

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
School of Education



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

TOPIC: Lecturers' Perspectives on the Failure Rate of Students at a Selected

TVET College

By

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ABSTRACT

TVET college's main purpose was to offer youth training programmes relevant to the needs of the industry. This training aimed to bridge the skills gap in South Africa to curb unemployment and grow the economy.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013b), it was estimated that the sector would have 2.5 million students certified by 2030, and this projection was unfortunately not fulfilled due to the poor performing institution and high drop-out rate (DHET, 2013b). According to DHET (2021), only 9.2 % of students enrolled for NCV level 2 in 2016 completed the qualifications over the three-year expected time frame. The low throughput rates result in small class sizes at later NCV program levels, increasing the cost per student as the same amount of lecturing is required even when classes become smaller (DHET, 2021). The government has allocated billions of rands to grow the TVET sector over the years. Despite the substantial funding, this sector still produces the poor performance of students (Papier, 2009). If this sector does not improve students' academic performance, it will be a poor return on the government's investment.

Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to explore the views of TVET college lecturers on the key factors contributing to the failure rate of NCV students at a selected TVET college in Kwa-Zulu Natal and find possible solutions to help curb the problem of student failure. The college was conveniently selected, and the researcher selected the participants purposively. The qualitative design allowed the researcher to identify themes. Thematic analysis was employed in the data analysis section.

Tinto's Student Integration Model was comprehensively explored. Tinto's (1975, 1993, 1997) Student Integration Model provides useful information on reasons that contribute to learning success. The study revealed several reasons for the high failure rate of students. The findings revealed that TVET college students lack motivation and show very little zeal and commitment towards their studies. Many underachieving school learners are referred to TVET colleges, and they have learning barriers and are not prepared for the NCV programme. Furthermore, the TVET curriculum is overloaded and too theoretical for some learners, while for others, it does not provide further learning opportunities at tertiary institutes. The TVET curriculum is also not

keeping up with current information, current job skills, are not linked to the workplace, and does not provide work opportunities for students. Most TVET students come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and experience financial problems. Absenteeism is also a major problem among students. There is a major challenge with resources for both learners and lecturers. The students do not receive enough academic and social support. The registration process to enroll NCV students is ineffective.

Recommendations are made, including: that DHET extend the duration period for registration so that TVET colleges have more time to properly screen students to attain a better caliber of students. The placement test given at registration should be revised to something more concrete to test student's numeracy and literacy levels. It is recommended that the TVET curriculum be reviewed to provide different routes for learners, one that will be more practically inclined to lead directly into employment and the other creating further learning opportunities into tertiary institutes. The curriculum also needs to be reviewed to be up-to-date and relevant to current job requirements. Student Support should be moved from Central Office to campus based making it more accessible to students and provide the students with various support strategies to enhance pass rates. Finally, all resources available to lecturers and students need to be reviewed and upgraded to improve academic performance.



KEYWORDS

Student failure, lecturer perspectives, student related factors, community related factors, institutional related factors, lack of motivation, registration process, socio-economic status of NCV students, poor class attendance, learning barriers, lack of resources and curriculum challenges.

DECLARATION

I, Abigail Govindasamy, declare that:

- (i) This research report in this dissertation, except where indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other people's data, pictures, graphs, or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late dad, who has given me a head start in life.

He worked hard and made many sacrifices to educate me.

I will be forever grateful for his love and support during my years of growing up.

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First and foremost, I want to take this opportunity to thank my Almighty God, Jesus Christ, who has given me the strength, guidance, and courage and has brought me thus far. My sincere gratitude goes out to my mum for her love, support, and fulfilling some of my duties when I could not. I thank my husband, Clinton, for his continuous love and support and my three beautiful children, William, Hadassah, and Hodaya, who allowed time to be stolen from them to complete my dissertation. I also want to thank my brother, sister, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, relatives, church members, and friends, for their love, prayers, and continuous support. Special thanks go out to my five wonderful colleagues who have taken the time to participate in this research study. I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to my College Rector and Campus Manager for allowing me to conduct this research at our College.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) was introduced in TVET colleges in 2007 with 14 fields of study to respond to the country's economy (DHET, 2021). Students that attend TVET colleges are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)¹. According to Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Higher Education (2018, 2019), the bursary allocation for TVET colleges had increased from R2.4b in 2017 to R5.1b in 2018, and for 2018/2019 an additional R2.5b was made available for student fees, travel, and accommodation allowances (Sowetan, 2018). Despite the substantial funding, Papier (2009) has noted the dissatisfactory results and poor performance of NCV students at TVET colleges. According to DHET (2021), only 9.2% of students enrolled for NCV level 2 in 2016, completed the qualification within the three-year expected timeframe. The low throughput rates result in small class sizes at later NCV programmes, increasing the cost per student as the same amount of lecturing is required even when classes become smaller (DHET, 2021). This study gained lecturers' perspectives on the failure rate of NCV students at a public TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Section 1.2 provides the background and context of the research problem, followed by a literature review in section 1.3. Section 1.4 presents the theoretical framework on student failure used in this study. Section 1.5 describes the research problem and rationale for the study. Section 1.6 discusses the research aim and objectives. Section 1.7 introduces the research question and sub-questions. Section 1.8 discusses the research design and methodology for the study. The population and sample size are discussed in section 1.9, followed by a discussion on the data collection and analysis methods in section 1.10. Section 1.11 briefly discusses the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the research. Section 1.12 points out the limitations of the study. Section 1.13 lists the definitions of terms used in the study. Section 1.14 highlights the significance of the study, and in section 1.15, the subsequent chapters are outlined, followed by the chapter's conclusion in section 1.16.

¹ The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is a South African government student financial aid scheme which provides financial help to undergraduate students to help pay for the cost of their tertiary education after finishing high school. It is funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

After establishing democracy, the South African government-initiated reforms to the apartheid education system. One of the reforms entailed restructuring the then further education and training (FET) college sector and transforming them to provide learners with “high quality, life-long learning opportunities that are essential to social development and economic competitiveness in a rapidly changing world” (DoE, 2001:5). FET education under apartheid leadership was distinguished with inequalities such as inferior quality of programmes offered, poor infrastructure and unequal funding. “Black technical colleges lacked meaningful linkages with industry and were largely disconnected from the local economy,” according to the DoE (1998a). The government was now determined to provide an education system more accessible to previously disadvantaged communities who had limited access to education in South Africa in the past (South Africa, 2008a:38). The South African education and training sector experienced significant transformation in 2002, where 152 technical colleges were merged to form 50 multi-site campuses.

South Africa has experienced a sequence of educational reforms from Vocational Education and Training (VET) to Further Education and Training (FET) and then Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (DHET, 2014). The re-naming of the South African further education and training system was intended for South Africa to be aligned with international practice. Two different programmes are offered at TVET colleges, namely, National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) (Report 191) and National Certification (Vocational) (NCV).

The NATED² programmes consist of 18 months’ theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months’ relevant practical application in workplaces. Engineering studies range from N1 to N6, while Business Studies and Utility Studies range from N4 to N6. The goal of NATED courses is to award students with an N6 Diploma. The admission requirement for Engineering studies is a pass in Grade 9 for N1, Grade 12 pass for N4, and a Grade 12 pass for Business Studies N4. NCV comprises different programmes such as Office Administration (OA), Information

² NATED programmes also known as Report 191 are delivered through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and quality assured by Umalusi. These programmes are offered in both Engineering and Business Studies. Engineering is offered as a trimester course (3 months per level) and Business Studies as semester courses (6 months per level).

Technology (IT), Finance (FEA), Engineering, Tourism, and Hospitality. NCV consists of levels 2, 3, and 4. Level 4 is equivalent to Grade 12. NCV requires a pass in grade 9 to be enrolled, and the course is offered over three years. Each programme consists of seven subjects comprising three fundamental subjects: language (first additional), Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation Skills, and four vocational subjects (DHET, 2007a:6). Students need to pass all seven subjects in each level to receive certification for each level. Both NCV and NATED are overseen by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). This study is focused on the NCV programme.

The main purpose of the TVET sector in South Africa was to offer youth training programmes relevant to the needs of the industry. This training aimed to bridge the skills gap in South Africa to curb unemployment and grow the economy. The NCV curriculum was developed as an alternative to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) to address the shortage of occupational skills. The NCV programme envisaged bridging the skills gap and promoting economic growth by developing the skills of TVET graduates (South Africa, 2006:12). According to a report on the National Review of Academic and Professional Programmes in South Africa (CHE, 2010:41), the NCV programme was initiated to increase technical and cognitive skills and to grow the economy; however, this did not materialise as the programme did not receive support from industry and there was non-implementation of programme delivery instructions.

According to a fact sheet produced by DHET, only 9.2% of students who enrolled for NCV level 2 in 2016 completed the qualification within the expected 3-year time frame, and this is far from the target of 75%, which was set by the National Development Plan (NDP)³ for 2030 (DHET, 2021:8). Since the inception of the NCV programme, pass rates, and throughput rates have been low (Papier, 2009). This study aims to find the reasons for student failure in one TVET college and offer recommendations to improve students' academic performance.

³ The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 is an important policy document of the South African government drafted in August 2012 by the National Commission, a special ministerial body first constituted in 2009 by the then President Jacob Zuma.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

South Africa is struggling with serious socio-economic challenges such as poverty, inequality, and high unemployment rates. “Cross-country comparisons regularly affirm that South Africa’s unemployment rates are among the highest in the world” (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014:1). According to the National Treasury⁴ (2011:11) policy documents, South African youth face high unemployment, which inhibits the country’s economic and social development by imposing a larger burden on the state to provide social assistance. Treasury regards the TVET sector to reduce youth unemployment by absorbing them into skill programmes (Rasool & Mahembe, 2014). DHET also want to make TVET colleges “attractive institutions of choice for school-leavers” (DHET, 2013b: xii). DHET envisioned the NCV curriculum as providing school-leavers with basic skills to enter the workplace. Therefore, TVET colleges play a vital role in skilling youth, creating employment, and reducing poverty. Policy makers in many developing countries also regard technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as having a significant role in economic progress and the quest to ease poverty (Yao, Zhang, Huan, Yang & Shi, 2017, Nwose & Micah, 2017). The TVET sector in most developing countries is anticipated to occupy two essential roles in the national sustainable development: the first role is to offer training opportunities and career advancement opportunities for the increased school leavers, and the second role is to offer a skilled workforce that is needed at all levels of the economy; the skills developed should be able to lead to self-reliance in the shortage of salaried employment and enrich the industrialisation process (Wahba, 2020:1).

The unequal education system during the apartheid era⁵ has resulted in Black South Africans receiving poor quality education and inheriting a low socio-economic status in South Africa. In 1994, when the ANC government came into power, they adopted the National Qualifications Framework⁶, and one of the key principles of this framework was to provide easy access to education and training for Black South African youth. The ANC government-initiated plans to

⁴ The National Treasury is one of the departments of the South African government. The treasury manages national economic policy, prepares the South African government’s annual budget and manages the government’s finances.

⁵ The apartheid era in South African history refers to the time that the National Party (NP) led the country’s white minority government, from 1948 to 1994.

⁶ The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the system that records the credits assigned to each level of learning achievement in a formal way to ensure that the skills and knowledge that have been learnt are recognised throughout the country.

improve access and initiated bursaries through National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for underprivileged and academically deserving students. Naledi Pandor (2007) announced: “As part of our commitment towards improving access to FET by our youth, in 2007 we launched the Department of Education FET Colleges Bursary Scheme. R600 million was set aside by Treasury over three years”. “Despite this substantial funding, the TVET college sector has not delivered on the expectation of becoming institutions of choice and assisting in alleviating the plight of skills shortages in South Africa” (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018:3). “The challenges facing the post-school vocational education system are daunting” (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018:1), who (2018:2) assert further: “A well-functioning post-school vocational education system is a key for school leavers to break out of poverty and inequality and sustain a consistent development trajectory.” The problem is that the government is allocating resources to get students to attend colleges. Little effort has been applied to understand why students fail and drop out of college.

Student failure is not limited to South African TVET colleges but also occurs in other higher education institutes in South Africa. Many researchers (Killen, Marais & Loedolff, 2004; Nyamupangedengu, 2017; Frase & Killen, 2003 & Cross & Carpentier, 2009) have presented studies on student failure in higher education institutes in South Africa. Killen, Marais, and Loedolff’s (2004) research were based on lecturer and students’ perceptions of university success and failure factors. This study aimed to develop guidelines to help students reflect on their perceptions and expectations of their post-school studies to gain more control and become more successful academically. This study also aimed to help lecturers reflect on their expectations of students so that they can be better informed about ways to improve the success of their learners. Nyamupangedengu’s (2017) research paper investigated factors that impacted the success of students in higher education classrooms. Nyamupangedengu (2017) interviewed students to find out what they expected from their lecturers teaching them and discovered that lecturers who are tasked with the responsibility of delivering the curriculum to students could adjust their teaching practices to cater to the diverse student body that exists within the classroom, to ensure the success of students. Fraser and Killen (2003) investigated factors influencing academic success or failure of first-year and senior university students. The purpose of their study was to identify and categorise the post-enrollment factors that lecturers and students see as having important influences on student success. Cross and Carpentier (2009) investigated institutional culture,

student performance, and the challenge of democratisation. The study aimed to unpack how higher education addresses the problems arising from the increased intake of students from the disadvantaged social groups and the insufficiency of results that they achieve, particularly the processes of learners' affiliation to the university culture and the difficulties associated with their academic success or failure.

A few researchers have researched student failure and dropout at TVET colleges (Cain, 2013; Gafoor, 2018; Strumpher, 2018 & Jansen, 2020). Cain (2013) interviewed students to investigate the key factors contributing to the high failure and high dropout rates at a TVET college in the Eastern Cape. Her studies revealed that multiple factors such as finances, accommodation, transport, poor motivation, and lack of commitment caused the high dropout and failure rates. Gafoor (2018) interviewed students to investigate the internal and external factors influencing programme completion among the 2017 NCV Business Studies Level 4 students in the Western Cape. There were four main factors: teaching quality/style, friendly teachers, general social interaction, and friends that influenced students' decision to complete their qualifications. Strumpher (2018) interviewed students in the Western Cape to understand the factors contributing to high dropout rates. The findings revealed that individual learners' finance and social context were the main factors that contributed to students dropping out of college. Jansen (2020) explored the factors that influenced student goals, institutional commitments, social and academic integration, and persistence. The study revealed a correlation between student persistence, student goals, institutional commitment, and academic integration.

Most of these researchers investigated student failure and dropout rates at colleges in other provinces, mostly the Western Cape, and interviewed students to gain insight into student failure and dropout rates. However, this study has investigated student failure at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal and interviewed lecturers to understand student failure.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“The theoretical framework is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research study. It serves as the structure and support for the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the purpose, the literature review, and most

importantly, the methods and analysis” (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12). This study uses Tinto’s (1975, 1993, 1997) Student Integration Model (SIM) as its theoretical framework. Tinto’s framework is the most widely used theory to understand student persistence in education (Karp, Hughes & Gara, 2008; Chryssikos, Ahmed & Ward, 2017).

Tinto’s (1975, 1993, 1997) Student Integration Model provides useful information on reasons that contribute to learning success (Bitzer & Troskie-Bruin, 2004). Tinto proposes that students are most likely to remain in an institution if they become connected to its social and academic life. Students who become integrated into college life by interacting with peers and participating in academic and social activities are most likely to persist in their studies. Students who did not feel comfortable at the institution and felt that it could not help them achieve their goals are less likely to persist at college. Tinto believes that student integration into an educational institute happens on two levels, the academic and the social. Academic integration occurs when students adapt to the academic life of the college, while social integration is when students form interactions outside the classroom environment.

Tinto believes that students are most likely to remain enrolled in an academic institution if they connect to its social and academic life. According to Tinto’s theory, the decision to drop out arises from a combination of student characteristics and the extent of their academic environment, environmental and social integration in an institution. Tinto’s theory was derived from Durkheim’s theory of suicide. According to Durkheim (1961), suicide is more likely to occur when individuals are insufficiently integrated into society (Tinto, 1975). Durkheim believed that if an individual has sufficient social support and moral integration, then that individual is less likely to commit suicide. Similarly, Tinto believes that students do not persist at college because they are insufficiently integrated into college.

Tinto also believes that when students enter the educational institute, they do so with background characteristics. These characteristics are presented in 3 segments: pre-entry attributes, goals or commitments, and formal and informal institutional experiences. Pre-entry attributes of a student (such as family background, skills, abilities, and prior schooling) influence the development of educational expectations and commitments. Goals or commitments show the students’ intentions and external commitment to dropping out of college. When students attend the institution, intentions and external commitments substantially affect the overall goal and

institutional commitments. For the formal and informal aspects of the institutional experiences, academic and non-academic staff are seen as having the power to influence the dropout decision. Positive college experiences increase integration into academic or social systems, whereas negative experiences weaken academic and social integration (Tinto, 1993).

Tinto's Student Integration Model was criticised mainly because it did not accommodate non-traditional⁷ students who did not have the opportunity or time for social integration (Tierney, 2000:1). However, despite the criticism, Tinto's Student Integration Model (SIM) remains the most influential model of student retention (McCubbin, 2003).

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The NCV programme is relatively new and was only introduced in 2007. Not much research has been done in the TVET sector; it has been confined to a small group of researchers (Wedekind, 2009). Poor academic performance at TVET colleges is a problem (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Students failing to graduate from TVET colleges will contribute to the already high youth unemployment in South Africa. In 2019, the estimated youth unemployment rate in South Africa was 54.47 percent (O'Neill, 2021). The main purpose of these colleges was to offer training programmes to the youth to bridge the skills gap, curb unemployment and grow the economy. The government has, over the years, allocated billions of rands to grow the TVET sector. Despite the substantial funding, Papier (2009) has noted the poor performance of NCV students since its inception. The poor pass rate is a cause for concern, and not much research has been done to highlight the poor performance of NCV students at TVET colleges. Therefore, this study sought to obtain lecturers' perspectives on the high failure rate of students to contribute to the existing body of literature.

⁷ A nontraditional student is a term originating in North America, that refers to a category of students at colleges or universities. Non-traditional students refer to socially or educationally disadvantaged students.

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The study aims to explore the perspectives of lectures on the high failure rate of students at a selected TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal.

The objectives of this research study were to:

- Explore lecturers' perspectives on the high failure rate of students at a selected TVET college.
- Understand the perspectives of lecturers on the high failure rate of students at a selected TVET college.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions that focused my research were:

- What are the lecturer's perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?
- Why do lecturers have such perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.8.1 Research Approach

The researcher has chosen to use a qualitative approach. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions or experiences to get in-depth insights into a problem, while quantitative research involves collecting and analyzing numerical data for statistical analysis (Bhandari, 2020). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative research involves interpretative and naturalistic approaches, meaning that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and try to bring meaning to peoples' descriptions of the phenomenon. I interacted with lecturers in their natural setting, which was in the classrooms that they teach in at a TVET college. I wanted to understand as much as possible their perspectives on student failure.

1.8.2 Research Paradigm

According to Kuhn (1997), the term ‘paradigm’ refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. This study adopted the interpretive paradigm, which allowed me as the researcher to become engrossed in the social setting to engage freely with participants in their natural setting, gaining detailed context-based data rather than simulated or artificially created experimental conditions (Cohen et al., 2000).

1.8.3 Research Methodology

The selection of methods is dependent on the aims and objective of the study, the nature of the phenomenon being investigated, and the underlying theory or expectations of the investigator (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I have chosen a qualitative case study methodology. Stake (1995) depicted case study methodology as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a programme, event, activity, process of one or more individuals. For this study, the phenomenon under inquiry was the reason for student failure. The case for the current study was lecturers’ perspectives on student failure at the selected TVET college. The case study approach uses multiple data collection methods such as interviews, document reviews, archival records, participant observation, and ‘thick descriptions’ of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2003). I collected data through in-depth, face-to-face interviews and document interrogation for this study.

1.9 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLE

This study has drawn five lecturers: three lecturers from fundamentals subjects, Mathematics, Life Orientation, and English, and two lecturers from a Vocational subject, Tourism. Purposive sampling was thus employed in this study. According to Rule and John (2011), a researcher cannot consult everyone involved in a case, and can therefore choose people who can illuminate the case. During conversations with lecturers, I made known to lecturers that I was conducting a study and asked if they were available to participate; only a few were available and willing.

Therefore, the sampling was purposive in that the invitations were only sent to lecturers in certain departments who were available and willing to participate.

1.10 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This study used interviews to generate data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) suggest that an interview is not merely a process to ask a specific number of questions to generate data, but a social encounter between a participant and the researcher. Hence, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) advise that the researcher must encourage participants to speak freely about the topic by appropriately probing them to achieve depth in the responses received. In this study, interviews seem to be the most suitable method because they make allowance for asking open-ended questions to a small sample and exploring individual experiences or opinions regarding the research phenomenon. A semi-structured, face-to-face, one-on-one interview was employed in this study. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks participants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions.

After the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted, they were transcribed. Then the interviews were transcribed to perform analysis. For this, the researcher embraced a content (thematic) data analysis approach. According to Anderson (1998), Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. The Thematic Content Analysis was used to supply a thick and rich description of the participants' perspectives on student failure at the selected TVET college in KZN. The analysis method consisted of five steps: transcription, checking, editing, analysis, and interpretation (Sarantakos, 1998).

1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) define trustworthiness as ensuring data quality in qualitative research. Guba (1981) suggests four criteria that qualitative researchers should consider to ensure a trustworthy study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Struwig and Stead (2001) assert that ethical consideration provides researchers with a code of conduct that guides researchers. In this study, various ethical considerations had to be taken: member checking was used, and the participants were given the transcribed interview scripts to check for accuracy.

I ensured that the research conformed to all acceptable ethical norms and standards as a researcher. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from all participants, the campus manager, and the college rector. The information provided by participants was treated with confidentiality, and the identity of the participants was protected. The participants' names were not revealed in the study. Instead, pseudonyms were used.

1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to five participants and one TVET campus. Therefore, results should not be applied to similar contexts or be subjected to generalisation. Another limitation was the data collection. Since information obtained during the interviews depended on the interviewees and what they were willing to share, the nature of the information was limited to their perspectives and lived experiences.

1.13 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Terms are defined next according to how they have been used in the context of this study.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College

This refers to a college that focuses on vocational and occupational education and training intending to prepare students to become functional workers in a skilled trade.

Vocational Education and training (VET)

Refers to teaching of knowledge and training in skills in a specific trade, occupation or vocation the students intend to pursue.

National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV)

The National Certificate (Vocational) was introduced to public TVET colleges in South Africa in 2007.

National Technical Education Diploma (NATED)

NATED courses, also known as Report 191 or N courses, are delivered under the Higher Education and Training department. The programmes consist of 18 months' theoretical studies at colleges and 18 months' relevant practical application in workplaces. Engineering studies range from N1-N6, while Business and Utility Studies range from N4-N6. The goal of the NATED courses is to award the student studying the course with an N6 Diploma.

Lecturers

This refers to the individuals who teach the students' knowledge, skills, and values.

Students

This refers to the learners or people who are studying at the educational institute.

Perspective

This is a way of seeing something.

The failure rate of students

This refers to a process where students lag behind their peers, eventually causing them to fail to meet the course requirements and not progress to a higher level.

The throughput rate of students

This is the rate at which students complete a qualification within the stipulated time frame for that qualification (DHET, 2021).

Drop-out rate

This refers to the percentage of students who did not complete the course.

Academic achievement

Refers to the number of students at an institution whose learning rate meets or exceeds the grade requirements.

Slow learner

Refers to a child who ranks below average in intelligence and significantly slower performance than other children.

Socio-economic status

Refers to a measure of a person's wealth compared to others.

Lack of motivation

When a person does not have a reason, will, or commitment to do something.

Learning barrier

A learning barrier refers to things that hinder learners from effectively achieving learning outcomes.

Curriculum

Refers to what is taught in a course or subject.

1.14 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to understand factors contributing to the high failure rate of students at a selected TVET college through lecturers' perspectives. The findings of the study will inform lecturers, management, policy makers, and DHET to develop or amend policies and strategies to improve pass rates. They will further enhance the educational experience for students and their future role in society.

1.15 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 introduced the topic and provided the background and context to the research problem; it presented the literature review and theoretical framework; the aim and objectives of the study; the research question and sub-questions, research methodology and design; the population and sample size; the data collection tools and approach to analysis; trustworthiness and ethical considerations, and lastly, the limitations and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature related to student failure. The chapter presents the contributions that existing studies have made towards understanding student failure and academic achievement. This chapter also presents the theoretical framework that is used to support the study.

Chapter 3 presents the research design, methodology, and methods used in the study. The types of methods used for data collection and analysis are also discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings, analysed data, and interpretation of findings.

Chapter 5 concludes with a summative analysis of the study and its findings. This chapter also makes conclusions and recommendations.

1.16 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced and gave a brief overview of the study. Chapter one provided an understanding of the research problem within the TVET sector of education, specifically the NCV programme, and the negative impact on the institution and the economy when failing to address the failure rate of students at TVET colleges. This was followed by the aim and objective of the study, the research question, and the research design. Key terms were clarified, and an outline of the structure of the dissertation was given. A comprehensive review of the literature will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provided the background and motivation for this study, and the research problem, research questions, aim, and objectives. This chapter will provide a brief background of TVET colleges in South Africa, and their staffing and students. I will also present the challenges within the TVET sector and existing literature on student failure to understand why students fail, specifically in the South African TVET colleges.

In addition, this chapter presents a theorist view on student failure, which forms the framework of this study.

2.2 BACKGROUND OF TVET COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

To address the research question, it is necessary to have an in-depth understanding of the background of TVET colleges and their theoretical underpinnings. According to (RSA Report (191[97/07])), the Minister of Education, Pandor, announced the implementation dates of the new National Certificates (Vocational) qualifications, levels 2 to 4, and the superseding of the Report 191 (97/07) old technical college programmes per level as from January 2007. The aim was for the old national accredited technical education (NATED) N1 to N3 qualifications to be phased out over three years and the new National Certificates (Vocational) qualification to replace them, starting with level 2, from January 2007 and ending with the implementation of level 4 in 2009.

The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) curriculum offered by TVET colleges was introduced in 2007 to address the skills shortage. The significance of public TVET colleges lies in the contribution they are expected to make to national human resources development⁸ (HRD) through providing intermediate to high-level skills. The TVET sector also has a task to expand access, widen participation and encourage social inclusion in a society identified with

⁸ The main goal of the national human resources development (HRD) is to contribute to human development. The strategies and interventions are designed to respond to economic and social imperatives.

widespread poverty, unequal income distribution, and high unemployment (Fisher, Hall, Jaff & Powell, 2003).

In the 2010 State of the Nation Address⁹, the former president, Jacob Zuma emphasised expanding access to develop a skilled and capable workforce to support growth and job creation. The development of job-related skills is not the sole purpose of TVET colleges: they to create employment, reduce poverty and develop socio-economic equality (Rasool & Mahembe, 2014). Rasool and Mahembe (2014), quoting UNESCO (2012), state that TVET colleges have been linked to the process of industrialisation and economic development. Hence, TVET policies have regularly been influenced by economic and equity perspectives.

According to the National Treasury (2011:11) policy documents, South African youth face high unemployment levels, which inhibit the country's economic and social development by imposing a larger burden on the state to provide social assistance. Rasool and Mahembe (2014) state that Treasury regards the TVET sector as a strategy to reduce youth unemployment by absorbing them into skills programmes. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the TVET sector plays a vital role in skilling youth, creating employment, and reducing poverty. Also, policy makers in many developing countries regard technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as having a significant role in economic progress and the easing of poverty (Yao, Zhang, Huan, Yang & Shi, 2017; Nwose & Micah, 2017).

The TVET sector is used to interface with the constituencies historically excluded from education and training. In democratic South Africa, this sector promotes learning that is accessible and inclusive to all South Africans. The election of President Jacob Zuma in 2009 encouraged a developmental state, and South Africa's new economic policy was committed to the poor by creating job opportunities. Bisschoff and Nkoe (2005) have noted that, according to the Department of Education (DOE., 2001:9), researchers have observed that the previous vocational and technical system was characterised by minimum concern with skills; it was mainly dedicated to the ideologies of apartheid. Therefore, there was the initiation of legislation such as the Further Education Act of 1998, the Skills Development Act of 1998, and the South

⁹ The State of the Nation Address is when the President of South Africa in an annual event, reports on the status of the nation.

African Qualification Authority Act as guidelines for a democratic further education and training system.

Education in South Africa is categorised into three bands: General Education and Training (GET), which caters to primary school education, Further Education and Training (FET), which caters to secondary school education. And Higher Education and Training (HET), consists of education for universities and colleges. TVET colleges were categorised under the FET band, which fell under the Department of Education but was later moved to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The legislative landscape of TVET colleges has undergone significant changes. An amalgamation of 152 technical colleges to 50 non-racialised multi-site colleges took place through a merger process. TVET colleges were formally known as FET colleges and have been renamed TVET colleges.

In 2014, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, announced that all public FET (Further Education and Training) colleges would be renamed TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) colleges. TVET is an international term adapted from the 1999 UNESCO Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul. TVET is viewed as a global educational initiative that focuses on attaining knowledge and skills for the world of work. The new name is also symbolic of moulting the negative images of the old technical college and bringing together educational values that apply to the workplace (McGrath, 2004).

2.3 STUDENTS AT TVET COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The NCV programme was introduced in TVET colleges in 2007 to redress the skills imbalance in South Africa. The new National Curriculum (Vocational) (NCV) was introduced as a general vocational programme that included both academic and vocational subjects. The intention was that these programmes would replace the N-programmes. Many TVET colleges did not fully respond to the government announcing that the old NATED curriculum should be fully phased out (Papier, Powell, McBride & Needham, 2018). Instead, they opted for the co-existence of the old and the new, offering the new NCV full-time and shifting the NATED to part-time classes offered in the afternoons or on the weekends (Buthelezi, 2016).

One of the main criticisms of the NCV has been its confusing admission policies. The programme was originally meant for young people completing Grade 9, but it began to allow and even encourage learners who had finished schooling levels up to the National Senior Certificate (NSC). This led to dissatisfaction among students, many of whom must repeat much of what they have previously covered in the fundamental subjects at school. Furthermore, NCV has led to the emergence of mixed-ability classrooms. The NCV classrooms are full of students at different educational levels and mixed learning abilities (Buthelezi, 2016).

NCV is a three-year qualification offered at levels 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NCV is an alternative vocational learning pathway to Grades 10, 11, and 12. The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) courses span three years and are pegged at level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework. Each level takes a full year of study, and a student must take seven subjects for each level. A student must take three compulsory fundamental subjects: Language, Life Orientation, Mathematics, or Mathematical Literacy. Over and above this, a student takes four vocational subjects chosen from their field of specialisation, which can be Information Technology (IT), Business Studies, Finance Economic Accounting (FEA), Hospitality, Tourism or Engineering. At each level, the student is expected to complete seven subjects. However, most students struggle to pass all seven subjects. The promotional policy allows students to pass in five subjects to proceed with their studies.

TVET colleges attract students mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds (Gamede & Uleanya, 2019). Most NCV students receive bursaries through NSFAS. As amended, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was established in the NSFAS Act (Act56 of 1999). In terms of the Act, NSFAS is responsible for allocating funds to the 50 TVET colleges and administering loans and bursaries to students at these public institutions (Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, 2016). According to Garish (2007), TVET colleges unintentionally attract immature, irresponsible, unmotivated, difficult, demanding, and disruptive students in the classroom. Garish (2007) further states that present-day TVET college students are very young and lack discipline, resulting in very high levels of absenteeism and late arrival for classes. This has put an emotional burden on lecturers.

Furthermore, Mokone (2011) believes that TVET lecturers deal with adolescents rather than young, mature, responsible adults. NCV classrooms consist of mixed ability students because

students arrive with different educational levels, making it difficult for lecturers to deal with different educational levels in the same classroom. Furthermore, it has also led to frustration among students, many of whom must repeat what they previously covered in fundamental subjects at school (DHET, 2012).

Key funding is available by DHET for staff, infrastructure, and student support services to ensure that TVET colleges are responsive. Funding is also sourced from students who do not qualify for subsidies. Other sources of funding are expected to be explored by college managers and should include SETAS and employers (White Paper for POST-School Education and Training, 2013). The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Naledi Pandor, announced that bursary allocation for TVET colleges has increased from R2.437 billion in 2017 to R5.164 billion in 2018. From 2018 to 2019 an additional R2.5 billion will be made available for student fees, including travel and accommodation allowances. TVET colleges generally attract students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. To their advantage, most NCV students receive bursaries.

2.4 LECTURERS AT TVET COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Lecturers represent a crucial role in the TVET college sector in South Africa. Therefore, it is essential to examine their profile. TVET college lecturers in South Africa are heterogeneous concerning their social and educational background.

According to the education statistics for 2015, there were 5088 female lecturers and 5504 male lecturers in government TVET colleges in South Africa (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). In TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal, most lecturers are Zulu speaking, while in the Eastern Cape, most lecturers are Xhosa speaking. Most of the older lecturers at TVET colleges previously worked in the industry, while most newly employed lecturers have educational qualifications.

When the new curriculum (NCV) was introduced in 2007, most lecturers felt inadequately qualified because it was expected to combine theory and practice in their teaching (Buthelezi, 2018). Furthermore, a 2009 audit of TVET colleges in the Eastern Cape discovered that only

38% of lecturers were self-assured in their ability to convey practical skills to learners, while 34% required gaining skills (SAQA, 2016). The government has gazetted a framework for new qualifications which envisages that all lecturers will improve their qualifications.

Previously, some TVET college lecturers were employed by the colleges and became the responsibility of the colleges. A College Council was appointed to approve conditions of employment. Other lecturers and management were appointed and paid by the government and received benefits. Having two different employers created divisions amongst lecturers, as most of the older staff were permanently employed by the state. In contrast, newly appointed lecturers were on council payroll and in contract positions (Buthelezi, 2017). Since April 2015, college-paid staff migrated to DHET.

2.5 CHALLENGES AT TVET COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

A well-established TVET college sector can enhance our students' success and throughput rates. Since 2006, the TVET sector has been through a continuing reformation process to improve infrastructure and curriculum, re-train staff and improve programmes; however, the poor performance of students has not been a good return on the investment (Papier, 2009). The TVET sector needs to be strengthened to provide quality vocational education, but the challenges are unlimited and complicated and need to be observed from different perspectives (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Considering that the challenges are unlimited within the TVET sector, only some key challenges such as partnerships, quality of staff, infrastructure and the curriculum of TVET colleges will be discussed in this section.

2.5.1 Partnerships

Forming partnerships between TVET colleges and industry has made slow progress over the years. Given the lack of urgency to form partnerships, the TVET sector is unaware of the needs of the industry and, therefore, cannot respond to the demands of the industry. This impacts the economic growth in South Africa. Furthermore, when students do not have the skills and knowledge that fit the job, employers become hesitant to employ TVET college students. For students to become employable, they must be exposed to the latest technology, machinery, and

equipment within the workplace (Olojuolawe et al., 2019 & Ryan, 2018). Forming partnerships between TVET colleges and industry can pave the way for colleges to secure work experience for college students during holidays, which could help them gain exposure and experience to become more employable. However, the TVET sector has too few partnerships with businesses and industries, which results in institutions being ill-equipped to respond to the skills requirements of employers and the progression of students into appropriate jobs (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Furthermore, TVET college lecturers are not exposed to first-hand experience at the workplace. They, therefore, cannot pass on workplace knowledge and skills to their students (Lutaaya, 2016 & Smouse, 2018).

2.5.2 Quality of Staff

In South Africa, a constant challenge is that of inequality, poverty, and unemployment. TVET colleges are placed in the most practical position to equip students with employable skills for the work environment, contributing to the country's economic growth. However, to drive this agenda, the TVET sector needs to secure competent and skilled staff to ensure the success of TVET students. Buthelezi (2018) confirms in a study that when the NCV curriculum was introduced in 2007, lecturers felt that they were insufficiently qualified to combine theory and practice in the classroom. Buthelezi (2018) further confirms by citing the statistics for the 2009 audit on TVET colleges done in the Eastern Cape. Only 38% of lecturers were confident in their abilities to convey skills to learners, and 34% were in compelling need of up-skilling. Therefore, an ongoing sense of professional development amongst lecturers should be encouraged to ensure up-to-date knowledge and skills.

As Gewer (2010) expresses, other challenges are that there seem to be inadequate levels of knowledge amongst college management and leadership. Efficient leadership and management are imperative for successful student achievement at TVET colleges. Balkrishen and Mestry (2010) conducted a study on the leadership role of campus managers to improve student achievement in TVET colleges. They found that the campus manager's role at a TVET college is essential because they are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning, which impacts student achievement. Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) further argue that if TVET colleges envision improving student achievement, the campus manager is responsible for not only communicating this vision but also upholding this vision through effective actions such as initiating staff

development, monitoring and evaluating instruction, and ensuring the overall co-ordination of the plans for student achievement.

Furthermore, management is too small at TVET colleges and does not specialise in specific departments to add to this challenge. At the college under study, departments such as hospitality and tourism are managed by one senior lecturer who is a specialist in hospitality; they may not have an interest or knowledge in tourism subjects and may also lack the skills or ideas needed to broaden or support that department. Lack of specialised department heads may impact the quality of support given to staff and students, negatively impacting student achievement.

2.5.3 Infrastructure

According to the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) and the Green Paper for Post-School Education (2012), one of DHET'S priorities was to widen access and increase enrolment of students at public TVET colleges. DHET envisioned an increase of 2.5 million students by 2030. A widened access and increased number of students mean that colleges will face a wide diversity of socio-economic and academic backgrounds. Pather (2015) cites McInnis and James (1995), who point out that higher education institutions may not fully be aware of the growing diversity of students and how this may affect the institution and staff. Pather (2015) further explains that McInnis and James (1995) foresee that institutions may have to deal with higher dropout rates and an increase in low throughput and graduation rates. Pather (2015) argues that this will impact academic staff that will have to be more creative and innovative in their teaching methods to accommodate the diversity of students. This will require more time and resources to prepare sufficiently. This will also impact the lecturer, who must deal with increased class sizes and greater marking loads. Akoojee (2009) states that the funding allocated to the TVET sector is inadequate to cater to the sector's needs, which requires greater resources for a changing labour market. McGrath (2005) asserts that the infrastructure at TVET colleges is out-dated. Currently, at public TVET colleges, the infrastructure is underdeveloped, and resources are scarce, especially in the rural colleges.

Buthelezi (2018) conducted a study regarding challenges at TVET colleges. Her study confirmed a scarcity of furniture, textbooks, libraries, computers, printers, photocopiers, and equipment needed for vocational education. She further explained that the scarcity of resources

was one of the contributing factors to the high failure rate at TVET colleges. Numerous factors within the institution that can encourage student achievement, and the culture of the institution can enhance student persistence. Tinto's (1993) sociological model proposes that higher education institutions consist of academic and social systems and that high levels of integration lead to greater social integration. Tinto (1993) particularly identified that extra-curricular activities would allow students the opportunity to have contact with other students which will lead to integration into college life. Tinto (1993) further explains that the greater the institutional commitment, the greater the chances of student persistence. Badenhorst and Radile (2018) state that according to a DHET report (2011:1), students' academic achievement is likely to occur in an environment where there is support in terms of correct programme choices, proper orientation, and academic support. Another challenge regarding infrastructure, mentioned by Buthelezi (2018), is that a share of the government's funds allocated to TVET colleges has been allegedly mismanaged at the expense of quality education. TVET colleges are expected to deliver quality education and improve pass rates, yet they encounter numerous challenges such as poor and insufficient resources to support students.

2.5.4 Curriculum

There also exist numerous challenges regarding the curriculum at public TVET colleges. The curriculum is said to be the heart of any educational institute and is the vehicle for driving the goals of the government. For a government to achieve its educational goals, it would need a curriculum that is effective and relevant to its needs. TVET colleges were meant to be attractive institutions of choice. Terrablanche (2017) states that DHET assumes that the curriculum at TVET colleges will take on the one-size-fits-all policy and states that TVET cannot be everything to everyone. TVET programmes can be designed in a way that takes at least two paths. The first path can be more skills-based, which will route into employment, while the second path can be more theoretically-based, which will articulate into higher education. The entry requirements into colleges should also be different for the two programmes (Terrablanche, 2017). Many researchers (Buthelezi, 2016; Papier, 2009 and Terrablanche, 2017) who considered the area of TVET curriculum at colleges, found that students often complained that TVET programmes were too theory-based and lacked the practical component, while others who wanted to further their studies felt that there was no clear path into higher education. It was also

found that the TVET curriculum is not responsive to the needs of industry; therefore, TVET colleges fail to secure jobs for TVET students (HSRC, 2010). Furthermore, the White Paper (2013) states that the sole purpose of TVET colleges was to prepare students for the workplace or self-employment, so it is essential that a working relationship be developed between the college and employers in the specialised area of study, so students gain work experience.

Papier (2009) has found that the NCV curriculum is pitched too high, as the long syllabus and too many assessments created an overload of work on students. Papier (2009) further stated that colleges at large attracted poor-performing school students who viewed TVET education as an easier route and were under-prepared for the demand of the NCV curriculum, and the students who enrolled were not the most suitable for these programmes. Students also expected more practical work and less theory and did not expect to do so many subjects. Most TVET colleges accept the criticism that there has been very little articulation between theory and practice (McGrath, 2005).

My perusal of NCV textbooks has shown that the content in the textbooks is also outdated. The textbooks often have dates long gone and refer to something that has already happened as the future. Also, students are learning content that is irrelevant to their field of study. We can refer to Tourism, as an example, as Tourism students do Maths Literacy which is compulsory. There are certain concepts or formulas that a student in the Tourism department learns in Maths Literacy that they will never use in the Tourism industry. For many students, learning mathematics was seen as separate from their vocational learning; however, when learning mathematics was connected to students' vocational development, values, and culture, the subject generally became more relevant, meaningful, and coherent (Dalby & Noyes, 2015). Therefore, students should only be learning Maths Literacy content that is relevant to their field of study. Therefore, curriculum developers need to consider the relevance of subject content when designing the curriculum. Currently, the TVET curriculum is out-dated (McGrath, 2005). The curriculum needs to change as the economies change. The quality and relevance of TVET programmes need to be reviewed to keep up with the needs of the economy, globalization, and the 4th industrial revolution.

2.6 LITERATURE ON STUDENT FAILURE

From the data presented by DHET on the national pass rates, it is evident that TVET colleges are ineffective in managing throughput and retention rates and maintaining a high pass rate (Mdluli, 2017; Zulu & Mutereko, 2020). TVET colleges must design a proposed action to deal with the problem of student failure. This could only be done if the causes of student failure are identified. The causes of student failure will be examined next under four broad categories: student related factors, college related factors, family related factors, and community related factors.

2.6.1 Student Related Factors

According to many researchers, the characteristics of students also affect educational outcomes (Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003). Numerous studies have shown that poor grades, lack of interest in learning subject knowledge, misbehaviour, absenteeism, truancy, lack of motivation, and commitment contribute to academic failure. Many social scientists also confirm a close relationship between student characteristics and academic achievement (Konstantopoulos, 2006 & Merrete, 2006).

Throughout my years of lecturing it has been observed that poor academic achievement is one of the strongest predictors of students failing and dropping out of college. Unfortunately, the new NCV curriculum is pitched at a high standard. Most students who attend TVET colleges are underachieving students from the school sector, who cannot cope and attend TVET colleges because they expected a TVET college to offer more practical work than theory. This is not currently the situation. Tinto (2012) expresses that expectations have a major effect on student achievements. Terblanche (2017) engaged in a study that provides a framework for leading curriculum change affirms that the level of difficulty that the NCV curriculum is pitched at is not correlating with the education level of underachieving school learners. Terblanche (2017) further states that the TVET programmes do not cater to the intended students' diverse needs, aptitudes, and backgrounds. Students who encounter academic difficulties eventually drop out of college.

Many researchers have confirmed that students who become disinterested and have disciplinary issues are likely candidates for drop-out and failure. Mdluli (2017), who conducted a study based on dropout rates at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal, states that some of the disciplinary

problems were high rates of absenteeism, poor classroom behavior, and bad relations with teachers and peers. According to Schoen (2018), in a study explaining Jewish student failure, it was observed by the researcher, teachers, and parents that disrespectful and disruptive behaviour affected learning areas. It has been noted at the TVET college under study that chronic absenteeism is also another factor that contributes to the high failure rate. Ramodike (2009) investigated student absenteeism at a TVET college and concluded that students who are often absent are at risk of failing. Papier (2009) mentioned that a lack of finances could cause student absence; however, financial pressure is not a serious concern among NCV students. These students are supported by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). There is extensive literature that establishes a link between student absenteeism and academic failure. Williams (2000) and Jansen (2000) have confirmed that students who get absent regularly suffer academically.

There is ample evidence in the literature that suggests a strong correlation between motivation, commitment, persistence, self-discipline, and academic success (Killen, 1994; Tinto, 1993; Paris & Turner, 2012; Gaertner & McClarty, 2015). When students are motivated and committed to studying, they have self-discipline, which leads to student persistence for academic success against all odds. Unfortunately, at TVET colleges in South Africa, very few students are self-disciplined and motivated to learn. Most students who attend TVET colleges could not cope with main-stream schooling and enroll for NCV, thinking it is an easier career path. Pitcher (2012) has identified that students who usually fail, do not comprehend that the quantity and quality of work required are much higher than anticipated, so more effort is required to ensure academic success. In Badenhorst and Radile (2018), research findings emerged that lecturers agreed that low levels of motivation were the dominant source in student failure. The absence of motivation leads to reluctance to learn, attend class and focus on their studies.

2.6.2 Family Related Factors

The family environment in my research relates to family structure, parents' education levels, and the family's socio-economic status. According to Onder's (2016) research, it was found that a common reason for student failure in the context of the family was the lack of parental academic support and the absence of an appropriate study environment. Other contributing factors to the

failure rate were causes such as the low socioeconomic levels of the family, broken family structure, and a general disinterest in education.

Tinto's theory (1993) on social and academic integration is the most referred to in student retention studies. There are variables such as a family background in this theory that promote students' academic and social integration in higher education. In South Africa, students who enter TVET colleges come from extreme inequality in race, class, and socio-economic resources. Due to these unfavourable circumstances, these students are not well integrated into colleges' social and academic environment, contributing to students failing and dropping out of college.

At the college under study, it was noted that students who attend this college generally come from single parent backgrounds, have no parents, live with grandparents or extended family members, or live away from their hometowns due to their studies. There is no proper family structure in this college environment, so parental involvement is strongly absent. One of the key factors that play a role in a student's well-being and academic success is the family structure (Thompson, 2013). It was found in a study by Pather et al. (2017) that family played a remarkable role in providing support to first generation students. First generation students are those who are the first members of their family to attend higher education. In their studies (Pather et al., 2017), the statistics revealed that mothers who motivated their children to attend higher education institutions also motivated them before tests were written and encouraged their children to pursue their studies once they were enrolled.

Literature indicates that parents who have low attainment of education levels contribute to student failure because students do not receive the motivation and support from parents (Clark, 2015). Parents who have high education levels are most likely to have a high personal drive and determination. These positive attributes will carry over to their children (Jeynes, 2005). These parents are also most likely to recognise the positive link between parent support and academic success and ensure that their children's support is given to monitoring if homework is done, making class visits with educators, and providing the needed resources to attain academic success.

Most students that attend TVET colleges come from disadvantaged family backgrounds. Three theorists, Spady (1970), Tinto (1975), and Bean (1980), have confirmed that family background is a contributing factor in the academic success of students. Students who come from single parented homes or low-income families are faced with the challenge that these parents are subjected to under-employment or work longer hours to make a living (Jeynes, 2005). According to Dixon (1994) and Juliusdottir (1997), single parents, mainly those from poor homes, worked more hours, reducing their presence at home, causing a decrease in parent participation in their children's education. Furthermore, many researchers have investigated the impact of a family's income and economic status and the positive outcomes to educational attainment. According to Jeynes (2005), increased income levels lead to more educational resources in homes like books and computers, assisting in higher educational attainment. Raftu's (2017) study also found that poor economic situations of families play a significant role in absenteeism and dropping out.

It can be concluded that parental involvement in student studies, high attainment of parent education levels and high-income levels all provide a positive environment for a student to be motivated and thrive to reach their full potential.

2.6.3 Community Related Factors

Community refers to a group of people living in the same place or having a characteristic in common.

It has been widely stated that it takes a community to raise a child. The community has a significant role and makes a difference in the quality of education a child receives. Many researchers (Kapur, 2018; Nash, 2002; Bouen & Bouen, 1999 & Alam, 2015) have confirmed that community factors play a role in student achievement. Community factors such as the community's geographic location, environment, and resources, will be discussed and their effects on student achievement.

Most students that attend TVET colleges are from African communities. These communities are mainly situated in suburbs or rural areas. These areas often lack basic infrastructure development. The problem related to infrastructure was inherited from the apartheid era.

Although it has been 27 years since apartheid ended, many areas still suffer from significant infrastructural inadequacies in electricity, water, and sanitation facilities.

Furthermore, students that attend schools in these poorer communities are faced with the challenge of large classes. Having many students in one classroom is referred to as congestion (Kapur, 2018). Kapur (2018) further states that classroom congestion serves as a disadvantage in students' academic performance. Students from economically disadvantaged and under-resourced communities do not have the opportunity to receive an education similar in quality to that received by children in wealthier communities.

A range of factors emerges outside the school environment that places the student at risk of academic failure (Nash, 2002). Many activities can occur within a child's community to create a child's positive or negative learning environment. Many students who attend the TVET college under study come from communities rife in crime, rape, violence, and substance abuse. Students subjected to these negative acts impede their psychological approach and develop fear and apprehensiveness in going out of their houses and communicating with others (Kapur, 2018). Students exposed to such acts are hindered in their concentration on their studies and are unable to achieve positive learning outcomes. High levels of neighbourhood crime impede a student's sense of school coherence (Nash, 2002). Bouen and Bouen (1999) affirm that research suggests that living in a neighbourhood with a high level of crime is linked with poor academic and behavioural outcomes at school. Alam (2015) conducted a study on the effect of community factors on primary school learners' achievement in rural Bangladesh. In this study, parents reported that naughty and uneducated children in the community negatively influenced their studies because they tend to learn from other children and adults. For students to have the desired educational outcomes, creating a community with which they can be associated is necessary.

A relationship between the community and the college should always be encouraged to enhance student achievement. Communities must be eager to extend support to colleges, and colleges must welcome this support.

2.6.4 Institutional Related Factors

If many student's complete college, then the institution is evaluated as efficient (Alfred, 1973). Many factors within the institution can determine a student's success. Tinto (1993) believes that the more the student is academically and socially integrated into the institution, the greater the commitment would be on the part of the student in completing their studies. There are various ways in which a college can engage to help integrate the student into college life.

There should be a decent amount of resources and facilities available to support teaching and learning. The college library can be considered one of the most important resources within the educational institution. At the college under study, a library is not available to students and this could serve as a major disadvantage to the student's learning process. In their study, Pather et al. (2017) found that students made ample use of the library facilities, especially the internet at the library. A library can also be considered a learning space for students, where students surf the net for information, engage with books and meet with peers to study. Literature reveals that students who form study groups with peers actively engage in their learning collaboratively outside the classroom (Hodges, 2018). Other resources such as textbooks and stationery should be delivered on time, and there should be an adequate number of computer labs and workshops for the skills-driven courses. In Badenhorst and Radile's (2018) study, students expressed their concern about the non-availability of some critical resources needed for practical work. Lecturers also need to be provided with adequate resources such as photocopiers, projectors, and stationery to efficiently teach and learn. The provision of these resources can enhance positive learning outcomes. When lecturers and learners are provided with the necessary tools, they will perform their tasks more effectively.

To add to resources, one of the most valuable resources a college could have, is a well-grounded lecturer with a high work ethic. Colleges need to ensure that they employ lecturers that are best suited and most able to enhance student performance. There are certain characteristics that lecturers need to possess, such as the ability to lead, be approachable, caring, possess sufficient subject knowledge, and engage in a wide variety of lecturing methods to enhance learning. Klar (2012) observed that lecturing involves much more than knowledge and desire to lecture; it also involves a firm understanding of motivational techniques, leadership and conflict resolution skills, human psychology, and the capability to think on one's feet. In their study, Pather et al.

(2017) confirmed that a lecturer promoted a supportive environment that resulted in a positive student-lecturer engagement experience.

There are large numbers of underdeveloped students who enrol at TVET colleges. According to Badenhorst and Radile (2018), there are no definite enrolment criteria for the admission of students at TVET colleges. Instead, colleges depend on the national admission policy, which permits students from different school grades resulting in different levels of academic readiness. Students do a placement test before enrolment during the registration process at the college under study, but if students fail, they are still enrolled. Due to time constraints, such as only one week is assigned for registration, according to the academic calendar that DHET generates, there is not enough time to properly screen students as specific numbers are given by DHET for all courses offered by the college. Tinto (1987) asserts that institutions that set low standards and accept large students are setting themselves up for high dropout rates.

Furthermore, registered students have English as their second language, and they struggle in class because the medium of instruction takes place in English. According to Papier (2009), who investigated the factors that contributed to the poor performance of students at TVET colleges, students find English as the language of instruction difficult, as it is not their first language. In general, South Africa is known for its low proficiency scores in Maths and English (Howie, 2003; Graven, 2014). Colleges can assist learners in the form of remedial classes in English, Maths and reading. Reading clubs can also be encouraged, so a culture of reading is encouraged. Literature has revealed that remedial¹⁰ support enhances learner performance.

Stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, and fear can hinder a student's learning. Most TVET students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and they would be the ones most likely to have been exposed to or have experienced these factors. It will be in their best interests to provide support such as counselling and guidance to ensure that no underlying aspects contribute to their poor performance. When students have a healthy body and mind, they will be able to contribute a vital role in learning (Kapur, 2018). Counselling can be initiated to facilitate student achievement, improve student attendance and behaviour and help students develop socially. It is also the institution's responsibility to provide a deep understanding of how to effectively use the

¹⁰ Remedial support intends to correct areas of learning where it is needed the most. The main aim is to provide a remedy for learner difficulties.

counselling services for their development. Ryan (2007) researched to obtain the school counsellor's perspective on raising achievement with adolescents in secondary education. She found out that counsellors played an active role in raising academic achievement by improving student attendance. These counsellors worked with students and their families to discover the underlying emotional and psychological causes of absenteeism and truanting. Counsellors were also able to help students who suffered the loss of family members, anger issues, and ADHD. Ryan (2007) concluded that counsellors present at schools were able to raise achievement through counselling intervention.

Recently, there has been an increasing focus on students who are underachieving academically. High failure and dropout rates should be a cause for concern in any educational institution since they will contribute to the large numbers of unskilled and unemployed people in South Africa. Management is positioned in educational institutions to take accountability and responsibility to produce positive learning outcomes. Effective academic leadership has been well documented in the literature (Nettles & Herrington, 2007; Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Holloway, 2004; Leithwood, 1992). Management in TVET colleges must work collaboratively with administrators and lecturers to establish and monitor clear goals regarding pass rates to effectively increase learning and achievement.

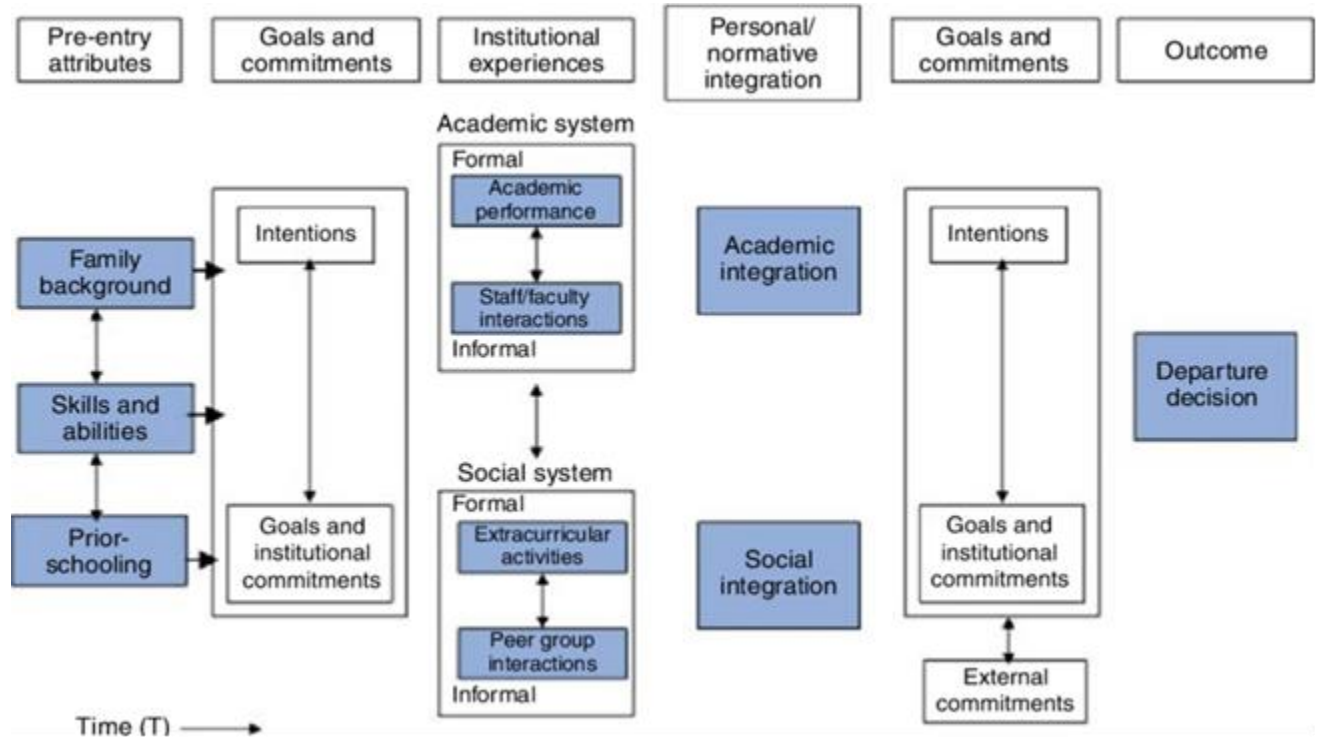
2.7 CONCLUSION

This section has examined student failure under four broad categories: student-related factors, college-related factors, family-related factors, and community-related factors. It can be concluded that the causes of academic failure are myriad and often multiple within individual students struggling academically.

In the next section, I discuss the theoretical framework that has guided this study.

2.8 TINTO'S INTEGRATION MODEL

Tinto's revised model of student attrition



One of the most popular theoretical perspectives regarding student success and retention is Tinto's Integration Model. This study draws on the theoretical observation of Tinto (1975, 1993).

Tinto believes that students are most likely to be enrolled in an academic institution if they become connected to the social and academic life. According to Tinto's theory, the decision to drop out arises from a combination of student characteristics and the extent of their academic environment, environmental and social integration in an institution. Tinto's theory on dropout rates and reasons was derived from Durkheim's theory of suicide. According to Durkheim (1961), suicide is more likely to occur when individuals are insufficiently integrated into society (Tinto, 1975). Durkheim believed that if an individual has sufficient social support and moral

integration, then that individual is less likely to commit suicide. Similarly, Tinto believes that students drop out of college because they are insufficiently integrated into college life. Tinto's Model of Integration was not exclusively based on Durkheim's model of suicide because he acknowledged that a person could commit suicide because of individual psychological traits.

The first segment of Tinto's revised Student Integration Model (1993), is labelled pre-entry attributes of a student (such as family background, skills, abilities, and prior schooling). According to Tinto's theory, students drop out of college because of a combination of student characteristics and the extent of their academic, environmental and social integration in an institution. These characteristics and individual attributes also influence the development of educational expectations and commitments. Tinto explained that the background traits and individual commitments guide how well students perform and become integrated into the academic and social systems. Hence, the greater the student's social and academic integration level, the greater the commitment to the institution and the goal of college completion.

The second segment of Tinto's model, labelled goals or commitments, shows the students' intentions and external commitment to dropping out of college. When the student attends the institution, intentions and external commitments substantially affect the overall goal and institutional commitments. The first two segments of the model denote the student's characteristics at the time of entry and the student's stance regarding intentions and motivational factors. These characteristics and dynamics prepare the student to respond to experiences they may encounter at the institution (Connolly, 2016). The second segment of the model also acknowledges that external commitments to others and entities outside of the institution (e.g. family and friends) affect college time. The external commitments can either have a positive or negative influence on the student's goals and commitments and interactions with the institution and, ultimately, their drop out decision (Tinto, 1993).

The third segment of Tinto's model includes formal and informal aspects of institutional experiences and the effect of academic and social systems. Academic and non-academic staff are both seen as having the power to influence the drop out decision. The external community, made up of individuals or entities with which the student interacts, is a factor over time (Tinto, 1993). Positive college experiences tend to increase integration into the academic or social systems, whereas negative experiences weaken academic and social integration (Tinto, 1993).

Tinto recommends that institutions remain committed to their educational purpose and mission to help prevent drop out.

Critiques have argued that social and academic integration do not act as reliable indicators for persistence rates among non-traditional students such as distance learning students, mature students, returning students, and minority students (African-American students, as well as Native Americans, Asian Americans and Latinos) (McCubbin, 2003). Despite its critics, Tinto's Integration Model remains the most influential model of student persistence (McCubbin, 2003).

This study has considered the significance of students' pre-entry attributes, goal commitments, external communities, and institutional and personal factors that have all influenced their academic achievements at the selected TVET college. Tinto's Student Integration Model (1993) shapes the basis of this study because, firstly, it lays the groundwork for research on student success and persistence in college. Secondly, its methodological approach to student success and persistence is broad-based, focusing on individual characteristics before entering college, the students' experience upon entering the college, and external factors that interfere with students' academic performance.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the literature regarding student failure with specific reference to TVET colleges. The researcher has used both national and international literature to discuss the concept of student failure. Retention theory by Vincent Tinto was also analysed. This theory assisted in the study's investigation of student failure. The next chapter focuses on this study's research methodology and design.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on student failure to gain a broader insight into the perspectives regarding this phenomenon, specifically in a South African public TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal.

My study aimed to understand the lecturer's perspectives as to why students fail. The main research questions that focussed the research were:

- What are the lecturer's perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?
- Why do lecturers have such perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?

This chapter explores the research methodology under the following sub-headings: research approach, research paradigm, research style, data generation, sampling, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and limitations.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Cresswell (2014) highlights three general approaches for a research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative research is an inquiry to understand a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words that are reported and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 1994). Quantitative research is an inquiry into a social problem by gathering numerical data analysed mathematically (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Mixed methods are when the researcher collects and analyses data using qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The researcher has chosen to use a qualitative approach.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative research involves interpretative and naturalistic approaches, meaning that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings and try to bring meaning to peoples' descriptions of the phenomenon. I interacted with lecturers in their

natural setting, which was in the classrooms that they teach in at a TVET college. I wanted to understand as much as possible their perspectives on student failure.

Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship between variables (Creswell, 2012). In the quantitative approach, the researcher is distant and independent of what is being researched, and the researcher's values do not interfere or become part of the research. The quantitative approach was not deemed suitable for this study because, as the researcher, I was actively involved in generating data. Furthermore, I am a staff member at the research site. Hence, I was involved in the entire research process.

A qualitative research design was selected for this study because it contains aspects that allow the researcher to obtain thick descriptions and in-depth information to understand its phenomenon better. Barbie and Mouton (2001) assert that qualitative research is different from quantitative research because it is conducted in a natural setting of social occurrences and focuses on process rather than the outcome. Its aim is in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events. Qualitative researchers are very interested in understanding the issues being researched from the perspective of the research participants. In other words, you are trying to see through the eyes of the participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001). By utilising this method, more emphasis is placed on the participants' perspectives and descriptions of events, beliefs, and behaviours. Participants are thus allowed to expand on statements given and provide a more thorough explanation. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that qualitative research is seen as a civic responsibility and brings needed societal change. Civic responsibility means to be active participants in the public life of a community in an informed, committed and constructive manner. Qualitative researchers can be allowed to change society by engaging with the research process to provide evidence to effect change in the curriculum, teaching methods, classroom, educational institutes, and beyond. As a researcher, I wanted to gain the participants' perspectives relating to the failure rate of students to bring the needed change at the educational institute where I teach and to society as a whole.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Kuhn (1977), the term ‘paradigm’ refers to a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. Hence, a paradigm implies a pattern, structure, framework, or system of scientific and academic ideas, values, and assumptions (Olsen, Lodwick, & Dunlop, 1992). Furthermore, a paradigm can be described as a lens through which a researcher can view a study. Research paradigm differs concerning their ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology deals with the essence of reality; epistemology is concerned with what constitutes knowledge, and methodology deals with the methods used to acquire knowledge (Krauss, 2005). There are several different paradigms, each unique ontological and epistemology perspective. Gephart (1999) classified research paradigms into three distinct categories as positivism, critical and interpretive paradigm.

The positivist paradigm assumes that society can and should be structured empirically and scientifically. Researchers in this paradigm forsake their preconceptions and values in pursuit of objective, empirical and knowable truth. The positivist paradigm assumes that there can only be one reality that is objective and knowable. The assumption is that there can be a distance between the researcher and what is being researched, thus allowing the researcher to hold an objective position. The aim of this research paradigm requires describing and analysing reality (Krauss, 2005). The view of positivists is that all things can be measured, and it tends to ignore unexplained phenomena (Sekaran & Bougie, 2014). Given this, positivism as a research view is not adequate to gain the perspectives of lecturers on the failure rate of students in a public TVET college. The lecturers were freely allowed to express themselves concerning the research phenomena. Furthermore, the positivist approach is not suited to this study because the researcher in this paradigm remains distant from the object of study and focuses on experimental and quantitative methods. This study adopted the interpretive paradigm, which allowed me as the researcher to become engrossed in the social setting to engage freely with participants in their natural setting, gaining detailed context-based data rather than in simulated or artificially created experimental conditions (Cohen et al., 2000).

Unlike the positivist paradigm, the critical paradigm posits that research cannot be truly objective and aims to address political, economic, and social issues related to conflict, oppression,

struggle, and power (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). There is the interaction between the researcher and what is being researched, and the values of the researcher inevitably influence the research. This research aims to social transformation that will benefit those who have little power (Usher 1996). The critical paradigm studies power imbalances and seeks to change them to emancipate them. This study adopted an anti- critical viewpoint because, as a researcher, it was important for me not to impose my interpretation on the participants but rather understand their interpretations and meanings of the given context. An interpretive approach was suitable for this study as it aims to understand the research phenomenon by interpreting the meanings that participants express. The advantages of interpretivism are well noted. It provides an opportunity for the participants to express themselves without any limitations; therefore, it is the most suitable paradigm for this study.

Interpretivism assumes that reality is not objectively determined, but socially constructed. In this paradigm, the underlying assumption is that by placing people in their social contexts, there is a greater opportunity to understand their perspectives of their activities. Interpretivism pays attention to what people say, do, and feel and how they make meaning of the phenomena being researched. Patterns, trends, and themes emerge from the research process, and the role of the researcher should be to understand real-life situations from the view of the participants. As Neuman (1991) argued, this paradigm aims, are to develop a greater understanding of how people make sense of their worlds. In this paradigm, the researcher is involved in every step of the research process. There can be no separation between the researcher and what is being researched, which is befitting for this study because the researcher was an active participant.

As an active participant in the research process, I managed every process, from collecting data to analysing it. When interviewing the participants, we felt comfortable with each other, and I could probe into the discussions for greater meaning because they were my colleagues; I understood and could relate to what they were saying because I also work in the same environment and teach the same students. This impacted the research because I could easily understand and interpret the data and write about it.

3.4 RESEARCH STYLE

The researcher has chosen a qualitative case study methodology. Several renowned researchers, the most well-known of whom are Yin (2009), Stake (1995), and Merriam (1998), have written extensively about case study research and have recommended techniques for systematising and managing research successfully. This research was mainly influenced by definitions offered by recent case study methodologists Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), and Yin (2009).

The research design for this study is a descriptive and interpretive case study that is analysed through qualitative methods. In a descriptive and interpretive case study, the researcher analyses, interprets and theorises about the phenomenon against the backdrop of a theoretical framework. Merriam (1998) states that qualitative case studies in education are often outlined with concepts, models, and theories. The framework established in this study promotes evaluating participants' perspectives. Findings were examined concerning existing knowledge to reveal how the present study has expanded the knowledge base.

Stake (1995) depicted case study methodology as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using various data collection procedures over a continued period. For this study, the phenomenon under inquiry was the reason for student failure. The case for the current study was lecturers' perspectives on student failure at a selected TVET college. The case study approach used multiple data collection methods such as interviews, document reviews, archival records, participant observation, and 'thick descriptions' of the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2003). I collected data through in-depth, face-to-face interviews and document interrogation for this study. Interviews were conducted and recorded. The data was then reviewed and coded for emergent themes. Another component of a case study is the unit of analysis, defined as the area of focus of the study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). For this study, the unit of analysis was the selected TVET college chosen to participate in the study.

Yin (2009) names five components of effective case study research design: (1) research questions; (2) proposition or purpose of the study; (3) unit analysis; (4) logic that links data to propositions. And (5) criteria for interpreting findings. The most appropriate questions for this

qualitative case study research were ‘how’ and ‘why’ forms of questions. I specifically asked participants why they think students fail and how the pass rate could be improved to collect data.

The second component of case study research design is to outline the study purpose clearly. This component is generally recognised as the purpose statement. My purpose in this case study was to understand the perspectives of lecturers on student failure and why students at that particular TVET college fail.

The third component of the case study research design is the unit analysis. Yin (2009) explained the unit of analysis as the area of focus that a case study analyses. Yin made known that an appropriate unit of analysis occurs when primary research is accurately specified. The unit of analysis is directly tied to the research questions developed by the researcher. This study’s unit of analysis, per Merriam (1998), is the selected TVET college in an urban area in KwaZulu-Natal.

The fourth component of case study research design connects data to propositions. This connection is made following the data collection phase as themes emerge. As data is analysed, the researcher attempts to match patterns that appear in the data to the theoretical propositions of the case study. The themes that emerged in this study thus served as answers to the research questions.

The fifth component of case study design is the criteria for interpreting findings. Generally, the case study researcher codes the data before developing themes (Yin, 2009). Following the theme development stage, I carefully extracted meaning from the findings to determine recommendations for practice and future research.

Yin (2009) discusses four arguments against the case study approach. First, case studies are criticised for inadequate rigour. The researcher has failed to follow systematic procedures in conducting the study, or whether the researcher has permitted some bias to influence how the data and findings are interpreted. The second criticism of the case study approach is that the small number of subjects provides little basis for scientific generalisations. This study is limited to one TVET college campus, which provides limited opportunities for generalisations. Third, case studies are seen as lengthy, time-consuming, and challenging ventures that produce large amounts of documentation. Data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed as soon as it

was collected to ensure that the data was managed and organised systematically. Fourth, case studies are criticised for being unable to directly address causal relationships. As an objective of the study was to understand the perspectives of lecturers, it did not seek to establish any causal relationships.

Given the interpretive position adopted in this research and the nature of the research question, the case study methodology was considered the most appropriate approach to employ because it provides a systematic way to collect data, analyse information, and reports the results, thus understanding a particular problem or situation in great depth from a variety of participants' perspectives. Case studies do not claim to be representative, but the emphasis is on what can be learned from a single case (Trellis, 1997). There was no attempt to generalise the findings, bearing in mind a statement by Scott (2009) that qualitative data cannot be generalisable. Hence this study is in a specific context under specific conditions. I am using a case study because my aim is not to generalise the results from this study, to say that all lecturers from all TVET colleges think along the same lines. I thus looked at a selected TVET college.

3.5 DATA GENERATION

Data generation refers to the theory and methods used by researchers to create data.

3.5.1 Data Method

A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure and analyse data related to the researcher's interest. This includes questionnaires, interviews, observation, and reading. This study used interviews only to generate data. From the researcher's perspective, this data generation method was the most appropriate in eliciting the lecturers' perspectives on student failure at the selected TVET college.

3.5.2 Interviews

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) suggest that an interview is not merely a process to ask a specific number of questions to generate data but a social encounter between a participant and the researcher. Hence, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) advise that the researcher must encourage participants to speak freely about the topic by appropriately probing them to achieve

depth in the responses received. The interviews provided spaces for participants to speak in detail about their understandings and experiences of student failure. In this study, interviews seemed to be the most suitable method because they make allowance for asking open-ended questions to a small sample and exploring individual experiences or opinions regarding the research phenomenon. Potter (1996) argues that interviews are valuable tools for collecting data in qualitative research. A one-on-one interview method allows the researcher to interact with the participants and to observe non-verbal cues during the interview process. The interview method allows the researcher to seek clarity and probe a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. Interviews vary in their degree of structure. In this study, a semi-structured, one-on-one interview was employed. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks participants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions.

In this study, the semi-structured interview seemed most appropriate. As Pole and Lampard (2002) described, a semi-structured interview is a suitable method because it composes an interview guide that helps to keep focus during the interview. Kumar (2005) describes semi-structured interviews as an in-depth, face-to-face encounter between the researcher and an informant directed at understanding the informants' perspective of their life experiences or situations as expressed in their own words. Furthermore, these structuring features ensures that important theoretical issues are covered during the interview. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data directly from participants. The researcher designed an interview schedule with mostly open-ended questions to encourage a conversational style to gain insight into the participant's views and ideas on student failure. The first few questions of the interview consisted of general questions to confirm the demographics and suitability of the participant. The rest of the questions were directed toward understanding the participants' perspectives on student failure at the selected TVET college. Cresswell (2014) states that a qualitative interview occurs when the researcher asks participants general, open-ended questions to ensure that participants can voice their opinions without any limitations.

The interview venue was private, free of disruption, and conducive to generating genuine participants' responses. I prearranged individual interview dates and times with participants, considering their availability and convenience. I warmly welcomed each participant and

conducted the interviews relaxed, conversational, non-intrusive, sensitive, and appropriate manner. I earnestly appealed to the participants to display honesty in their responses, as they would not be judged or treated shamefully by a public display of the data. I provided the participants with ample time to reflect upon the questions asked, gather their thoughts, respond or seek clarity on issues they felt were difficult to understand. During the interview, I attempted to create a comfortable atmosphere to provide participants with the opportunity to answer the questions without feeling coerced by me or being fearful of my presence. I was pleased to note that the participants openly and willingly shared their experiences with me. It indicated that they trusted me and valued the opportunity to talk about their experiences.

After the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted, they were transcribed. I took each interview transcript back to each participant (face-to-face) as a validity check to review and validate that they made those comments; it was also an opportunity for them to add or retract comments that they made previously. This process aimed to gather additional information that the participant may have left out during the interview. All the participants validated that I correctly transcribed the interviews, and none of them chose to add or remove any of the responses.

3. 6 SAMPLING

There are many methods to conduct sampling. Qualitative researchers usually focus on relatively small samples (Lyell, 1998). Generally, participants are selected because they can provide detailed descriptions of their experiences, providing information that will enrich the researchers' understanding of the study undertaken (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, Hutchinson & Wilson, 1991).

3.6.1 Research Population

The population can be explained as a comprehensive group of individuals, institutions, or objects of interest to the researcher and meet the researcher's criteria. In this case, the lecturers' perspectives were central to my research. Generally, education scholars note the powerful benefits of having educators' voices at the table when education policy is being discussed, both

for educators and the education system as a whole (Pennington, 2013). The lecturers' perspectives were valuable, and they played a central role in this study.

3.6.2 Sampling Procedure

The selection of a sampling strategy is governed by the criteria of suitability or fitness for purpose, which should serve the purpose of the research and the methodology, if validity is to be obtained (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The sample population for this study was selected because the participants all had something in common. They were all lecturers at the study site, and had first-hand experiences with students. These lecturers have been teaching TVET students for several years, have engaged with students personally, and know student challenges. Purposive sampling was employed in this study. According to Rule and John (2011), a researcher cannot consult everyone involved in a case, and the researcher has to choose people who can assist in illuminating the case. Purposive sampling was used to select lecturers.

3.6.3 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their judgement when choosing members of the population to participate in their study. This sampling method requires researchers to have prior knowledge about their studies to choose suitable participants (Foley, 2018).

3.6.4 Participant Selection

The study drew five lecturers for participation: three lecturers from fundamental subjects: Mathematics, Life Orientation, and English, and two lecturers from a vocational subject, namely, Tourism. Barbie and Mouton (2006) assert that it is not always possible to sample everyone relevant to the studied social phenomenon. With purposive sampling, lecturers who participated in individual interviews were sent invitations to participate. During conversations with lecturers, I made known to lecturers that I was conducting a study and asked lecturers if they were available to participate; only a few were available and willing. Therefore, the sampling was purposive in that the invitations were only sent to lecturers in certain departments who were available and willing to participate.

3.6.5 Demographics of the lecturers interviewed

Five lecturers were interviewed. One was male, and the other four were female. Three lecturers taught fundamental subjects, and two taught vocational subjects. Pseudonyms are used for each participant.

Lethabo

Lethabo is male and a father of three children. He was born and raised in a small village outside Vryheid. He matriculated in 2005. He went to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where he obtained a BA degree in Tourism and Politics. Later, he earned a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing Management at the University of Cape Town. He enjoys travelling. He loves teaching. He is a ballroom dancer/coach and Kyukushinkai Karateka.

Zendaya

Zendaya is a female of 46 years of age and the mother of two children. She was born in an Indian township, Chatsworth. She studied at the former University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree (BA), then studied for a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE). Later, she achieved a Postgraduate Diploma in Tourism Management at UNISA. She has taught for twenty years in South Africa and three years in London. She loves yoga, dancing, travelling, and spending time with family and friends. Teaching has chosen her, because she follows in the footsteps of the generation of teachers in her family. Teaching gives her a purpose and is her passion. She enjoys inspiring and uplifting learners for the betterment of South Africa.

Makena

Makena is 53 years old and a mother of three kids. She also has one grandchild and enjoys spending time with her. She grew up in Mariannhill and still lives there. She achieved a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree from Walter Sisulu University. She has 25 years of teaching experience. She loves travelling and has a passion for teaching. She regularly attends church and enjoys socialising with friends in her spare time. She pursued a career in education because of her love for children and she wanted to make a difference in the lives of the younger generation.

Omari

Omari is 44 years old and a mother of 2 children. She was born in a little town in iTtongati in KwaZulu-Natal. She studied for her first degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA) as it was correspondence hence allowing her to work while studying. Her first degree was a Bachelor of Arts (BA). After qualifying, she was employed as a lecturer at Educor Holdings. She then received a promotional post, as manager then decided to study Human Resources to assist with this new post. She then achieved a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Later, she completed a Bachelor of Educations (BEd) Honours Degree. She has 18 years of teaching experience. Teaching was not her profession of choice, but she fell into it and realised that it was her calling. She loves seeing her students moving on to greater achievements because she feels like she is making a difference in this world, one step at a time. Her students' success becomes her success. In her spare time, she loves to read, hike, and play chess.

Zuri

Zuri is a female of 32 years who grew up in the humble suburb of Shallcross. She attended the local government primary and high school. Her mum worked very hard to save up for tertiary studies. She studied for a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degree and worked in administration for two years when she realised that she desired to be in a profession that allows her to give back to the community. She applied and got a job as a teacher. Her dream came true! She then went on to gain a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), which gave her a teacher's qualification. She has a love and passion for teaching and wants all her students to succeed. She has been serving the Education Department for ten years now. Her main goal in life is to see her students become hard working citizens of South Africa and live great lives or live better than the ones they currently have.

3.6.6 Study Site Selection

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), certain types of research are site-specific, meaning that research can only be conducted in settings particular to the context. This research is a case study involving TVET college lecturers, which can only occur at a TVET college in an urban area in KwaZulu-Natal. This research site was chosen because the researcher works at it,

making it easily accessible, convenient, and feasible. Also, the researcher is familiar with the research site's surroundings, which is an advantage because the researcher plays a key role in data collection (Maree, 2007).

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Wong (2008) defines qualitative data as subjective, rich, and in-depth information normally presented in words. Wong (2008) further states that analysing qualitative data would require that the researcher read the transcripts to inspect for similarities or differences, discover themes and develop categories. Struwig and Stead (2001) assert that data analysis methods should enable the researcher to organise and bring meaning to the generated data. In this study, I collected data through one-on-one interviews with the research participants. After the interviews were transcribed to perform analysis, I embraced a researcher's content (thematic) data analysis approach. According to Anderson (1998), Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. Thematic Content Analysis was used to supply a thick and rich description of the participants' perspectives on student failure at the selected TVET college in KZN. The analysis method consisted of five steps: transcription, checking and editing, analysis, and interpretation, generalisation and validation (Sarantakos, 1998).

Step 1: Transcription

As the researcher, I transcribed the recorded data by typing it out. After that, I printed each transcript and read it to understand what the data was about. I also gave the interview participants the typed transcript to ensure the correctness of what was said.

Step 2: Checking and editing

The data was divided into fewer content categories. This was achieved by identifying themes linked to each question that was posed to the five participants. The questions assisted the researcher in grouping the responses into themes.

Step 3: Analysis and Interpretation

I used the contents and psychological understanding to interpret and analyse the themes that were identified.

Step 4: Generalisation

The differences and similarities between the different interviews were identified. I then grouped the differences and similarities separately.

Step 5: Validation

Finally, I read and reread the transcripts to identify themes. The themes were compared to arrive at interpretation and conclusion. The verbatim views of the participants were recorded in italics to ensure accuracy. I then interpreted and analysed the data before the findings were presented.

3.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) define trustworthiness as ensuring data quality in qualitative research. Guba (1981) suggests four criteria that he believes should be considered by qualitative researchers to ensure a trustworthy study: 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability. These are discussed next.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is the first aspect that must be established in research. It is seen as the most important aspect in establishing trustworthiness. This is because credibility essentially asks the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research study's findings. To achieve credibility, the researcher used two techniques, namely, triangulation of sources and member-checking. Triangulation of sources is when the researcher utilises different data sources within the same method. This entails using different populations, interviewing people at different points, or comparing people from different perspectives. In this study, I interviewed lecturers with different perspectives because they are from different race groups, genders and lectured different subjects. Member-checking is a technique in which the data, interpretations, and conclusions are shared with the participants. In this study, after the interviews were transcribed, they were given to the participants to correct errors, provide additional information if necessary, and ensure that their perspectives were accurately reflected in the interpretations of the data. The purpose of doing member checks is to eliminate researcher bias when analysing and interpreting the results. Member checks are crucial for any qualitative

researcher because it is the heart of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To further establish credibility in this study, participants were selected purposively because of their specific characteristics and years of experience within the TVET sector to accurately share their perspectives on student failure at the research site. Purposive sampling helps the researcher focus on key informants who are particularly knowledgeable on the research phenomenon (Schutt, 2006).

3.8.2 Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that qualitative research seeks transferability by providing the details of the phenomenon and setting it in formal accounts like research reports. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents. According to Bitsch (2005), the researcher facilitates the transferability judgement by a potential user through the thick description and purposeful sampling. This means that when the researcher provides a detailed description of the inquiry and participants are selected purposively, it facilitates the inquiry's transferability. Thick description can be achieved through describing events so that the reader can feel and experience the events described. In this study, the researcher used this technique to describe the lecturer's perspectives in detail on student failure. A thick description concerning transferability aims to sufficiently describe the context so that the researcher or other researchers have sufficient detail and can apply relevant knowledge from the account to another setting. Although this study was conducted at one TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal, transferability of the findings is possible due to most of the TVET colleges offering the same national programmes, centralised at the DHET.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Guba (1981), an individual must determine that an inquiry's findings are consistent if repeated with the same or similar context. Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to follow, audit, and critique the research process (Sandelowski, 1986, Polit et al., 2006 & Streubert, 2007). In this study, the data that was collected was recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were given to the participants to verify the findings. Participants were asked to confirm if the transcripts truly reflected their responses during the interview sessions.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness that a qualitative researcher must establish. Confirmability refers to how the results of an inquiry could be confirmed by other researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Confirmability is there to verify that the findings are shaped by participants more so than a qualitative researcher shapes them. Studies suggest that confirmability of qualitative inquiry is achieved through an audit trail, reflective journal, and triangulation. As a researcher, I used the Audit Trail procedure to enhance confirmability. I achieved this by recording the data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the data. The themes that emerged from the data collection were coded, and the themes were explained. By providing a detailed methodological description, the researcher enables the reader to determine confirmability showing how the data emerged (Shenton, 2004).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Struwig and Stead (2001) assert that ethical consideration provides researchers with a code of conduct that guides researchers. For this study, various ethical considerations had to be taken into account and are discussed next.

3.9.1 Permission

The researcher's application for ethics was granted by the Ethics Research Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (evidence is attached as Appendix A). Permission was requested and granted from the College Rector because the research was conducted on the college premises involving lecturing staff (evidence is attached as Appendix B). The Campus Manager of the research site was also consulted for permission to engage with staff members.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

All participants were adequately informed about the research, and their agreement to participate was obtained only after a thorough explanation of the research process. Participants were given a copy of the interview questions a few days in advance to familiarise themselves with the questions and adequately prepare for the interview session. Consent to record the interview was

also obtained from them. The researcher also informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and could withdraw from the research at any time.

3.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The participants were explained that the information given during the interview would remain confidential. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were adhered to by not revealing their names in the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the study findings. As mentioned, pseudonyms were used. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview environment were both assured and managed with caution during the interview session, data analysis, and dissemination of the findings. Data was stored on my computer and password protected. The transcripts were shared with the participants for verification, and hard copies were kept in a locked cabinet for cross-checking in data analysis. To avoid harm to people, the researcher had to be aware of potential psychological factors such as ensuring the anonymity of participants.

3.9.4 Privacy

All interviews were kept private and were not made available to external sources. Participants were made aware that they were being interviewed, and they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point in time. As the researcher, I ensured that the right to privacy was protected at all times. Data transcribing was conducted in private using earphones to avoid the possibility of recordings being heard by other people. In presenting the study's findings, the participants were referred to by their pseudonym names on the verbatim quotes. It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the identity of participants is protected and to promote detailed and honest research without deception to readers (Arifin, 2018).

3.10 LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to five participants and one TVET campus; therefore, results should not be applied to similar contexts or be subjected to generalisations. An additional limitation to the study proved to be the data collection. Since information obtained during the interview depended on the interviewee and what they were willing to share, the nature of their information was limited to their perspectives and lived experiences.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the research process followed by the researcher when conducting the research and the generation of the data for the study. It also highlighted the essential processes and procedures taken during the study, offering a rationale for the choices made. The next chapter focuses on the statement of findings and interprets and discusses the research results.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three discussed the research design and methodology used in this research. This chapter presents the research findings and data analysis of the data generated from the one-on-one interviews conducted with NCV lecturers at a selected TVET college on the failure rate of students. The interviewees responded all the questions, which resulted in various themes. Categories were identified and categorised through a process of coding the raw data.

4.2 THEMES FROM THE DATA

The main interview questions were:

- What are lecturers' perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?
- Why do lecturers have such perspectives on the failure rate of students at a selected TVET college?

All of the lecturers interviewed stated that the failure rate was high for the subject they taught. The interviewees observed that there were various reasons why students failed. There were seven main themes derived from the data: lack of motivation, registration process, socio-economic status of NCV students, poor class attendance, learning barriers, lack of resources, and curriculum challenges. These themes will be discussed next.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Lack of Motivation

A lack of motivation from students emanated as a very strong theme from lecturers. All the lecturers interviewed commented that most of the students that attended this TVET college showed very little zeal and commitment towards their studies. Responses from the lecturers to this theme are captured below.

Lethabo: *I think the students in NCV are less motivated, so the failure rate is high. They do not take the work that we give them as seriously.*

Lethabo: *Most of the students lack motivation. This is the main factor in my view because if they lack motivation, they will not succeed. In the subjects that I teach, the content is not that difficult. If they learn, they will pass well in my subjects.*

Omari: *Many students that attend this college have failed at mainstream schooling. Therefore, this is their second chance. These students are angry and frustrated youth who want a better life but are unwilling to work hard. They never complete class or homework.*

Similarly, Tinto (1987) affirms that individual commitments, related to motivation, drive, or effort, play an essential role in whether students succeed in higher education or not. Tinto (1987) reiterates that students' lack of dedication plays an important role in student departure and that college completion requires some effort.

It has emerged that many of the students who fail are not motivated to persist. There are different reasons why they are not motivated, and some of the reasons (as provided by the participants) are presented below.

Lecturers stated that some students had not been studying their first choice but merely placed in a course with available spaces. Certain programmes like Office Administration (OA) get filled quickly, and if there is no space in OA, then students are just placed in other departments such as Tourism or Hospitality. At the time of registration, the students are content that they have been placed because they do not want to waste the year, but later on, they realise that they have no interest in the course they were placed in. Tinto (1993) asserts that if a student is not interested or was coerced to enroll for a course at the college, then that student may not be willing or motivated to complete the course.

Lecturers also mentioned that students lack self-motivation, perseverance, and discipline to work diligently. As soon as they start lectures, they realise that TVET colleges are not easier than school. The workload is very intensive and requires them to do a great deal of self-study, which they are not prepared to do simply because they lack self-motivation. Lecturers further stated that schools encourage academically weak students to go and learn a skill at TVET colleges. These students are already academically challenged, enter the system with low self-esteem, and are demotivated, contributing to poor performance. In Fraser and Killen's (2003) study at a university in South Africa, first-year students identified the following as reasons for their failure: inadequate preparation for academic work, student absence, and lack of self-discipline.

Lecturers believed that students lack a positive attitude needed for their success. The interviews often pointed that students lack a work ethic yet expect to be rewarded; they do not realise that they have to work hard to succeed. This concurs with the views of Sefa et al. (1997). Personal factors such as motivation, self-esteem, personal interest, and confidence impact academic achievement (Kim et al., 2010).

4.2.2 Theme 2: Registration Process

At the beginning of the college term, staff usually have a meeting on the first day back, and the very next day, the registration of students begins. Colleges are only given one week to complete the registration process. Under this limited time frame, registration must be completed, and classes must commence. Classes are timetabled in the academic calendar generated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). With this rushed registration process, lecturers repeatedly pointed out that the college recruits the wrong calibre of students contributing to poor performance.

Responses from the lecturers were as follows:

Amari: Many students that attend this college have failed at mainstream schooling.

Zendaya: I think that the failure rate is high. Students do not meet the entrance requirements. The schools refer poor-performing students, but our syllabus is very theory-orientated. Students do not meet the entrance requirements. After all, their school reports do not meet the requirements that we need because they perform poorly. Therefore, at the beginning of the registration process, we are strict with requirements, but towards the end, when we do not meet our numbers for that course, we lower the requirements to most students.

When Papier (2009) interviewed lecturers in the Western Cape on the factors that contributed to the poor performance of NCV students, they also expressed the view that TVET colleges are chasing numbers during registration. Therefore, they compromise on the selection and placement processes. The placement test consists of literacy and numeracy. Even though students fail, they are still enrolled to boost enrollment figures, and no form of remediation is offered to bridge the gap. For this reason, lecturers feel that students are not sufficiently screened for the NCV course at the time of registration. Students who are not academically ready for college education now have a false sense of their academic abilities. This seems to be the general norm at TVET colleges throughout South Africa and is not just limited to the campus under study.

The participants observed that the registration scheduling and process are ineffective for both lecturers and students. The placement test was supposedly present to assist learners in being placed in the correct course. Still, this process is pointless when students are enrolled according to the availability of space per programme. The gaps in the registration process contribute to the learning difficulties that are encountered in the classroom. Konstantopoulos (2009) believes that unequal placement decisions may marginalize or privilege certain student populations.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Socio-Economic Status of NCV Students

The majority of the NCV students that attend this TVET college come from low socio-economic backgrounds. We know this because most of these students receive NSFAS bursaries, and they would only qualify for these NSFAS bursaries if they come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Furthermore, with the number of years of experience, staff have, lecturing students, many general conversations with the students occur; through these conversations, we can infer that most of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Studies were done by Ngoveni (2018) and Ngwato (2020), in which TVET students were interviewed, have confirmed that most students who attend TVET colleges come from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the American Psychological Association (2021), socio-economic status (SES) is the social standing or class of an individual or group and is regularly calculated as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Socio-economic status can be broken down into three levels (high, middle, and low). When placing a family into one of these three categories, any or all three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed. Lamb (2011) confirms that students from economically challenged, disadvantaged backgrounds, cannot complete their qualifications. Below are the lecturers' responses revealing the view that the low socio-economic status of students affects their academic achievement.

Amari: Students do not have money for travelling, clothes, or food. They struggle. Most learners only come to school on days they consider important such as writing an assessment.

Zuri: Students fail for several reasons, mainly the language barrier, their financial constraints... living conditions, their home life, and the turbulent lives that they lead.

Lethabo: The main reason for students failing is the background of the students. The majority of them come from primary and secondary schools that are not so good, especially in their understanding of the English language. They come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their work ethics and business ethics, where they come from, are not conducive to succeeding in education.

A growing body of literature (Breier, 2010; Saifi, 2011, & Thomson, 2018) expresses that a student's socio-economic status affects academic achievement. Meyer (2010) states that socio-economic status constitutes family composition, employment status, poverty levels, and parental education.

Mdluli (2017) conducted a study at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal on dropout rates. The findings of his study revealed that one of the reasons for students underachieving and dropping out of college is the lack of parental support. In Gafoor and Bijl's (2019) studies, one of the factors that influenced NCV Business Studies students in a TVET college in the Western Cape to complete their studies was parental involvement. When parents are involved in their children's lives, this creates an environment for children to learn and achieve their educational goals. Ratell (2005) firmly believes that children need the support of their parents to achieve various academic outcomes. Numerous studies (Ismail et al., 2019; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Mahuro & Hungi, 2016, & Lara, et al., 2019) have confirmed that parental involvement is linked to academic success.

A student's home environment has a strong impact on educational outcomes. Students from low-income families often do not receive the stimulation and support required to attain educational goals. Parental inconsistency, such as frequent changes of primary caregivers, lack of supervision, and poor role modelling, negatively affect educational achievement. Furthermore, many researchers (Gwija, 2016; Gooding, 2001 & Nelson, 2009) have confirmed that students that have well-educated parents perform better academically. Parents who are educated tend to earn higher incomes and can afford to provide an environment for academic preparation. Unfortunately, many college students under study come from low-income homes and depend on the NSFAS bursaries (mentioned earlier) to fund their learning. Even those students that live in college hostels and away from home lack funding and family support. Due to the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, Black learners have inherited the social standing of their parents, so the cycle of poverty continues.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Poor Class Attendance

The research findings unveiled that poor class attendance was one of the major contributing factors to the high failure rate. Lecturers stated that there were many reasons why students get absent frequently. The lecturers listed several reasons for absenteeism: lack of money for transport, lack of interest, bunking, and undisciplined students. Some of the thoughts expressed by the lecturers on this matter are captured below.

Zendaya: Students come late to class, and this happens often. Our students are not interested. They are not self-motivated. There is a lot of bunking among students. Our students spend a lot of time in the cafeteria or on the grounds.

Makena: Students do not have money for travelling, clothes, or food.

Lethabo: Attendance is poor. As a lecturer, you can do very little when the student is not present. When they do not attend class, they say that they do not have transport money and cannot attend college. The students say that NSFAS promised to give them money for transport. The college says that NSFAS takes a long time to pay, so that affects attendance.

Zendaya: Students have a shortage of money to attend college, so they do not attend as they are supposed to attend, so they miss important work that we are doing. About NSFAS, some students receive it late. They were hoping that if they received it early, they would be able to attend.

Poor class attendance was also a common finding in the research of other authors (Cain, 2013; Masemola, 2014; Lawrence, 2016 & Mdululi, 2017), who all investigated student drop-out at TVET colleges. These studies revealed that there is a strong correlation between student absenteeism and academic failure. Latif Khan et al. (2019) investigated if absenteeism affects academic performance among under-graduate students and found that students who were present

in classes regularly seem to have been more successful in their studies than students who missed classes often. In their studies on student absenteeism and academic performance, authors (Chan et al., 1997; Stanca, 2006; Smidt, 1983, & Burt, 1969), found a significant positive relationship between class attendance and student academic performance of students. The studies revealed that absenteeism was the most direct cause for underachieving in class, and under-achievers showed frequent non-attendance. These studies have been done in developed countries, so the absenteeism problem of classes is not just limited to South African TVET colleges but is a global issue. Myataza (2019) investigated student absenteeism at a TVET college in the Nelson Mandela Bay District. The study revealed that the NSFAS scheme was the major contributing factor in student absenteeism due to delayed payments.

4.2.5 Theme 5: Learning Barriers

The TVET lecturers at the study site expressed the following views on learning barriers:

Lethabo: Most learners come from primary and secondary schools that are not so good, especially in their understanding of the English language. They come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Zuri: Students fail, mainly because of the language barrier.

Makena: Schools refer poor-performing students to TVET colleges.

Zuri: Students that come here spend most of their time in the cafeteria.

Amari: Many of the students that attend this college have failed at mainstream schooling.

Makena: In Maths Literacy, the students need to have a good understanding of English because, without a good understanding of English, they fail to understand the question they are asked. Maths Literacy is all about story sums, so they must read the story before they answer.

TVET college learners face many learning barriers that impede pass rates, such as learners being academically underprepared, their lack of self-management and self-discipline skills, and their poor socio-economic backgrounds. Literature corresponds with these findings that TVET college students experience barriers that hinder their academic success. Schools generally encourage poor-performing students to TVET colleges, which has contributed to poor pass rates. These students enter TVET colleges with low foundational knowledge, low language proficiency, and a lack of self-discipline and self-management skills. These barriers have contributed to the low pass rates at TVET colleges. Studies in South Africa (Osman, 2015; Spaul, 2015 & Mckeever, 2017) have revealed that the unequal school system is the primary cause of students being under-prepared for college education. South Africa has one of the unequal school systems globally, with the widest gap between test scores. A 2017 international survey revealed that 97% of Grade 4 children in South Africa scored the lowest of the 50 participating countries in a reading and literacy test, with 78% of the students unable to read for meaning (Amnesty International, 2020). South African students are academically ill-prepared to study at TVET colleges and tend to drop out (Matsolo et al., 2018).

The apartheid Bantu Education system led to low funding of Black schools, unqualified teachers, poor environmental conditions, limited curriculum, and inadequate resources (Cape Times, 2016). This extremely distorted and discriminatory school system negatively impacted Black students. These students are likely to have English as their second or third language and are generally under-prepared for vocational education, where English is the medium of instruction. Hence, students struggle to cope with writing tests and assignments and understanding the textbook and instructions. Papier (2009), in her studies, found that TVET students' literacy and numeracy skills were poor. Langan (1993) indicated that the under-achievement of Black students could be the fault of schools that are not adequately preparing students to learn English.

In South Africa, there are eleven official languages, but the medium of instruction at TVET colleges is only English. In 2008, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) researched 26 countries showing that over 50 percent of students who dropped out of school did not speak the language they received instruction in (Elsworth, 2017). Millions of learners worldwide who enter classrooms each year are not proficient in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) (Elsworth, 2017). Pitcher (2012) considers the lack of proficiency in the language of learning and teaching to be a major cause of student failure. He further states that students find it difficult to grasp the work and effort to achieve good results.

From the literature and the findings presented here, it can be concluded that, in general, TVET college students experience barriers such as poor English proficiency, lack of self-management and self-discipline skills, and lack of the foundational knowledge required to succeed in TVET colleges. These students urgently need remediation support to help them with the barriers that impede their academic success.

4.2.6 Theme 6: Lack of resources

The concept of resources in this study is not restrictive as it includes anything that can be used as an educational tool. Education resources are important in developing a conducive teaching and learning environment. Therefore, TVET colleges should ensure that they have adequate resources to maintain the proper administration of the college. Presented next are views of the lecturers on the available resources at the study site.

Zendaya: For Tourism, we do not have a SIM room. According to the syllabus, we are supposed to have a SIM room for practicals. At the moment, there is no SIM room, so the students cannot do research, and there is no specialist venue, so we cannot put maps, clocks, and pictures because our venues are shared. We share our venues with other lecturers, it is difficult to put up visuals, and our students learn from a visual point of view. Their method of learning is visual, but we cannot show them pictures. We cannot do slide shows or projectors because we do not have access to computer venues, and we keep moving to different venues. It is difficult for us to

carry all our atlases to these different venues. In addition, we sometimes teach in park homes, which is not a permanent structure, so we cannot make the room or environment good for learning for our students.

Zendaya: There is a lack of a senior specialist lecturer for Tourism. We currently have a senior lecturer managing both the Hospitality and Tourism department, but she is only qualified in Hospitality. Therefore, we do not have much support, as we would get from a person that would have been interested in Tourism.

Zuri: There is a need for us to have a proper library facility to do research.

Zendaya: Excursions are limited or restricted. Lecturers plan excursions. We get very little support from our senior lecturer, who will help us with our planning. When we do plan it, it is always turned down. For the last three years, excursions have been turned down. Previously, Hospitality and Tourism were combined on excursions, which doesn't make sense because our syllabus is different. Excursions are another way for students to learn. When I have taken students on excursions previously, most of our students have not stayed at an accommodation. They learn about staying at an accommodation. They learn about different animals. They get to see the animals on game drives. Students have not been previously exposed to this.

Amari: We have a lack of resources. We do not have a library to motivate our students to read to improve their language abilities.

Amari: We are supposed to have 60% practical's and 40% theory, but it is the opposite due to lack of resources.

Amari: Lecturers are not given their designated venues. They are expected to move around the whole day and lecture without the relevant resources.

Zendaya: Lecturers need every day work experience. As much as I may qualify, I'm unsure of what is going on in the workplace. Hence, we need current work experience in Tourism, and that would include: tourism information offices, travel agencies, the airport, tour operators, bus lines, etc., so we can align or give our students first-hand experience of what they need to know.

Zendaya: Many of our students come from disadvantaged, single-parent homes. They have a lot of emotional distress, and unfortunately, the lecturer is not qualified to assist them. Therefore, we need qualified counsellors.

TVET students in South Africa come mainly from low-income families and communities. Therefore, they do not have the resources needed for their studies and are dependent on the college to provide these learning resources. Learning resources are not just textbooks, but can refer to many tools that provide learners with a platform to broaden their learning experience. In this advanced technological age, learning and teaching resources are not confined to only the textbook. They are available in many forms, such as reference books, worksheets, web-based learning materials, computer-based, and audio-visual teaching aids. Libraries can also be used as effective tools for learning (Savery, 2015).

A library is usually where students obtain materials to enhance their learning and use them as a study venue. A growing body of research has shown that a library with a qualified librarian has contributed positively towards student achievement, especially for those who do not speak English at home (Londsdale, 2003; Dukper et al., 2018 & Rashidah, 2017). A library is an important resource that encourages a culture of reading to improve knowledge. Furthermore, it encourages students to read to attain knowledge; it is also a tool to help them do research and use this space as an independent study site. Librarians can assist and guide students to access information that will help them to enhance their studies. According to the Australian Council for

Education Research (ACER), there is strong evidence to suggest that students tend to be more engaged with learning if they have access to library resources, interact with library staff and spend time using libraries. TVET colleges are not only in need of a library, but an effective library. An effective library is well-resourced and has printers and photocopiers. Leadership is encouraged to acknowledge the contributions of a library in teaching and learning because numerous studies have proven that libraries improve academic performance (Omenyo, 2016; De Souza, 2006, & De Jager, 2014).

Student computer labs and internet connectivity should also be considered as essential resources. This is imperative to enhance learning: when students require assistance regarding certain concepts, the internet is an imperative source of obtaining knowledge and information. Sometimes, the textbook is limited and does not do justice in explaining certain concepts. If students have access to computers and the internet, they can use these resources to better understand the subject matter concepts they are struggling with. Being a staff member at the study site, the researcher has noted that there is no student lab dedicated for the students' sole purpose, and the internet is limited in the sense that it is slow and does not always work. Students who attend this college come mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the schools they attended did not expose them much to the use of computers. These students generally struggle with the computer-based subjects at the college. If they had the privilege of a student lab, they would then have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with this technology and become more computer literate, which is a necessary skill for this advanced technological era we live in. Accessing the internet enhances teaching and learning where lecturers can use this tool to communicate with learners and *vice versa*. Internet access opens doorways to a wealth of information, knowledge, and educational resources. Lecturers use online materials to prepare lessons, and students use them to extend their range of learning. Therefore, it is necessary to have access to the internet with sufficient bandwidth. Having access to computers and the internet is working towards being part of the 4th industrial revolution. Many researchers (Invwighreghweta & Igere, 2014; Apake, 2018 & Shahibi, 2017) have found that computers and the internet have improved educational outcomes and academic achievement.

All the lecturers interviewed expressed their unhappiness about sharing venues. They felt that the room was not dedicated to their subject, and they could not make it comfortable and

attractive with posters relating to their subject. Lecturers explained that they had to move around the whole day with their dictionaries, atlases, textbooks, files, worksheets, etc., which became a tiresome task. At the study site, lecturers utilised the same room at different times throughout the day because there was a shortage of space. Lecturers felt that there was no accountability for the venue. Thus, the venues were left uncleaned, with desks rearranged and classroom décor missing; it took up lecture time to make the room conducive to teaching.

Furthermore, during their free time, they are required to vacate the venue to accommodate the next class; this left them with a lack of personal physical space to prepare and mark. It is important to note that a large amount of a students' time is spent in the classroom. This is where they will spend many hours learning the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve success in a global society. With the classroom being such an important place of growth for a learner, it is important to understand that this environment will influence their learning. So, how the educator organises the classroom and controls will yield positive or negative consequences for students. If a lecturer does not have their own space to create a positive learning environment, they can become demotivated, negatively impacting students and the learning environment. A room dedicated to a lecturer, dedicated to a particular subject, with an appropriate desk layout, informative posters, and a conducive teaching atmosphere, makes learning more progressive.

Lecturers have reported that there are not enough practical venues such as SIM rooms, computer rooms, and specialised subject venues to carry out practicals; therefore, students do not get enough exposure to practicals. Most of the lessons in the curriculum cannot be done practically, so students are only learning the theory, which defeats the purpose of acquiring job-related skills. SAQA (2016) reported that the most critical problem that most colleges face is inadequate practical facilities. This situation became worse when the same facilities were used for NATED and NCV programmes. SAQA (2016) further stated that this is a serious issue because practical components of the curriculum are important for its credibility and success. Also, lecturers have reported that the current generation of learners are visual learners and lecturers need the technology installed in classrooms. Audio-visual equipment enhances teaching and learning. Lecturers strongly felt that if they had access to certain visual learning aids, they would be well engaged in the lesson, which would help improve pass rates. Buthelezi (2018), in her study on

TVET colleges, confirmed that the scarcity of resources was one of the major contributing factors that contributed to the high failure rate of students in TVET colleges.

It has been commonly said that the greatest resource in the classroom is the educator. Being an educator is a commitment to being a lifelong learner. An educator must continually develop his/herself professionally and be given the support to achieve this. Lecturers expressed their concerns that they sometimes feel less knowledgeable about what is happening in the workplace. They are not exposed to the industry, and they need every day work experience. They felt that they needed first-hand work experience that they could pass to their learners. Also, funding was not always available for them to upgrade their qualifications. The researcher has also noted that with COVID-19, college buildings were closed at times, and lecturers had to quickly transition to implement new teaching and learning tools to adjust to the new virtual learning space. Many lecturers had never used the resources and tools required to thrive in the virtual learning environment. Some lecturers were familiar with these learning platforms and had the resources to carry out the lessons thrived during these times, while others did not cope. Therefore, it is advisable to have lecturers always trained with current knowledge and skills. They need to be given resources such as laptops to be the best resource available to their learners. Lecturers are the greatest resource to learning and the most indispensable entity in the college and should be comprehensively trained to flawlessly and proficiently perform their lecturing duty.

The researcher has noted that a department such as Student Support Services exists in the institution. It is situated at Central Office, and so it becomes non-existent at the study site because it is not easily accessible to the students. Given the poor general literacy and numeracy levels among TVET students, these students require student support to learn effectively. The college needs proper and accessible infrastructure for academic and student support. According to Tinto (1993), students struggle to succeed without academic and social support. For many students, college is a new experience and can be a very daunting one. Tinto (1993) suggests that student support can assist the college by employing assessment and feedback strategies to help monitor the progress of students and alert the institution on which students need assistance so that the institution can provide the support. Tinto (1993) further explains that it is essential that first year students get this support. Due to social and economic challenges, some students can become involved in negative activities, easily putting them on the wrong path. Student Support

Services can arrange programmes and activities for learners to participate in, to keep them occupied and engaged. Tinto's (1993) sociological model suggests factors such as student 'integration' into their learning communities, 'involvement' and 'engagement' especially in extra-curricular activities, enhance the likelihood of them persisting with their studies. Student Support Services can also make academic support available to students in basic skills courses, commonly referred to as remedial education, tutoring, or study groups, to increase their chances of succeeding in college.

The lecturers that were interviewed also mentioned that the learners who attend this college come in with many personal problems: behavioral problems, abuse, poverty, crime, low self-esteem, and depression, amongst others. They recommended that an educational psychologist or counsellor be based at the study site. Also, participants expressed that students cannot make informed career decisions due to a lack of career guidance and access to resources and information. The lack of career guidance places students on the wrong career path leading to dropout and student failure. Papier (2012) acknowledges that very little funding is available for academic and psycho-social support for college students. Tinto (1993) affirms that social support through counselling, mentoring, and student centres, would help to reduce failure and dropout rates.

From the findings presented, it can be concluded that the college needs to invest in adequate resources to ensure the success of its learners.

4.2.7 Theme 7: Curriculum Challenges

The curriculum is the most important component in any educational institution. Everyone, including students, lecturers, administrators, parents, community, and other stakeholders, depends on the curriculum for delivering quality education. However, the TVET curriculum in South Africa has many challenges. Presented next are lecturers' views on the TVET curriculum.

Zuri: Our calibre of students are poor-performing students, and our syllabus or curriculum is very theory-orientated.

Makena: *Students think that when they come to TVET, they will do skills work, whereas there is also the theoretical part. They are not interested in the theoretical aspect. They want to do skills.*

Amari: *Our curriculum is not up to scratch; e.g., we are not recognised on the NQF band. Students who complete their studies cannot further their studies at a higher education institute.*

Amari: *We are supposed to be 60% practical and 40% theory, but it is the opposite due to lack of resources. When our students qualify, they do not leave with skill but a certificate that takes about two years to receive. They are not qualified with much.*

Zendaya: *Our students learn visually or practically, and this is lacking in the curriculum.*

Zendaya: *We also need to align our curriculum with workplace needs. We need support from local businesses.*

Lethabo: *We also need workplace experience for our students to keep them interested in the subject.*

Zendaya: *Our curriculum is failing the students. Our curriculum needs to include things like what our students enjoy. If you look at our students, they enjoy sports, arts, dance, and music. They thrive in this kind of environment. If it's part of the curriculum, then they would want to be in college. They will be self-motivated because college is not only about theory but also has practicals.*

Lethabo: *The curriculum for Tourism remains a challenge. The students are not ready for the world of work when they leave college because the curriculum is not keeping up with the changes occurring in the Tourism industry. The curriculum was written when Tourism was still new in South Africa.*

Lethabo: *People who were not clued up with Tourism wrote it. As compared to another subject, Tourism is young. We need rapid changes in the syllabus. In the Tourism textbook, they talk about the future as 2010. The industry has changed so much because of technological advancement. Therefore, the syllabus must keep up.*

Lethabo: *I sat in a meeting. This was an initiative by the National Tourism Department. A question was posed to the people from the industry: When you receive our students at your work place, are they ready to work? The answer was “No”. We asked what gaps they had identified? One of the problems they highlighted was that students have the wrong picture of the industry. When they work in the reality of the industry, they get frustrated. They do not know what to do because it is not what they expected. One of the resolutions would be to align the syllabus with industry needs. The syllabus needs to include a training programme, which exposes students to industry.*

Lecturers pointed out that one of the challenges with the NCV curriculum is that it is not aligned with higher education programmes. This might discourage students from enrolling at TVET colleges because some college graduates may have the potential to enroll at higher education institutes. DHET needs to restructure all TVET qualifications to benefit those students who require access to higher education programmes. Terblanche (2017) suggests that DHET must move away from the one-size-fits-all regime, meaning that not all TVET programmes should be designed to provide access to higher education programmes. Terblanche (2017) further suggests that programmes that are more practically inclined should lead to direct employment, and programmes that are theoretical can be more closely aligned to higher education; therefore, the

entry requirements that allow access at the college level should also be different for those two different types of programmes. Stumpf, Papier, Needham and Nel (2009) assert that one of the key problems identified in TVET colleges is a lack of further learning opportunities. A successful TVET college should offer diversified learning programmes and provide further learning opportunities for students gaining access to higher education. Clarke (1998) points out that institutions and sectors that do not offer transfer to higher education tiers have a lower status.

Many lecturers believe that the current TVET curriculum is not up-to-date, meaning that it is not keeping up with current technology and current job skills and is not linked to the workplace. Badroodien and Kraak (2006) mention that TVET colleges failed to link students to real employment prospects in the world of work. TVET curricula were supposed to change as economies change to keep up with current trends, but the range of programmes often appears to have little to do with current and potential labour market opportunities (McGrath, 2005). TVET colleges urgently need to improve specialisations so that the TVET sector is linked to different skills markets. If skills are developed, productivity will increase which will benefit and uplift the country's economy. Tandem, Siriwardene and Qureshi (2009) confirm that positioning TVET to the requirements of the world of work is important for economic, social, and sustainable development. They further state that TVET has a great capability to spawn growth by empowering and enriching the positions of individuals to be employed. One of the greatest challenges facing South Africa is the high unemployment of youth. Badenhorst and Radile (2018) assert that the vocational system suffers from inadequate partnerships with businesses and industry. As a result, vocational training institutes are less equipped to respond to the skills requirements of employers and the transition of youth to suitable employment. The main purpose of TVET colleges is to prepare students for the world of work, so partnerships with businesses and industry should be viewed as a strategy to get informed industry knowledge and opportunities so that curriculum is linked to the workplace and current job skills.

Lecturers also expressed the view that they too need to be exposed to industry because they are unaware of the current happenings in the industry. Arrangements need to be made for lecturers to be exposed to work experience to keep up with the improvements made in the industry. Lecturers are the ones who impart knowledge and skills to students; therefore, workplace

experience that lecturers require should be prioritised to ensure that their training is current and corresponding with workplace needs, and lecturers also can better understand the needs of the employers. Constant staff development to enhance students learning should be an important priority. Lecturers at TVET colleges are offered some training, including assessor, moderator, and facilitator training, but it seems that there is much to be desired in terms of the subject (DHET, 2011). Lecturers should have opportunities to access information through technology with industry (Gamble, 2006). Continuous professional development of TVET lecturers is encouraged to gain relevant knowledge and skills to impart to students for successful academic achievement. According to the SAQA Bulletin (2016), TVET lecturer qualifications (RSA, 2013) required lecturers to have specialised vocational teaching qualifications and industry experience.

The level of difficulty of the NCV programme is of concern to the lecturers as the students from the mainstream school do not cope well with the NCV curriculum. The NCV curriculum is too theoretical and consists of seven subjects, three fundamentals, and four vocationals for each programme. Lecturers also explained that there were too many assessments, which led to inadequate teaching and learning time, affecting the quality of programme delivery. The students have to do seven assessments and final exams per subject. In Badenhorst and Radile's (2018) study, it was also found that lecturers who were interviewed generally felt that the NCV curriculum was too difficult compared to the school grade for that level, which is a consequence of poor performance. DHET assumes that the current TVET curriculum will suit all students and loses sight of the intended students' diverse needs, aptitudes, and backgrounds. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), TVET colleges provided second chance opportunities and accepted youth at risk. Therefore, there is a need to acknowledge that students in the TVET sector have poor foundational knowledge. Lecturers further expressed that although the design of the curriculum was supposed to be 60% practical and 40% theory, it seemed that the practical skills were being taught and tested theoretically, with very little or no practical exposure. Students were also of the notion that when they enrolled at TVET colleges, they would do more practical work than theory, and this is not the case. The curriculum is considered intensive and demanding, with little time for practical training (Pandor, 2007). The NCV programme was designed as a general vocational qualification as an alternative to academic schooling and not intended to serve as a theory component of an apprenticeship.

Therefore, this programme did not serve its purpose. Thus, the industry is reluctant to host NCV students for practical qualifications, which could be linked to the poor public image of TVET colleges.

Lecturers have pointed out that their TVET college faces a critical problem in delivering the curriculum to its full potential because of a lack of practice facilities. Students in some programmes like Office Administration and Tourism, study theory only because of lack of resources. Lecturers expressed the concern that when NATED exams are taking place, there is a shortage of venues to conduct NCV lectures, which impacts teaching and learning time. Most TVET colleges have inadequate facilities, and the situation is worsened by doubling facilities for both NATED and NCV programmes. The consequence of this is that insufficient time is spent on practical aspects of the curriculum, yet the practical component is critical for its credibility and success. Thus, the NCV is not being implemented as intended (SAQA Bulletin, 2016). Lecturers also explained that subject experts do not write the textbooks they are currently using to teach, and they are outdated because they refer to the year 2010 as the near future! Lecturers need materials that have been developed with real-life classroom situations in mind with up-to-date information for 2021 and on. They also expressed that most learners learn visually, yet they do not have the technical equipment to deliver visual lessons. Lecturers want the curriculum to be reviewed to match the current trends. As we live in an age of technological advancement, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) equipment should be introduced instead of the traditional tools to deliver lessons. The current curriculum is misaligned to the required technology and the equipment used in the industry. The current curriculum provides little or no practicals in some subjects. Therefore, it lacks industry support for workplace opportunities. Buthelezi (2018) found that TVET colleges still have the challenge of inadequate resources, which makes it difficult for students to perform well in their studies; this negatively impacts students' results.

Some lecturers suggested that the curriculum, include fun things like art, dance, and music, because these are the things students like and enjoy. Adding this to the curriculum can increase cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills. It can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork. Art, dance, and music can be used as learning tools, and may be incorporated into the syllabus in many ways. For example, musical notes can teach fractions, and students can role-play scenarios from the textbook to understand certain concepts.

The arts can be an influential and transforming tool for learning when integrated with academic subjects; they enhance instruction, the environment, and student learning (Redman, 2016).

From the responses of the lecturers and the thematic analysis, it is clear that the NCV curriculum must be restructured to increase responsiveness to the needs of students, industry and to improve Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) standards to attain a more positive image of the TVET sector.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of the study. There were seven main themes that developed from the findings. The next chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presented the research findings according to the themes that emerged from the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document interrogation. This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the research. The study's main aim was to gain lecturers' perspectives on student failure at a TVET college. The conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are guided by the themes that emerged in the previous chapter.

5.2 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research conclusions revealed numerous reasons for the high student failure at the specific TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal. These reasons, discussed next, cannot be seen in isolation, as they are interconnected and can influence each other.

5.2.1 LACK OF MOTIVATION

A lack of motivation from students emanated as a very strong theme from lecturers. Lecturers commented that most of the students who attended this TVET college show very little zeal and commitment towards their studies. It has emerged that students who fail are not motivated to persist in their studies. There were many reasons for this lack of motivation: students were not studying their first choice but merely placed in a course with available spaces; students lack a positive attitude, self-motivation, perseverance, and discipline to work independently, and students who attend TVET colleges are academically challenged.

Papier (2009) found that learners placed in the wrong NCV programs in TVET colleges became disengaged in their studies and dropped out. Tinto (1993) confirms that if a student is not interested or was coerced to enroll for a course at the college, then that student may not be

willing or motivated to complete the course. Lecturers have recommended that a trained counselling team be available to students at the registration period to receive advice and guidance about the NCV programs. These counsellors must ensure that the students are given a full brief on what the course entails and ensure that the students meet the requirements of the course they intend to study; students should not merely be placed in a program to fill spaces. Lecturers interviewed also recommended that if there were no spaces available for a student's first choice of study, that student should be put on a waiting list in case of spaces become available, or the student should be referred to another college so that other options are available to them. Some students make poor choices concerning course selection. They should be given guidance on each specialisation, the career paths they can follow, and which subjects are compulsory. Also, most students do not know what the policies of the college are. Therefore, these students need to receive as much information about the college as possible and know where they can find further information, such as the college website or the student portal. Gewer (2010) states that the problem with student readiness is fueled by the scarcity of adequate student support services which offer proper career guidance. Further studies should investigate how students can receive support and guidance during the registration process for academic studies. Effective academic advising is important to laying an appropriate course map for students (Forrest, 1982).

Many under-achieving school learners are referred to the TVET sector. Once these students are registered and start classes, they realise that TVET colleges are not easier to manage and succeed at than school and that the workload is very intensive. Furthermore, these students lack self-discipline, perseverance and are demotivated; therefore, they fail. Lecturers recommend that a bridging program be offered to these under-achieving school learners who do not meet the entrance requirements because enrolling them directly into the NCV program sets them up for failure, and the NCV program has a heavy workload. The NCV programs are not sufficiently equipped to make the transition from school to college a success. The level of difficulty of the NCV programs results in poor academic performance (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). DHET should focus on developing academic bridging programs between high school and the NCV programs. These programs should entail reading, writing, numeracy, research, and computer skills. The institution should also provide developmental and motivational workshops to promote self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in succeeding at a particular task

or a situation (Bandura, 1977). Tinto (2017) believes that self-efficacy is learned and not inherited and affirms that people with high self-efficacy will engage more readily in a task, spend more effort on it and persist longer with it, even when they encounter difficulties. Therefore, a good support system is recommended to provide motivation and encouragement to students.

5.2.2 REGISTRATION PROCESS

At the beginning of the college term, colleges are only given a maximum of one week to complete the registration process. During this allocated time frame, the staff is required to enroll both NCV and NATED students. Under this limited time frame, registration needs to be completed, and classes must commence as timetabled in the academic calendar generated by DHET. With this rushed and inconvenient registration process, lecturers repeatedly point out that the college recruits the wrong calibre of students, contributing to the poor pass rates.

During registration, students are required to do a multiple-choice placement test. It can happen where students guess the right answers and will attain a good pass, which will give them a false notion that they can cope with the NCV curriculum. Even if students perform dismally in placements tests, they are still enrolled in courses with available spaces. The findings confirmed that many of the students who were enrolled at the college do not meet the entrance requirements and are not ready to meet the NCV curriculum demands.

The registration process is ineffective for both lecturers and students. The placement test was supposedly to assist learners in being placed in the correct course, but it has become a pointless exercise when students are placed according to space available per program. The findings confirm that the registration process gaps contributed to the high failure rate at the college. Several researchers (Papier, 2009; Cain, 2013; Masemola, 2014 & Lawrence, 2016) have confirmed that the registration process in TVET colleges in South Africa is ineffective.

The college has a huge responsibility to ensure that enrolled students succeed in their studies and remain in the program to achieve certification. Therefore, it is recommended that DHET extends the one-week registration period to at least two or three weeks so that colleges have more time to make the registration process more effective. It is strongly recommended that the

screening of students takes place in a much more stringent manner. If colleges are given an extension of the registration period, they will have more time to screen students properly. If colleges gain a better selection of students through stricter screening methods, they will sail smoothly through the syllabus; even if time is lost during the registration period, they will manage the workload more effectively.

It is also recommended that the placement test be revised to something more comprehensive such as a writing task because learners who are enrolled and fail are the ones who can hardly construct sentences or read. Following a more stringent selection and screening process could ensure a better calibre of students in the NCV program. Therefore, it is recommended that colleges not enroll all students who apply to fill seats but ensure there is proper testing, selection, and career counselling so that the right students are placed in the right programs to enhance student performance at the college.

5.2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) OF NCV STUDENTS

At this college, it was noted that the majority of students come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. A single parent or a grandparent heads their homes. Most of these students lack parental support. It was also noted that these students have only one family member employed to care for the entire family. In some cases, no one is working, or the person responsible for financial support is dependent on a government pension. The majority of the students that attend this TVET college experience financial challenges. Furthermore, TVET students generally come from extreme inequality in terms of schooling, class, and socio-economic resources, largely due to the legacy of historical inequality in South Africa. Tinto (1993) states that students enter educational institutes with various individual characteristics such as background (family, parental education level, socio-economic status); individual attributes (age, sex, race, ability), and prior academic experience (school experience, grades); all these play a role in student achievement and dropout rates in college education.

A student's home environment is considered one of the most significant factors affecting performance and academic achievement (Younas et al., 2021). Students from low socio-economic backgrounds do not receive the stimulation and support needed for high academic

achievement. Parental inconsistency, such as frequent changes of primary caregivers, lack of supervision, and poor role modelling, impacts educational goals. Many researchers (Gooding, 2001; Khan, et al., 2015, & Idris et al., 2020) have confirmed that students who have well-educated parents perform better academically because these parents tend to earn higher incomes and can afford to provide an environment for academic preparation.

Authors such as Carson (2005) and Kuh et al. (2007) have found that poor students often do not have the necessary skills and support to manage their studies. Lower SES students are often first-generation college entrants, have a poorer high school education, and have access to very low levels of financial support (Jones et al., 2018). Students' diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds and what they bring into the learning environment influence the educational outcomes (Taylor, 2010). Many students have even dropped out of college due to financial reasons (Schneider & Lin, 2011).

Lecturers have taken into account that students who attend this college come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds; this negatively impacts student's results. Therefore, they have recommended that students receive as much support as possible from the institution and DHET, and that strategies be put in place to respond to students' learning needs and provide early, regular and timely support.

Lecturers recommended that policies be developed to ensure that the college prioritises its links with parents, caregivers, and the communities, to improve their communication strategies to align college and parental efforts. Effective strategies target parents or caregivers that are difficult to reach and encourage individuals from the same communities to mentor students. Building links with the communities around colleges, businesses, and social stakeholders can strengthen colleges and their students.

Lecturers have acknowledged that most students come from unstable homes and that the college should provide an environment where students can receive care and support. They have recommended that college management encourages lecturing staff to practice the seven roles of educators as described in the Norms and Standards for Educators (Government Gazette, 2000: 20844). Lecturers need to display a warm and caring attitude towards students and provide an emotionally supportive classroom. When lecturers make an intentional effort to get to know

their students, it improves a student's sense of belonging and connection to the college, building a foundation for academic success. Positive educator-student relationships lead to increased cooperation and engagement in the classroom (Nishioka, 2019).

Lecturers have recommended that a competent team be present at registration to help students with their bursary applications. Students' bursaries should be paid at the beginning of the academic year, to have transport money. Lecturers mentioned that students are given textbooks and recommended that they also be given notebooks, and stationery, because these are necessities to help them start the academic year.

To further support the development of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lecturers have recommended that the college initiates after-college programs, community service activities, religious groups, and charity events to help mould and assist students. Tinto (2014) believes that without academic, social, and financial support, too many students are at the risk of not completing their studies.

5.2.4 POOR CLASS ATTENDANCE

Lecturers communicated that poor class attendance was one of the major contributing factors to the high failure rate. Lecturers noted that students who the college generally accepts get absent in the first lecture, after the break, and last. There were also those students who get chronically absent from college. Lecturers stated that there were many reasons for student absenteeism, such as lack of transport money, lack of interest, bunking, and undisciplined students; this concerned lecturers because the students that attend TVET colleges are generally school under-achievers and they would need the lectures the most to keep up with the academic workload. Gottfried (2014) confirms that chronic absenteeism is a primary cause of low academic achievement and strongly indicates students are at a higher risk of dropping out.

The penalties of the high level of college absenteeism can be disadvantageous for students. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) asserted that students with high absenteeism miss opportunities to learn the material that empower them to thrive at the academic institution. In addition, some researchers argued that students' attitude and motivation for learning was a crucial element in

student absenteeism (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Marchis, 2011, & Yunus & Ali, 2004). For instance, Kottasz (2005) found that students with low motivation are absent more than students with high motivation levels.

To boost academic attendance, it is recommended that the college should enforce an attendance policy to ensure eighty percent attendance in class. This attendance policy must be communicated to students and their families. This should be done via the college website and face-to-face meetings with parents or caregivers. The student and parent must sign this attendance policy at enrollment to acknowledge the policy and its consequences.

Since attendance is a major issue at the TVET college under study, lecturers should manage the register accurately, and after student attendance is captured on the system, a designated staff member should be tasked with the duty of informing those students who are frequently absent, of the consequences. This should be enforced and carried out early in the year to curb the problem of student absenteeism and to promote better academic results and better disciplined students. Lecturers recommended that regular feedback and timeous reporting to parents should be prioritised. Parents or caregivers should be informed promptly of any absenteeism and academic problems.

To help address chronic absenteeism, the college must be a place where students are excited to be. When students feel happy physically and emotionally, they will participate in college life. This will not only lead to higher attendance but higher academic achievement as well. Some studies (Blair, 2000; Raver, 2000; Liew, 2012 & Izard et al., 2008) have confirmed that positive emotions improve academic achievement. Lecturers, therefore, recommended that the college build an engaging calendar of events that will motivate students to attend college and participate in fun and educational experience.

The college can identify student needs and address them early in the year to prevent chronic absenteeism by being proactive. When students improve their attendance, they engage more in their learning, increasing their chances of success at college.

5.2.5 LEARNING BARRIERS

Lecturers stated that TVET college students are faced with many learning barriers that impede pass rates, such as academically under-prepared learners, learners who lack self-management and self-discipline skills, and poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Studies (Fiske & Ladd, 2004 & Gallo, 2020) have revealed that the unequal school system in South Africa is the primary cause for students being under-prepared for college education. Students from economically depressed communities are most likely to have English as their second or third language and are generally under-prepared for vocational education, where English is the medium of instruction. Hence, students struggle to cope with writing tests, assignments and understand the textbook's instructions. Papier (2009) found that TVET students' literacy and numeracy skills were poor. Langhan (1993) indicated that the underachievement of Black students could be the fault of schools that are not adequately preparing students to learn through the medium of English. Pitcher (2012) considers the lack of proficiency in the language of learning and teaching to be a major cause of student failure.

These students urgently need remediation support to help them with the barriers that impede their academic success. There are many ways to help them, such as forming and encouraging reading clubs and peer group support to help learners lagging. It is recommended that students struggling in literacy and numeracy be identified and referred to a remedial class. This type of support does not exist in TVET colleges. The lecturers that will be assigned to teach the remedial classes should be trained in conducting remedial education. With the introduction of inclusive education (equal opportunities for all learners to learn and succeed) into the South African education system, further pressure has been placed on lecturers. These lecturers need the skills and knowledge to assist learners with barriers to reaching their full potential; therefore, lecturers should be given training and support to carry out their job.

5.2.6 LACK OF RESOURCES

Educational resources are important in developing a conducive teaching and learning environment; therefore, TVET colleges should ensure that they have adequate resources to maintain the proper administration of the college.

Lecturers recommended that a library with a qualified librarian should be a priority as a college facility. The library should be well-resourced with printers, photocopiers, books, computers with a fast internet connection (the current internet connection is slow and does not work most of the time); this will cater to the student population and study spaces. Students should also have access to a computer lan with a lan administrator that is dedicated to them. Our students come from low-socio economic backgrounds, and their parents have minimal levels of formal education to assist them. To complete tasks and homework and develop literacy skills, these students need access to books and computers to aid their learning. A growing body of research has shown that a library with a qualified librarian has contributed positively towards student achievement, especially for those who do not speak English at home (Londsdale, 2003; Dukper et al.; 2018, & Rashidah, 2017).

Lecturers were unhappy about sharing lecture venues. They felt they lacked a physical space, and as the room was not dedicated to their subject, they could not make it comfortable and attractive with subject related posters and material. Lecturers also expressed that they had to move around constantly with all of their teaching equipment and material, which is tiresome. Furthermore, there was no accountability for the venue because different lecturers would use it. When they arrived at the venue to teach, they would find it disorderly; it would take up teaching and learning time to get the venue organised to make it conducive to teaching and learning. Lecturers also expressed that they did not have a quiet space to work during their free time because all lecture venues were being used. They recommended that college management looks into getting more classrooms. Rudman and Meiring (2018:88) state, “While attention is being paid to dealing with challenges at colleges at the macro-level or systematic level, there appears to be less focus on the micro-level, that is, on lecturers or teachers and their day-to-day classroom challenges”. It is important to note that lecturer well-being, motivation, and appreciation are important for learning and teaching. The classroom set-up is an essential component in a learning environment. The physical atmosphere of the classroom can help prevent behavior

problems and support and improve learning (Cox, 2019). Cox (2019) further states that the classroom arrangement is the physical foundation where students learn.

Lecturers commented that the current generation of learners are visual learners and for effective teaching to occur, classrooms needed to become more interactive. They recommended that classrooms at the college be upgraded with interactive whiteboards, data projectors, and computers and that every lecturer should have access to a laptop. Teaching cannot be effective without the right tools: for example, photocopiers should be readily available to accommodate the number of staff working at the college.

Lecturers cited insufficient suitable venues such as SIM rooms, computer rooms, and specialised subject venues to carry out practical lessons. Students are not getting enough exposure to practical lessons because most of the practical lessons set out in the curriculum cannot be done practically, so the students are just learning the theory, which defeats the purpose of acquiring job-related skills. The unavailability of computer venues to carry out lessons becomes worse when exams are running. Buthelezi (2018), in her study on TVET colleges, confirmed that the scarcity of resources was one of the major contributing factors to the high failure rate at TVET colleges. It is recommended that more specialised venues be built to accommodate practical lessons.

The researcher has noted that a department such as Student Support Services exists in the institution, but it is situated at the Central Office, so it becomes non-existent because it is not accessible to students. Given the poor general literacy and numeracy among TVET students, these students require student support to learn effectively. Tinto (1993) suggests that student support can assist the college by employing assessment and feedback strategies to help monitor students' progress and alert the institution to which students need assistance, which the institution can then provide. Due to social and economic challenges, some students can become involved in negative activities, easily putting them on the wrong path. Student Support Services can arrange programs and activities for learners to participate in, to keep them occupied and engaged. Tinto's sociological model suggests factors such as student 'integration' into their learning communities, 'involvement' and 'engagement', especially in extra-curricular activities, enhancing the likelihood of students persisting in their studies. Therefore, it is highly

recommended that Student Support Services be stationed at the campus, making it fully accessible to students.

Lecturers mentioned that students who attend this college come with many personal problems like behavioral problems, abuse, poverty, crime, low self-esteem, and depression, and recommend that an educational psychologist or counsellor be based at the study site. Munyaradzi and Addae (2018) investigated the effectiveness of student psychological support services at a technical and vocational education and training college in South Africa. The study revealed that students at TVET colleges experience several psychological problems, which adversely affect their academic success. Psychological support services improved students' academic performance, attendance, retention and also improved college certification rate. The researcher has observed that students cannot make informed career decisions due to a lack of career guidance and access to resources. The lack of career guidance places students on the wrong career path, leading to dropout and student failure. Papier (2012) acknowledges that very little funding is available for academic and psycho-social support for college students. Tinto (1993) affirms that social support through counselling, mentoring, and student support centers would help to reduce failure and dropout.

The lecturer is the greatest resource and aid in learning and the most indispensable entity in the college and should be comprehensively trained to carry out the teaching function. Lecturers expressed their concerns that they sometimes felt less knowledgeable about what was happening in the workplace because they were not exposed to industry and recent work experience. To aid the effective functioning of lecturers, they should be given the opportunity for in-service training, which will enable career improvement and development. Lecturers also mentioned that funding is not always available for them to upgrade their qualifications. It is recommended that DHET find ways to incorporate workplace training for lecturers to be familiar with business and industry workplace demands and use the subjects they teach to help equip students for the workplace. It is also recommended that the institution sources funding to improve lecturer qualifications. Lecturers with higher qualifications and training standards are better equipped to engage learners, providing improved learning environments.

Lecturers mentioned that it would be useful to receive more support from their Senior Lecturers. Sometimes Senior Lecturers do not have the time to give the necessary support required to every

department because the college currently has only three Senior Lecturers, 2 for NCV and 1 for NATED, and the ratio for the number of Senior Lecturers to the number of Lecturers is not proportional. Each department does not have a Senior Lecturer. For example, the Senior Lecturer that is assigned for Hospitality is also the Senior Lecturer for Tourism. The Senior Lecturer currently assigned for Tourism has qualifications only in Hospitality and may lack the expertise or passion for developing the Tourism Department; therefore, it is recommended that each department be assigned their Specialist Senior Lecturer.

Accessibility of resources for education is regarded as an essential and integral component of institutional administration and is geared towards improving all other aspects of the teaching and learning process, thus assuring qualitative service delivery by the institution to the society (Dangara, 2016).

5.2.7 CURRICULUM CHALLENGES

The lecturers who have first-hand experience delivering the curriculum to students explained that the TVET curriculum is beset with many challenges.

The first challenge pointed out by lecturers is that the NCV curriculum is not aligned with higher education programs. This disadvantages the students who can enroll at universities. Stumpf, Papier, Needham, and Nel (2009) highlighted that one of the key problems identified in TVET colleges is a lack of further learning opportunities. It is recommended that DHET restructure certain TVET qualifications to benefit those students who require access to university programs. Terblanche (2017) stated that DHET must move away from the one-size-fits-all regime, meaning that not all TVET programs should be designed to provide access to tertiary institutions. As stated by Terblanche (2017), it is recommended that programs that are more practically inclined should lead to direct employment, and programs that are theoretical can be more closely aligned to higher education. Therefore, the entry requirements that allow access at the college level should also be different for those two different types of programs. It is also recommended that TVET colleges form partnerships with tertiary institutions and design programs related to NCV to offer further education to NCV graduates.

The second challenge pointed out by lecturers is that the current TVET curriculum is not up to date, meaning that it is not keeping with current job knowledge, skills, and technology, and it is not linked to the workplace. The TVET curriculum was supposed to change as economies change to keep up with current trends, but the range of programs often appears to have little to do with current and potential labor market opportunities (McGrath, 2005). It is recommended that DHET find ways to improve specialisations so that the TVET sector is linked to different skills markets. The main purpose of TVET colleges is to prepare students for the world of work; therefore, it is recommended that TVET colleges form partnerships with businesses and industry. The syllabus needs to accommodate work-place experience for students to get informed industry knowledge and current job skills.

The third challenge pointed out by lecturers is that the NCV curriculum is pitched too high. Lecturers explained that students who come from mainstream schooling do not cope well with the NCV curriculum. The NCV curriculum is too theoretical and consists of seven subjects. There are also too many assessments, which leads to inadequate teaching and learning time. Furthermore, the design of the curriculum was supposed to be 60% practical and 40% theoretical, but it seems that the practical skills are being taught and tested theoretically, with very little or no practical exposure. Students also think that when they enroll at TVET colleges, they will be doing more practicals, and that is not the case. Therefore, it is recommended that DHET consider the diverse needs, aptitudes, and backgrounds of the intended students and restructure the syllabus per program. The skills-based programs should have less theory and more practicals.

Furthermore, venues to conduct the practicals also need to be provided because currently, TVET colleges face a critical problem in delivering the curriculum to its full potential due to inadequate practical facilities. Lecturers also expressed the view that the curriculum should include what students enjoy. They recommended that the curriculum should include fun activities like art, dance, and music. If these are added to the syllabus, it will improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork.

The fourth challenge lecturers pointed out was that the resources used to deliver the curriculum are outdated. Lecturers explained that subject experts do not write the textbooks currently used to teach and that they were written when NCV first started. It is recommended that textbooks be

revised every five years to be current and relevant to the syllabus. It is also recommended that the equipment used to deliver the curriculum be aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Only five post level 1 lecturers were used in this study. As a researcher, I would have also interviewed lecturers from higher post levels, but it was difficult to achieve this because they are at the management level. The management staff is usually busy, and my research would have been an imposition on their time. Furthermore, this was a small-scale study, and data were collected from one TVET college campus in KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the data cannot be generalised to all TVET colleges. It is suggested that future researchers use lecturers from different post levels and different colleges.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study revealed numerous reasons that contributed to the poor failure rate of students at the TVET college under scrutiny. This study aimed to identify the reasons for failure and offer recommendations to improve academic performance. I engaged with the extensive literature on student failure to get an in-depth understanding of the topic.

The findings revealed that TVET college students lack motivation and show very little zeal and commitment towards their studies. Many under-achieving school learners are referred to TVET colleges; they have learning barriers and are unprepared for the NCV program. Furthermore, the TVET curriculum is overloaded and too theoretical for some learners, while for others, it does not provide further learning opportunities at tertiary institutes. The TVET curriculum is also not keeping up with current information and job skills; they are not linked to the workplace nor provide workplace opportunities for students. Most TVET students come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and experience financial problems. Absenteeism is also a major problem among students. There is a major challenge with resources for both learners and lecturers. The students do not receive enough academic and social support. The registration process to enroll NCV students is ineffective.

It is recommended that DHET extends the duration period for registration, so the college has more time to properly screen students to attain a better caliber of students. The placement test given at registration should be revised to something more concrete to test students' numeracy and literacy levels. It is recommended that the TVET curriculum be reviewed to provide two different routes for learners, one that will be more practically inclined to lead directly into employment and the other creating further learning opportunities into tertiary institutes. The curriculum also needs to be reviewed to be up to date and relevant to current job requirements. It is recommended that Student Support be moved from Central Office to campus based to provide the students with various support strategies to enhance pass rates. It is also recommended that all resources available to lecturers and students be reviewed and upgraded to improve academic performance.

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APPENDIX A



17 October 2018

Mrs Abigail Govindasamy 991237874
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Govindsamy

Protocol Reference Number : HSS/0877/018M
Project title: Lecturers' perspectives on the failure rate at a selected TVET College

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 7 September 2018, 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 3 years 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,

.....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Professor LR Maharaj
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Ms Sheryl Jeenarain

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX B



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



**Elangeni
College**
Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

An ISO 9001 and OSHAS 18001 certified organisation.

12 June 2018

Dear Mrs A Govindasamy

Re: Request for using the College as a site of research

Elangeni College has no objection to you using our college as a site of research: Lecturers' perspectives on the failure rate at a selected TVET College.

However, the following conditions for external research apply:

- The name(s) of staff employed by the college cannot be used in any document
- The name(s) of college students cannot be used in any document
- When you need to collect data, please follow proper processes of making appointments with the relevant employees adhering to protocols.
- Once you have decided which college sites you will interested in using, please send that information to the Principal's office, so the relevant Campus Manager(s) can be informed.
- Ensure that the request for data/appointment is sent well in advance.
- Your research cannot disturb teaching and learning or any crucial function.

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

The college is looking forward to reading the final document.

Yours sincerely

TJ Aryetey (Ms)

College Principal

SABS
ISO 9001

Central Office, 15 Portsmouth Road, Pinetown, 3610 Postal Address, Private Bag X9032, Pinetown, 3600

SABS
OHSAS 18001

Email: info@elangenieduza Phone: 031 716 6700 Fax: 031 716 6777

INANDA
131 of Street 1080/2
Inanda
Tel: 031 5 9 0933

KWADABEKA
140 Khutaleka Road
Cenmoort
Tel: 031 71 0313

KWAMASHU
1 S. Mandela Road
KwaMashu
Tel: 031 505 9708

MPUMALANGA
280 Shea Main Road
Mpumalanga
Tel: 031 771 0148/9588

NDWEDWE
1100 Pizam Road
Ndwedwe
Tel: 034 587 9178

NTUZUMA
G. 384 Bher-dede Drive
Ntuzuma
Tel: 031 509 1924

PINETOWN
30 Bamboco Lane
Pinetown
Tel: 031 702 3260

QADI
Zulu Reserve Road
Qadi Hill
Tel: 031 777 1742

APPENDIX C

15 A Wandsbeck Road
WESTVILLE
0845525593
Abigailgovindasamy24@gmail.com
Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Abigail Govindasamy. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, South Africa.

I am interested in learning about the reason for failure of students at the TVET college and how to improve the academic performance of students and prevent failure and dropout of students. To gather the information, I am interested in asking you some questions. Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after five years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate, or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- The research aims at knowing the reason for failure of students at the TVET college and to find ways to improve pass rates, prevent failure and dropout.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed and observed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment (through zoom application)		
Video equipment (through zoom application)		

I can be contacted at Email: Abigailgovindasamy@telkomsa.net and cell: 0845525593

My supervisor is Dr. L R Maharajh, located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email: maharajh@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through:
HSSREC Research Office, Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

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 participate in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX D

EDITORS LETTER

THE WRITING STUDIO
Writing and Editing Practice

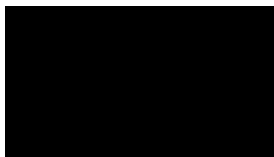
Certificate 11221

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

11 December 2021

This dissertation, entitled **Lecturers' Perspectives on the Failure Rate of Students at a Selected TVET College** by Abigail Govindasamy, has been edited and reviewed to ensure technically accurate and contextually appropriate use of language for research at this level of study.

Yours sincerely



CM ISRAEL, BA Hons (UDW) MA (UND) MA (SUN) PhD (UNH)
LANGUAGE EDITOR AND WRITING CONSULTANT
Connieisraelgo@gmail.com Mobile 082 4988166

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is your designation at this TVET college?
2. What subject do you lecture?
3. How long have you been lecturing at this TVET college?
4. What is your view on the failure rate of students at this college?
5. Why do you think students fail?
6. What strategies has the college employed to improve pass rates?
7. Are there any other factors that contribute to the failure rate of students at this college?
8. What suggestions would you make to improve pass rates?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the failure rate of students at this college?

APPENDIX F

TURNITIN CERTIFICATE

The screenshot shows a Turnitin interface. At the top right, there is a navigation bar with links: Lokesh Ramnath Maharajh | User Info | Messages (3 new) | Instructor | English | Community | Help | Logout. The Turnitin logo is on the left. Below it are navigation tabs: Assignments, Students (selected), Grade Book, Libraries, Calendar, Discussion, and Preferences. A breadcrumb trail reads: NOW VIEWING: HOME > MASTER OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM STUDIES) > STUDENTS. A section titled 'About this page' explains that this is the student portfolio page showing submissions. Below this is a table for the student 'Abigail Govindsamy' with the heading 'assignment list'. The table has columns for #, Assignment, Title, Submitted, Similarity, GradeMark, Download, and Reviews. One submission is listed: #1, Assignment: Dissertation, Title: Lecturers perspectives on fail..., Submitted: 06-Dec-2021, Similarity: 33% (yellow bar), GradeMark: (blue pencil icon), Download: (document icon), Reviews: 0.

#	Assignment	Title	Submitted	Similarity	GradeMark	Download	Reviews	
1	Dissertation start: 28-Jun-2021 due: 31-Dec-2021	Lecturers perspectives on fail...	06-Dec-2021	33%				0

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT – PARTICIPANT 2

1. What is your designation at this TVET college?

I am a lecturer.

2. What subject do you lecture?

I lecture tourism, Sustainable Tourism in South Africa level 4 and Science of Tourism level 2.

3. How long have you been lecturing at this TVET college?

For 11 years.

4. What is your view on the failure rate of students at this college?

I think that the failure rate at this college is too high and there are various reasons for this. Firstly, during our registration process, students don't meet the entrance requirements. The schools refer poor performing students but our syllabus is very theory orientated. Students don't meet the entrance requirements because their reports don't meet our requirements that we need because they performed poorly at the schools. So, at the beginning of registration we are strict with requirements but towards the end when we don't meet our numbers for that subject or for a class we then lower the requirements to most students. Also, our calibre of students are poor performing students and our syllabus or curriculum is very theory orientated. There is poor performance. Also, students come very late to class and this happens often. Our students are not interested. They are not self-motivated. There is a lot of bunking amongst students. Our students spend a lot of time in the cafeteria or on the grounds. The quality of internal exams is poor and because it is poor, students get the wrong impression of the national exams that it is easy but it is more challenging than our internal exams. Also, for our internal exams, the papers are set by different campuses and different lecturers. We don't get the scopes

on time so we don't know what is coming out in the internal exams to inform the students as well as the papers are of poor quality. Also for tourism we don't have a SIM room. According to the syllabus we are supposed to have a SIM room for practical's, so the students are unable to do research and there is no specialist venue so we can't put maps, clocks and pictures because our venues are shared. We share our venues with other lecturers and it is difficult to put up visuals and our students learn from a visual point of view. Their method of learning is visual but we cannot show them pictures. We cannot do slide shows or use projectors because we don't have access to computer venues and we keep moving to different venues. It is difficult for us to carry all our atlases to these different venues. Also, we sometimes teach in park homes and this is not a permanent structure so we cannot make the room/environment good for learning for our students. There is a lack of a specialist senior lecturer for Tourism. Currently we have a senior lecturer that is managing both the Hospitality and Tourism department but she is only qualified in Hospitality. So, we don't have much support as we would get from a person that would have been interested in Tourism. There is a lot of poor planning. The timetable is issued too late at the beginning of the year. A lot of time gets wasted and students lose interest because they are not sure as to which class to go to, which venues to go to because the venues keep changing. Because NATED is now introduced to our college there is a lack of space for the NATED students. Sometimes when these students write exams, we that teach NCV lose venues and we cancel classes so we lose time as well. Because NATED runs for six months so in the second term we get a new lot of students so in the second term there is a change in timetable to cater for lecturers to have the same number of loads. So, a lot of poor planning takes place.

5. Why do you think students fail?

Excursions are limited/restricted. Lecturers plan excursions. We get very little support from our senior lecturer who is supposed to help us with planning. When we do plan it, it is always turned down. For the last three years' excursions have been turned down. Even Hospitality and Tourism are combined on excursions which doesn't make sense because our syllabus is different. Excursions are another way for students to learn. It is a practical way that they learn. When I've taken students on excursions previously, most

of our students have not stayed at an accommodation. They learn about staying at an accommodation and about doing an inventory in the accommodation. They learn about different animals. They get to see the animals on game drives, doing different activities there. They have not been exposed previously to this. We got travel agencies to speak to them. We've taken them to tourist information offices in a practical way and this is how our students learn – visually or in a practical way and this is lacking in our curriculum. Also, students are involved in smoking dagga. Unfortunately, there is a lack of regular monitoring of students and our security is not as vigilant because our students are smoking dagga. They come to class with the wrong frame of mind. They are unable to concentrate.

6. What strategies has the college employed to improve pass rates?

The college has sent lecturers on training. They have given lecturers bursaries for studying further. I myself was given a bursary to complete a postgraduate diploma in Tourism Management. They have implemented the DP system where attendance and marks is considered. They have appointed programme heads to assist the senior lecturer so that the programme head is given a lesser load of classes so that they are able to do more for the students.

7. Are there any other factors contributing to the failure rate at this college?

Lecturers need current work experience. As much as I may have the qualification but I'm unsure of what is going on in the workplace, so we need current work experience in tourism and that would include, tourism information offices, travel agencies, the airport, tour operators, bus lines, etc. so we can align or give our students first-hand experience of what they need to know. We also need to align our curriculum with workplace needs. We need more support from local businesses in the tourism industry for workplace experience for our students and also management needs to assist us more with getting workplace experience for our students as well as programme heads because unfortunately we lecturers don't have sufficient time or resources like access to telephones or personal access to computers where we can actually get more workplace experience for our

students and our students do need that and they need this experience from level 2, level 3 and level 4 to keep them motivated and interested in the subject.

8. What suggestions would you make to improve pass rates?

I think that the college needs to go back to basics like the school environment. If you look at the school environment, the aesthetic view of the school environment. It is neat and clean. Here at our college we have a shortage of GA's. the venues are untidy. They are not cleaned. There is litter all over the place. The toilets smell. The environment needs to be clean. There need to be posters of student's good work all over campus so the students get motivated. We must acknowledge the work that they do. Our students need to be given notebooks. They are not matured enough to keep their own resources organised. Lecturers need to give out positive stickers and mark their books regularly. Student's notebooks need to be monitored regularly. Also going back to uniforms gives them a sense of belonging and it is cheaper. This uniform must be casual, not as strict as the schools with ties but given t-shirts at least 2 t-shirts should be given. Also, the chance to purchase t-shirts if they want more. They can use black pants or black jeans something to that effect. In doing this, it doesn't force students to be pressurised to keep up with the latest trends and to dress appropriately so there are no unnecessary distractions. Also, it will encourage them to come early to class because they just putting on jeans and a t-shirt. Attendance need to be monitored regularly. No student should be allowed to bunk. We should accept medical notes. Even the attendance register is not accurate in the sense to capture that the student has a medical note. The register should cater for these comments. There should be monitoring of funding. NSFAS should make sure that the disadvantaged students receive the funding. When students receive funding for transportation, this only comes at the end of the year. We need more funding but the funding needs to be monitored accurately. The funding needs to go into structures like building a sim room for Tourism. The funding should be given to the transport company and not actually to the students. Also cater for sports and art facilities. Our curriculum is failing the students. Our curriculum needs to include things like what our students enjoy. If you look at our students, they enjoy sports, arts, dance and music. They thrive in this kind of environment. If it part of the curriculum, then they would want to be in college.

They will be self-motivated because college is not only about theory but also has practical's. We need a fully functional library where the library is used for the sole purpose of the student to do research with computers as well as homework. If they do end up with a free lesson, then they must have this space where they can go to the library and do their homework. This is another thing that students don't do. They don't do homework. There is no strategy to get them to do their homework. A lot of our students come from disadvantaged, single parented homes. They have a lot of emotional distress and unfortunately the lecturer is not qualified to assist them. So, we need qualified counsellors. These counsellors need to be monitored. They need to have files on the students and the students who are being counselled need to be monitored. We also need a subject specialist for tourism who can help and assist us with tourism to help develop our Tourism department.

9. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the failure rate at this college?

Unfortunately, there is a high failure rate. It is not only our college. It is a lot of other colleges as well. In terms of Tourism, it is only offered at Ndwedwe campus and at our college and there should be more correspondence between the colleges. With regards to setting exam papers we are given unrealistic deadlines to set papers. There is insufficient time to do proper moderation. I recommend that exams be brought forward. Students should not be writing right until the last day before holidays so learners are given ample time to mark papers and give students feedback. Also, students will be able to receive reports before they go on holiday. Regular parent's meetings should be scheduled so parents are informed about the progress of their child, regular circulars should be sent to parents, for example parents should be informed about the DP system. The circulars also need to be in a language that parents/ grandparents understand. We need to get people from the Tourism industry into our college regularly to motivate our students and update them on what is going on in the work environment. Reports need to inform students on their current DP status. Parents meeting should be at the end of each term to inform parents about the child's attendance and academic progress so challenges can be

identified early. Subject files also need to be regularly monitored by senior lecturers because currently only POA'S are monitored.