therefore optimum wellbeing would be difficult to achieve in these instances.

The highly stressful culture and weakened SOC concludes that TVET college lecturers would likely be at a higher risk for work related illnesses, stress and burnout (Tselebis et al., 2001). The study found that lecturers suffered with a number of illnesses and health problems such as hypertension, heart disease, respiratory illnesses, lowered immunity, headaches, chronic fatigue syndrome, stress and anxiety and depression. Vos et al. (2012) confirms these findings in the descriptions of increased levels of stress amongst academics in the South African higher education system due to similar pressures described in the study.

The findings of emotional stress due to frequent disparaging experiences of situations in and the work climate indicates that even in the absence of observant physical illnesses, lecturers would be deprived of holistic wellness. The literature confirms that lecturers' feelings of dissonance, apathy, frustration and resentment are manifestations of emotional stress. Therefore, it should be of concern that TVET lecturers function under varying degrees of emotional stress caused by the work culture. Emotional stress would weaken SOC and further inhibit their attempts to cope and as stated in the literature, can lead to depression (Kamil, 2014).

Clinical studies report increasing cases of depression amongst educators due to undiagnosed and untreated symptoms (Steinhardt et al., 2011). While lecturers may be sufficiently motivated to cope, depression would not be alleviated without medical intervention. Tselebis et al. (2001) explains how people suffering with depression can appear to function normally with everyday tasks, can be highly productive and even achieve goals they set for themselves until their bodies could no longer maintain a condition of resilience and the result would be physical, mental and emotional breakdown or burnout. Depression is a sensitive and private matter which most individuals would be reluctant to discuss, thus making it difficult to assess its prevalence in the faculty even though the symptoms are apparent and in accordance with the literature. Emotional and mental health are often aspects of wellbeing that are neglected as individual would be able to function normally and therefore depression could be more widespread than the extent to which the literature and the study indicates. The prevalence of depression would be pertinent to issues related to the neglect of lecturers' wellbeing by the employer but also on the quality of education provided as depression would vastly impair performance.

The study highlights the disregard for lecturer wellbeing by the college. Not only are serious health and safety issues neglected but the failure of the employer to provide resources that would support their welfare indicates a callousness for the organisation's human capital. Employee assistance programmes or wellness programs are provided for in legislation (Bophela & Govender, 2015), however no such measures could be identified in the study. Leave taking audits were conducted by the college as part of the assessment of the health conditions on absenteeism and concluded that sick leave was higher and more frequent amongst lecturers at the faculty. However, interventions and support for lecturers are yet to materialise. The literature accedes to the notion of educators as the most essential resource in educational institutions and those that thrive would generally be differentiated by the level of attention given to staff welfare (Vazi et al., 2013). Studies such as this highlight the concerning ill-health of lecturers due to systemically poor cultures with the view to identify, understand and then seek ways to address the aspects of the work that would precipitate health and wellbeing. Fundamentally, in order to improve the quality of education, concern for lecturers' wellbeing would be critical.

While the components of manageability, comprehensibility and motivation are workplace considerations for SOC, these do not negate the importance of self-care and individual responsibility (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). In modern day society, individuals are experiencing higher levels of

stress from the demands of life and work in general. The study and literature affirm that SOC is an individual's disposition to environmental stressors and therefore coping idiosyncrasies will ultimately depend on the individual. Lecturers had sufficient motivation to cope in the demanding work culture, showed a proclivity for resourcefulness, creativity and dedication to their work mainly because they sought meaning in their work and had well developed internal resources in their SOCs. The resilience shown indicates lecturers would have assumed responsibility for their wellbeing in the absence of external support from the workplace. The researcher agrees with Akoojee (2008), that TVET lecturers are collectively a well-motivated and effective component of the sector. However, colleges can do more to create workplace cultures that could become spaces where they are able to thrive and perform at their best to improve the quality of education for the betterment of all.

This concludes the discussions of the findings and conclusions of the study. The next section explains the limitations of the study.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

Time constraints allowed for the use of only one data generation instrument, the semi-structured interview. As a qualitative study with a narrative research design, additional methods such as photographs or letter writing could have enhanced data generation. However, the use of additional methods would not have made much difference to the type of data needed for the study as the researcher was able to fully utilise the interviews and generated sufficient thick, rich descriptive data which uncovered in-depth details of the phenomenon she sought to understand. In fact, the amount of data generated was impressively extensive as evident in the lengthy reporting and evaluation of data chapter as the researcher attempted to report all the data in the varying views, perspectives and meanings as intended by the participants.

The study cannot be generalised as the nature of culture was best understood within specific contexts and as shown in the study, the same situation, event or context holds a variety of realities to individuals. This was not actually a limitation but rather a characteristic of the interpretative paradigm and the research approach. The intention of this study was not to make inferences of the findings to any other situation but to understanding the phenomenon from the findings. The findings could, however, be transferable to similar studies on a similar topic. The sample chosen was based on convenience as well as purposeful, and therefore as Johnson and Christensen (2012) indicated,

purposeful sampling could be construed as a disadvantage or limitation in that not everyone in the population had an equal chance of being included in the study. The solution to allay this limitation was resolved by establishing a set of criteria that enhanced the selection of the sample necessary for the purpose of the study, namely, age; gender and race. This decision served two advantages; firstly, it allowed for data generation to include the range of possible perspectives that was needed to meet the aims of the study and secondly; it mediated the disadvantage of purposeful sampling by facilitating the selection of participants to reflect a representative sample of the population that would elicit the type of data needed for the study.

The researcher's personal position as an insider researcher, as well as her personal interest in the topic could be construed as lending a possible subjectivity in the study. For this reason, the researcher adopted a personal sense of awareness on order to maintain a neutral and objective stance throughout the study. During the interviews she did not express or impose her personal views and her interview skills ensured participants were not led to agree or disagree with any issue. All steps were taken to ensure the findings were a true reflection of the participants' descriptions and not the researcher's own. The narrative inquiry served to reflect on the experiences of the participants and to report their reality and not that of the researcher's. In a qualitative study the researcher was also a data generation tool and therefore exercised this role to critically evaluate and report the data within the theoretical framework in order to give meaning and add context to the stories of the participants in accordance with the research aims and objectives and this was done with care so as not to distort the voices of the lecturers. The study reflected understanding and knowledge gained from one context only. There are others in South Africa, and it is necessary to conduct other studies that might confirm or disconfirm the findings and conclusions of the research phenomenon that were reflected in this study. More studies would strengthen the recommendations or suggestions emerging from this study as on its own it only presents a cameo.

6.6 Strengths of the Study

As Creswell (2012) contends, the narrative inquiry aims to allow participants a voice to describe their experiences and to draw thick descriptions that will generate greater understanding of the phenomenon. Through the narrative inquiry the researcher was able to bring forth the voices of the participants and truly represent and give meaning to their reality. The use of the semi-structured interview to facilitate the narrative inquiry allowed for the extraction of thick descriptions and depth

of experiences that helped strengthen the robustness of the data in the study. The researcher was able to capture the different perspectives of lecturers' experiences of aspects of the culture and their responses uncovered and brought to light the many layers of the culture in the data that validated the findings and conclusions in the study. The choice of the theoretical framework provided the suitable lens for further examination of the data generated and strengthened the meanings, findings and conclusions which enable a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. The research decisions in the choices made in the narrative inquiry as the research design, the semi-structured interview as the data generation method, the thematic analysis approach and the theoretical framework were suitable as they aligned together coherently which strengthened the researcher's ability to evaluate and interpret the data and report the findings meaningfully to meet the purpose of the study. The researcher was able to acquire different perspectives of the same situation and frame meaning and understanding according to the research objectives and questions and this made this study more robust in the understanding of the findings and conclusions made. The strength of this study was its ability to fully capture the experiences of the lecturers and their feelings of the research topic and to retain their voices in the narrative report.

The study revealed significant themes of the faculty culture within the college culture that could only be understood within the scope of this study. The many tangential aspects of the research phenomenon could be further explored by other studies. The researcher has attempted, to the best of her ability, to give a trustworthy, true and honest representation of the experiences of the participants as this study which could be used for future reference. The next section suggests recommendations from the findings of this study

6.7 Recommendations

The recommendations have been inspired by discussions with the participants during the interviews and the findings and conclusions that emerged in the study. The recommendations include suggestions for TVET colleges to improve their cultures with regard to aspects that will enable the wellbeing of lecturers and then recommendations for further studies.

Firstly, in terms of recommendations from the findings of the study: these findings will be presented to the faculty management and should they accept the findings, a suggestion to set up a committee will be put forward to explore aspects such as health and safety or management and staff relationships

and the researcher is willing to sit on such a committee. Secondly, a recommendation will be made to senior management to address the issue of the curricula as a priority. A motivation based on the findings can be made to the DHET and Department of Labour (DOL) to investigate current and future employer needs. A recommendation to set up a curriculum design team which includes lecturers as subject and discipline experts as well as representation from the business sector to assess the content of current programmes offered, the current state of the economy and anticipated future trajectories and then make the changes. Curriculum reform would require improved facilities, technologies and training and it is foreseen that the issue of funding will be a major hurdle to the recommendations.

Thirdly, the researcher recommends the college take on an entrepreneurial approach by offering a variety of services and products using the different disciplines and the many skills departments. Entrepreneurial models used in universities can be studied, evaluated and adopted according to the capacities of the college. The college has untapped potential in the human capital it can access and lecturers can be incentivised to generate ideas for entrepreneurship and branding of the college. More fervent use of the Skills Fund could generate additional income for the college as there are untapped markets for skills training that are possible opportunities for the college as a service provider. Lastly, partnerships with national and international institutions are recommended as these could be beneficial, as modelled by some TVET colleges that are already engaged in mutually beneficial partnerships, not only for generating funds but also for the trading of knowledge and skills that can enhance efficiency of the college. Partnerships have many advantages such as finding different options that would improve the quality of education, better management practices, suggestions to use the talents of staff members, strategies to provide resources for better staff health and solutions to improve the culture for students and staff.

In terms of recommendations for further studies based on the findings and conclusions that emerged from the study: Firstly, other members of the college such as the lecturers of other faculties, students, management and administrative staff were not part of the study. Studies on other faculties or colleges can add to the findings of this study from those perspectives on the research phenomenon and create a more robust body of knowledge on the characteristics and challenges of the sector. Studies that focus on students' or managers' experiences of the college culture will complement or refute the findings in this study and can add to the views in the literature on the research topic. Secondly, the themes and topics on college culture and employee health can be departure points for more direct studies on them and can create a better understanding of cultural descriptors that emerged from this

study. Aspects such as occupational health of college lecturers can be further explored in other studies as the increasing accounts of educator stress and depression are disturbing trends in the literature and as concluded in this study. Characteristics relating to the college and sector that emerged such as the management capacity, curriculum reform, and stigmatisation of the sector and government funding of education in South Africa are research topics that can be investigated to generate a deeper understanding of these pertinent issues. Studies on student protests, student readiness for higher education and TVET graduate employment also emerged as possible areas that can be studied further.

Lastly, studies on educational policy and governance can give an understanding from institutional, sectoral or national perspectives on educational decision-making in the country. Comparative studies can help to identify strategies that could work in the South African context. These studies can expand knowledge and provide a wider context to the understanding of the research topic and similar topics.

This section offered suggestions and recommendations on the findings that emerged from this study. The conclusion of this study follows.

6.8 Conclusion

This study has been an illuminating, enlightening and developmental experience for the researcher as fellow lecturers shared their experiences, feelings and views of their work culture in this scientific exercise.

The study revealed a range of experiences on aspects of the culture and a mixture of emotions and views and concluded, to a greater extent, that the culture was disempowering, unhealthy, stagnant and dysfunctional. Lecturers felt demoralised, demotivated, frustrated and stressed in a highly challenging work environment. Factors they identified as challenging and stressful were: poor infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, lack of teaching resources, unhealthy and unsafe working conditions. In addition, a number of other issues contributed to their unpleasant experiences such as: poor managers and management style, irrelevant curricula, the stigma of the sector and various problems with students. Lecturers felt that their hard work and effort was in vain as the education they provided was highly questionable in its value to students, the community and economy. They perceived the culture as uncaring citing lack of support and resources, guidance and recognition from management. The college culture failed to offer opportunities for personal growth and progress and

in fact agency and creativity were suppressed. The culture was stagnant and the curricula was over twenty years old. Management and the DHET were committing a disservice to students and the community by offering sub-standard education. The lack of wifi, technology and innovation stifled their efforts to be fully effective as lecturers or to expose their students to real world situations.

Not all experiences were unpleasant. Lecturers enjoyed the camaraderie and support amongst their peers. Despite the challenging culture, lecturers were commitment to their students and to making a difference. The opportunity to be of service kept them motivated and to a certain extent mediated some of the negative effects of the unpleasant experiences. The highly stressful environment was impacting their health. In spite of the demanding culture lecturers developed a level of resilience. They exercised creativity and resourcefulness where they could, to improve their teaching efforts for the benefit of their students. However, the ingrained and what was now an established poor culture was part of a systemically dysfunctional sector and education system in South Africa. Temporary moments of work satisfaction were quickly eroded by the unpredictable, dysfunctional and chaotic work culture. Such a culture negated efforts to achieve and sustain wellbeing as it was apparent that the faculty, college and sector was in a state of decline.

Lecturers' internal SOC was stable and they were able comprehend the stressors emanating from the workplace and to make decisions that helped them manage and cope to a certain extent. The study found that external resources for wellbeing were absent in the workplace and the conclusion was that lecturer welfare was not a concern of management. They were motivated, according to Antonovsky (1987), mainly as their choice of profession was premised on being able to contribute to something of significance, that is education and teaching. They sought meaning in their work and wanted to help students and make a difference in the world and these reasons were worthy enough to make efforts to cope and this helped to maintain their SOC.

Finally, faculty cultures are academic spaces with numerous, diverse and dynamic forces at play. The findings of this study indicate that these forces were counter to quality education or good health. In its role as an education provider the college and sector need to acknowledge and attend to these negative aspects as it is in the interest of the society and economy to do so. Lecturers' stories do not end with this study! They possess the economic and social capital in regard to their expertise, skills, experience and commitment and when the employer realises this wealth it can be capitalised on to

achieve educational and economic goals as TVET lecturers are the devolving link needed to take the sector forward (Akoojee, 2008).

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APPENDIX A LETTER OF REQUEST: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

20 January 2018

Att: The Principal

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Sir

I am currently a master's candidate at the University of Kwa-zulu Natal. My study requires the submission of a dissertation. I seek permission to conduct research at the Business Studies Division at the Springfield Campus.

My research topic is institutional culture. The aim of the research is to determine the type of organisational culture that exists in the faculty and lecturers' experiences of it. My aim is to gain an understanding of the research topic. I will be conducting interviews with six lecturers. All data is confidential. The names of the lecturers is confidential. Should management wish to know the results of my findings, then I will gladly submit the dissertation to the relevant authority. It is not my intention to create a negative impression of any person or the institute. A strict code of ethics is to be followed so that no one is harmed in any way by the research. The research and the information are confidential.

The research will be conducted from August 2019 to September 2019. Should you wish to acquire any other information, you are welcome to do so.

I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely

Nirvashini Singh
Lecturer and Masters Candidate

Contact details

Supervisor: Dr R Searle
Contact No: 031 260 3587

Researcher's Cell No: 078 365 7678
E-mail:nirvashinis@gmail.com

APPENDIX B GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

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

Thekwini TVET College
Opening doors to your future!

Enquiries: PA to the Principal	*Telephone: 031 250 8400*	*Date: 25-06-2019*
Imibuzo: Ms N Dlamini	*Fax Number: 031 250 8404*	*Usuku:*
Navrae:	*Address:*	*Datum:*

Ms. N Singh

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR USING COLLEGE AS SITE OF RESEARCH

Thekwini TVET College has no objection to you using our College as a site of research on the **understanding lecturer's experiences of workplace culture in a Technical Vocational and Educational Institution and its influence on lecturer well-being.**

However, the following conditions for external research apply:

- The College will have right to approve content with regard to research instruments and research analysis.
- The relevant documents relating to ethical clearance must be forwarded to the College Principal and approval of usage will be given by the College Principal in writing.
- The name of the College or any of its sites cannot be used in any documents
- The name/s of staff employed by the college cannot be used.
- The use of any findings that reflect negatively on the College, its partners or any related body must be approved in writing by the College Principal.

Please note that the failure to comply with all of the above conditions will result in the necessary legal action against you.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

[redacted]

Mr. NE Mchunu

College Principal

I have read the content of this letter and I accept the conditions

_____	_____	_____
NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

APPENDIX C ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

26 July 2019

Ms Nirvashini Singh 2017079738
School of Education
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Singh

Protocol reference number: HSS/0348/019M
Project title : Understanding lecturer's experiences of workplace culture in a Technical, Vocational and Educational Institution and its influence on lecturer well-being.

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

With regards to your response received on 09 July 2019 to our letter of 19 June 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Dr Ruth Searle
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Ansurie Pillay
cc School Administrator: Ms S Jeenarain, Ms M Ngcobo, Ms N Dlamini and Mr SN Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX D INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Dear Participant,

My name is **Nirvashini Singh**. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. The title of my research is: Lecturer's Experiences in a TVET Faculty Culture and the Effects on their Wellbeing. The aim of the study is to understand lecturer experiences in their work culture. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations of the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or to stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity number will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about an hour.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of five years, in line with the rules of the university, they will be disposed of by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures).

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email:nirvashinis@gmail.com; Cell: 0783657678.

My supervisor is Dr Ruth Searle who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Edgewood Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email mwsearl@mweb.co.za Phone number: 031 2603257.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

APPENDIX E DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I…… *(Full names of participant*) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent to have this interview recorded.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE

……

APPENDIX F SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Interview Questions

1. You are familiar with the mission statement of the organisation which applies to all divisions. Do you think that the vision and mission speak to the culture that you experience? Explain?
2. List three things about the division that make you proud to work in it and three things that make you feel embarrassed and ashamed? Feel free to elaborate.
3. How would you describe the culture in the division to someone from Japan or Finland?
4. What would you say to a new employee taking up a job in the division? What advice, guidelines or warnings would you offer the person?
5. Describe how the working culture affects your emotional, physical and psychological health and how do you cope with these?
6. Would you encourage someone to take up a job offer in the division or to send their child there to study?
7. Are there any questions, statements or comments on the topic that you wish to add?

APPENDIX G THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name of Participant	Date of Interview	Time
Tony	1 Aug 2019	8:00
Annie	2 Aug 2019	9:00
Samantha	5 Aug 2019	9:00
Simone	6 Aug 2019	9:00
Steven	7 Aug 2019	9:00
Patrick	8 Aug 2019	11:00

Checklist

Aspect of Interview	Comments
Date, time and availability confirmed	Confirmed
Venue availability and readiness	Checked ready
Tape recorder, notebook	Check
Informed consent obtained	Check
Declaration obtained	Check
Challenges	Tony, discussions started after switching off tape recorder
Errors, points of bias	None interviewee had full control
Aspects needing clarity, confirmation	These were discussed and confirmed with participant
Second interview/Confirmation	Took place in Nov 2019