



Exploring the lecturers' perceptions of Adult Education and Training Level 4 on dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two Community Learning Centres in Greater Edendale

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

M.Ed. Adult Education

In the

DISCIPLINE OF HUMANITIES

School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

February 2025

Supervised by

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Abstract

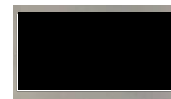
The study explores lecturers' perceptions of the Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 4 on the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Greater Edendale. The purpose of the research study is to gain insight into the experiences of AET level 4 lecturers by exploring their perceptions of AET Level 4, particularly dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale and envisioning that through their perceptions, the functionality of the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale will be improved. The theoretical framework that guided the study was System Theory, which is about understanding how a particular group is interconnected, interrelating, interdependent, and influencing one another in a specific system. The research study used a qualitative approach based on an interpretivist approach. The study used multiple data-generating methods, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling helped ensure that the most suitable and relevant participants were selected. Thematic analysis has been used to analyse data by identifying patterns and themes. The findings revealed a mismatch between the students' learning needs and the lecturers' training. There is a lack of alignment between the schools and AET. Also, there is a crucial need for full support from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in the CLCs regarding institutional resources. The findings also revealed that motivation is essential in retaining adult learners in CLCs. Furthermore, it was revealed that the current AET Level 4 curriculum emphasizes formal qualifications, while CLCs learners are interested in obtaining skills rather than qualifications. As a result, it fails to attract several adults and youth interested in completing a school qualification and in the market to alleviate poverty. The researcher concludes that although a General Education and Training Certificate for Adults is essential, it would be better if the CLCs focused on equipping learners with skills for entrepreneurship rather than preparing them for employment opportunities. The researcher recommends that educators be adequately trained to meet the needs of learners, which is likely to address issues such as dropouts. There must be a sound relationship between schools, AET and the college. A holistic approach must integrate formal and non-formal curriculum approaches, and skills taught in CLCs must align with the AET policy to suit adult learners' needs.

Declaration

I, Swazi Faith Nzimande, declare that:

- 1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- 2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- 3. This thesis does not contain other persons’ data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

- To God, the Mighty One who gave me strength, wisdom and perseverance in every step of this journey.
- To my beloved three children, Nondumiso, Mpilwenhle and Nomakhosi, for always encouraging and supporting me. I would not have done this without your love and support. I am forever grateful.
- To my supervisor, Dr. Z.H. Hlela, thank you for your patience, guidance, and support.
- To our mentor, Lucky Lushaba (prospective Dr), thank you for your mentorship, guidance, and support.
- To my colleagues, Thokozile Mncwabe and Nombulelo Masuku, thank you for always being there to offer advice and encouragement.
- To my dear sister, Momsy, for believing in me and always encouraging me.

List of Abbreviations

ABE: Adult Basic Education

ABET: Adult Basic Education and Training

AET: Adult Education and Training

ANHC: Ancillary Health Care

CLC: Community Learning Centre

CETC: Community Education and Training Colleges

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

DoE: Department of Education

GETC: General Education and Training Certificate

GETCA: General Education and Training Certificate for Adults

GETCAC: General Education and Training College Administrative Centres.

FET: Further Education and Training

ECD: Early Childhood Development

KZN: KwaZulu-Natal

NASCA: National Senior Certificate for Adults

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

NGO: Non - governmental Organisation

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

PALC: Public Adult Learning Centre

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

SBA: Site Based Assessment

SIDA: Swedish International Development Authority

SETA: Sector Education and Training Authority

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Appendices

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Chapter One

Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

The study explored lecturers' perceptions of the Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 4 on the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The chapter presents the rationale, the purpose of the study, the location of the study, objectives, and research questions. The key terms are also briefly outlined in the literature review section. The chapter also describes the study's theoretical framework, research methodology and ethical issues. Lastly, the chapter ends with the outline of the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Background and Rationale of the study

Chilli (2007) indicates that apartheid education has caused overwhelming damage to our education system, including adult education. Black South African students were subjected to apartheid education, which deprived them of equal access to educational opportunities. Since the beginning of the democratic era in 1994, the South African government has implemented several curriculum changes has been put in place by South African government. AET policies and Acts aim to correct the injustices of the past. One of the objectives of the legislative framework was to facilitate the AET's role regarding social change and the improvement of livelihoods. “The mission statement of the CETCs is to support an education system that will cater to opportunities for lifelong learning and entrepreneurship and help empower the community to be self-sufficient and active participants in the economy” (DHET, 2015, p. 5). The idea of redressing the inequalities of the past through the legislative framework is relevant to the socio-economic context of Greater Edendale.

The socio-economic context of Greater Edendale is predominantly black community due to the Group Areas Act (discriminatory practices), which is characterised by inequalities, high levels of poverty, poor health and poor infrastructure. Gumbi (2020) says that many youth and adults need to be more employed, literate, and skilled, not in AET programs and dire need of access to Education and Training Programs (NEETs). The curriculum aims to “redress this issue by providing formal and non-formal skills to uplift and empower people experiencing poverty and offer them sustainable livelihoods” (DHET, 2017, p.9).

The study's rationale is based on Post-School Education and Training DHET (2013), which maintains that the existing Public Adult Learning Centers system needs to work more effectively. As a result, CETCs have been introduced as a replacement to address the shortfalls of the current education system. The literature by Bachan (2017) indicates that the AET Level 4 qualification has less impact on skills development, poverty alleviation and unemployment. Nala (2020) further states that the CLCs do not have full-time staff and operate mainly in the evenings because the lecturers are double parkers, meaning they teach during the day and the evening; therefore, they cannot provide adequate teaching. Gumbi (2020) also highlights that the current AET Level 4 curriculum and approach in the CLCs focus on general education. As a result, it fails to attract several adults and youth interested in completing a school qualification and acquiring skills for the labour market to alleviate poverty.

There is a need to focus more on the quality and variety of AET Level 4 curricula for adult learners. As a result, it needs to be clarified to what extent the AET Level 4 curriculum responds to the needs of the youth and adults not in employment or Education and Training and in need of attending AET classes (NEETs). Nala (2020) states that a considerable challenge remains whereby a high dropout and failure rate and a low retention rate in AET Level 4 CLCs is a cause for concern; therefore, the study aims to investigate and understand through the lecturers' perceptions of the AET Level 4 dropout, the retention and the throughput rate in the CLCs in the Greater Edendale. It is hoped that the study's findings will contribute to developing and enhancing the effectiveness of the CLCs in Greater Edendale by reducing the dropout and failure rate and enhancing or improving the retention and throughput rate. "The education system has consistently created inequalities in educational opportunities in the adult education sector. Adults and youth not in formal workplaces or educational institutions have few opportunities to get first or second opportunities for learning." (DHET, 2013, p.32). Statistics South Africa (2011) shows that about 3.4 million youth are not employed, are not in education and training, and are also in need of education and training (NEETs).

McKay (2012) claims that the number has increased to 3.8 million young people who have obtained less than Grade 12 or equivalent education; they need to gain the skills to make them employable and have sustainable livelihoods. "The new institutional type of community education and training colleges (CETCs) aims to respond towards the needs of the communities

and laid post-school education that promotes skills which are relevant to adult learners in their societies” (DHET, 2013, p.3). Therefore, Gumbi (2020) says this raises questions: Can the existing AET L4 curriculum sustain adult learners in the CLCs, and to what extent does the existing AET L4 curriculum respond to the quality programs of NEETs?

Bachan (2017) further remarks that AET emphasizes formal qualifications, which learners would rather avoid obtaining. The other concern according to Bachan, (2017) is the quality of the GETC qualification that is being presented. Most adult learners collect a few certificates in specific learning areas. The study examined the factors contributing to the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the CLCs in Greater Edendale through the lecturers' perceptions.

The researcher is a former Adult Education and Training AET L4 lecturer; therefore, I was interested in sharing the lecturers’ perceptions and experiences regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. As an Edendale resident, I was also interested in contributing to the educational history of Greater Edendale by documenting the lecturers’ perceptions on AET Level 4 on dropout, retention and the throughput rate in their historical context and perspective.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The study focused on lecturers’ perception of dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The purpose of the research study is to gain insight into the experiences of AET Level 4 lecturers by exploring their perceptions of AET Level 4 about the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale and to find strategies to reduce the dropout and envisioning that through the lecturers’ perceptions, the functionality of the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale will be improved by ensuring increased retention and the throughput rate.

1.4 Location of the study

After 1994, the South African government recognised the need to address the issues of illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, and inequalities through various legislations. The study forms part of the Greater Edendale project; hence, it explores the lecturers’ perceptions regarding AET Level 4 on dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The data presented in this chapter was generated from the study participants of the two (CLCs) in Greater Edendale at the Imbali Township. The ‘Imbali’ is the IsiZulu word for ‘flower’. Laband &

Haswell (1988) state that the Imbali Township was established in 1958 and the mid-1960s for the City workers and job hunters away from the City of Pietermaritzburg. In 1964, the Department of Bantu Affairs, in collaboration with the Pietermaritzburg Co- operation, took over the control of the Area. The black people affected by the Group Ares Act became the first residents of the settlement to be known as Imbali Bantu Township. Pietermaritzburg's oldest and biggest township is nestled 15 km West of the city.

Greater Edendale falls under the Msunduzi Local Municipality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and forms part of the Umgungundlovu District Municipality. "Its population is about 617,000, and almost half reside in Greater Edendale" (Msunduzi, IDP 2019). Greater Edendale houses crucial adult educational institutions such as Indumiso College of Education, Manaye Community College, etc. The investigation is a case study of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The researcher will use the two satellite centres as sites under the Manaye Community Education and Training College.

Site A

Jabu Ngcobo Community Learning Centre is situated at Imbali Stage 2, Pietermaritzburg, KZN, South Africa. The centre is located 20 km away from Pietermaritzburg. The centre was started by Jabu Ngcobo in 1988 to provide literacy programmes to the adult community of Imbali Township. The centre was later renamed Jabu Ngcobo. After 1997, the ABET Act of 2000 replaced a new regulatory framework, and the centre was changed into a Public Adult Learning Centre. Ndabenhle Primary School hosts the centre and depends on its accommodation and administration resources.

Harley and Butler (2009) maintain that the location is ideal for both the communities of Imbali and the informal settlement of Slangspruit. The centre was opened to meet the needs of the previously marginalised community of Imbali because most of the community members are unemployed; they rely on pensions or small businesses to generate income or obtain money from members of the family who earn salaries. Nzimande (2007) further highlights that Jabu Ngcobo plays a significant role in catering for the learning needs of the previously marginalised Imbali community as well as the informal settlement of Slangspruit, given the context that KwaZulu-Natal has the utmost levels of illiteracy in the whole country.

Site B

Asikhululeke Community Learning Centre is at Imbali Unit 18 at Fezokuhle Primary School. The centre was started in 2006 with Levels 1, 2 and 3 only. In 2008, the number of learners increased, and more students passed, which led to the opening of Level 4. As the number of learners increased, more teachers were hired. In 2015, the KZN City College (Manaye Community Education and Training College) took over. In 2019, the number of CLCs was reduced because adult learners were decreasing. The centre was not gazetted and ended up under Inkanyiso, located at Kwa Pata High School. In 2023, the centre had many adult learners. As a result, it was gazetted and was known as Asikhululeke Community Learning Centre.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1.5.1 To explore the lecturer's perceptions on dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

1.5.2 To investigate the factors that promote the retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

1.5.3 To make recommendations on strategies that can be used to minimise learner dropout and improve the retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

1.6 The Research Questions

The study was conducted to respond to the following research questions:

1.6.1 What are the lecturers' perceptions regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?

1.6.2 What are the lecturers' perceptions of factors that promote, retention, and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?

1.6.3 What are lecturers' perceptions of strategies to reduce dropout and improve retention and throughput rates in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?

1.7 Key Concepts

This section briefly presents and describes the key concepts relevant to the study.

1.7.1 Adult Education

The terminology ABE and ABET have been used frequently in the research study; therefore, the researcher felt that it must be included in the key concepts of the study. Various scholars have

| NQF level | Qualification | Equivalent grades | AET level |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|

given different definitions to define adult education.

“Adult Education is defined as all forms of planned education and training system which meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy numeracy, general knowledge and life skills, values and attitudes” (Baatjies & Mathe, 2004, p.9) while Jarvis (1990) and Rule (2006) claim that Adult education includes several practice areas, vocational education, human resource development, continuing professional education and literacy education. Within the formal context of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa, “Adult Basic Education refers to all the learning programs for adults beginning from level 1 to level 4, which is equivalent to grade 9 in public schools or NQF level 1” (Adult Basic Education and Training Act No.52 of 2000, p. 6). This means that ABE is parallel with nine years of schooling. It also incorporates two fundamental learning areas, core and learning areas, in the elective category.

When examining the scholars above in the field of Adult Education, one can identify similarities among Jarvis and Rule regarding their definition of ABE. They define ABE as education geared to enhance productivity and create more employment opportunities, a perspective which Baatjies and Mathe (2004) refer to as “an instrumentalist approach to ABE. This educational framework has been revamped with a competency-based structure tailored to address South African requirements. Its primary objective is to impart adaptable workplace skills to enhance the country's competitiveness in the global market” (Baatjies & Mathe, 2004, p.8).

Table 1 overleaf indicates the different levels of qualifications for the National Qualifications Framework as a requirement for completion of GETC, which is equivalent to AET Level 4.

| | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| NQF 1 | General Education and Training | Grade 8- Grade 9 | AET 4 |
| | | Grade 6- Grade 7 | AET 3 |
| | | Grade 4-Grade 5 | AET 2 |
| | | Grade R- Grade 3 | AET 1 |

The Mission Statement states, "The KZN CET College is committing itself to serve the youth and adults by providing formal and non-formal education and skills-based programmes responsive to socio-economic problems. It also promotes an education that provides opportunities for life-long learning and entrepreneurship, empowering people to participate in the economy actively" (DHET, 2015, p.5).

Table 1: AET NQF structure

Aitchison (2004) notes that there have been significant policy advancements in the system since the first ABET policy in South Africa post-1994. However, despite these efforts, ABET has persistently been marginalised within the South African education framework. Consequently, the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) emerged as the primary qualification obtained after completing the four levels of ABET, aligning with the nine-year general schooling standard outlined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Rule (2014) claims that unfortunately, the formalisation of ABET has resulted in a high dropout rate and a decline in Public Education Centres.

While the policy formulators in South Africa express dedication to offering quality educational programs that foster lifelong learning and business skills, Aitchison (2004) contends that the new education and training initiatives prioritise formal qualifications under the National Qualifications Framework. He further asserts that lifelong learning should encompass formal and informal developmental approaches, enabling learners to apply the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes acquired daily.

1.7.2 Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is learning which occurs within a specific setting where the attainment of relevant skills never ceases. This type of learning taps within the social context in which the achievement of relevant skills never stops and is usable. It is also learning through collaboration for the community way of living.” (Merriam, 2008, p.185). Another scholar, Preece (2009), argues that lifelong learning is a holistic approach applied in all sorts of life to improve all aspects of an individual. “The view relates to a holistic approach to education and training offers learning that develops soft and hard skills to sustain livelihoods” (DHET, 2015). The document, according to Aitchison (2004, p.168), places Lifelong learning as the fundamental vision in order to attain the following purposes: “Education and training have a critical role in contributing to empowering individuals of society so that they will be able to participate actively in all aspects of the economy” However, the lack of a combined approach to using the principles has led to several challenges in the adult education system.

1.7.3 Defining Curriculum

Numerous scholars have outlined different definitions of the curriculum. Kerr (1986, p. 16) refers to a curriculum as strategic and guided learning by the institution that can be done individually or in groups. Mdladlana (2005) maintains that curriculum is the interaction of purposeful plans teachers create to benefit the students. Johnson (1967, p.130) defines the curriculum as an organised series of proposed learning outcomes perceived as instruction. “All learning that is intentional and guided by learning institutions, whether individually or in groups of learners, inside and outside the learning institutions” is termed curriculum (Bachan, 2017, p.35).

Ndlela (2012) defines curriculum as more than a syllabi documentation. She says it includes all teaching and learning activities in learning situations. She further asserts that the curriculum demonstrates the ideas of social interactions of a particular group, which is people who are set up to voice their opinions and values. These ideas all form part of the learning situation. When one defines curriculum, it cannot be separated from the context in which it is utilised. According to the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act no. 16 of 2000), the curriculum in a South African context refers to what is to be taught, the content, teaching methods, what to assess, and how (DHET, 2000). Most importantly, it has to reflect the needs and interests of those it aims to

assist. This curriculum notion aligns with the research study because it explores the lecturers' perceptions of AET Level 4 regarding dropout, retention and throughput rate.

The Continuing Education and Training Act of 2000 created a policy which served as a framework to formulate CETCs as another type of institution within the Post-School Education and Training system, which was effected from the 1st of April 2015. The Act is responsible for the formal provisioning of the General Education and Training Certificates for Adults (GETCA), equated with the NQF level 1 and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) qualifications (DHET,2015, p.10). “The Act aims to offer relevant programs that cater to adult learners and community needs. The new CETCs are expected to provide integrated formal education with a level 4 exit point for GETCA, as well as non-formal programs, also known as socio-holistic skills that include vocational and occupational training, to address the needs of youth and adults in NEETs” (DHET, 2015, p.15).

| RULES OF COMBINATION FOR THE GETC-ABET QUALIFICATION: 120 CREDITS | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| FUNDAMENTALS COMPONENT: COMPULSORY | | 39 CREDITS | | | | | | |
| 1. | One Official Language: 23 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 2. | Mathematical Literacy: 16 Credits OR | | | | | | | |
| 3. | Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences: 16 Credits NOT BOTH | | | | | | | |
| CORE COMPONENT: COMPULSORY | | 32 CREDITS | | | | | | |
| 1. | Life Orientation: 32 Credits | | | | | | | |
| ELECTIVES COMPONENT: OPTIONAL | | 51 CREDITS | | | | | | |
| Academic Learning Areas: | | | | | | | | |
| 1. | Human and Social Sciences: 23 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 2. | Natural Sciences: 15 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 3. | Economic and Management Sciences: 21 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 4. | Arts and Culture: 17 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 5. | Technology: 11 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 6. | One Additional Official Language (Excluding the language chosen as a Fundamental): 23 Credits | | | | | | | |
| Vocational Learning Areas: | | | | | | | | |
| 7. | Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology: 20 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 8. | Ancillary Health Care: 45 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 9. | Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises: 17 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 10. | Travel and Tourism: 38 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 11. | Information Communication Technology: 23 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 12. | Early Childhood Development: 26 Credits | | | | | | | |
| 13. | Wholesale and Retail: 37 Credits | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>OPTION 1 (5 Learning Areas)</th> <th>OPTION 2 (6 Learning Areas)</th> <th>OPTION 3 (7 or more learning areas)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>TWO Fundamentals ONE Core Two Electives</td> <td>TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and THREE Electives</td> <td>TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and FOUR Electives</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | OPTION 1 (5 Learning Areas) | OPTION 2 (6 Learning Areas) | OPTION 3 (7 or more learning areas) | TWO Fundamentals ONE Core Two Electives | TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and THREE Electives | TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and FOUR Electives |
| OPTION 1 (5 Learning Areas) | OPTION 2 (6 Learning Areas) | OPTION 3 (7 or more learning areas) | | | | | | |
| TWO Fundamentals ONE Core Two Electives | TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and THREE Electives | TWO Fundamentals ONE Core and FOUR Electives | | | | | | |

Figure 3: Learning Areas in a GETC Qualification. (Source: Umalusi, (2015))

Figure 3. above shows the rules of combination for the GETC – ABET Qualification, which is 120 credits.

Regarding curriculum development, rooted in lifelong learning, it is argued that such curriculums are essential for combining formal, non-formal, and informal education. Aitchison (2004) indicates that the emphasis should be on skills and should prepare adult learners with essential practices and self-awareness, resulting in whole-person curricular development.

1.7.4 The Lecturer

This fundamental concept is valuable to the study because the research inquiry aims to explore the lecturers' perceptions of AET Level 4 on dropout, retention and throughput rate in Greater Edendale. Any school teacher may be employed to become a tutor.

Tight (1996) highlights that the role of an adult educator is to facilitate the learning process and allow learners to develop to their fullest capacity therefore an adult educator has to set a conducive learning environment and guide learners' inquiry, engage in discourse and become empowered meanwhile students Elcock (2002; Knowles (2014) maintain that lecture-practitioner roles are discussed as possible solutions to ensure the combination of the theoretical knowledge and practical experiences for students. An adult educator has to identify the theory, maintain standards of practice and policies within a specific clinical range, and contribute to the educational programme of adult learners.

The ideology of the humanist approach is best suited to adult learners because, according to Carl Rogers (1940), the role of an adult educator is facilitating and allowing learners to be self-reliant and develop their natural abilities. Elias & Merriam (2005), argue that humanist education is designed to meet the needs of an adult as it promotes communication and cooperation among individuals towards self-actualisation. Therefore, the educator's role is to facilitate the subject matter, promote the learner's individuality and develop the learner for the betterment of society.

1.7.5 Adult Learner

The adult learner, as defined by Mkhwanazi (2001), is an individual who has progressed to self-directed independence. Various scholars describe their different ideologies of adult learners. Knowles (1990) views "an adult learner as an individual who responds to prior experiences

regarding subjectivity and objectivity.” The behaviourists, Gboku et al. (2007) refer to an adult learner as someone who takes an active role and responsibility for learning with the aim of becoming competent. Adult learners have rich resources for learning; therefore, a link has to be made between existing and new information through interactive involvement.

Elias and Merriam (2005) claim that the humanist approach to education is based on meeting the learner's needs. Humanists are similar to lifelong learning concepts, including some educational principles of learner-centeredness, flexibility in learning, open learning, and learner support. There is a similarity in Aitchison's (2004) argument whereby he says that from a humanistic point of view, lifelong learning means that adults must acquire basic skills to function actively in society and attain specific values, knowledge, and attitudes.

1.7.6 Adult Learning

The previous section dealt with an adult learner. The study now looks at the theories of adult learning. The theories will include andragogy, humanistic and experiential learning. The section presents adult learning theories because they relate to adult learning and teaching approaches.

Andragogy was fostered by Knowles (1990), who termed it the art of science and knowledge which facilitates adult learning. Adult learners are self-directed learners with vast experiences that serve as rich educational resources which are related to their social roles and are also intrinsically motivated to learn. The teaching and learning approach is learner-centred.

The humanistic view also shares the same concept with the philosophy. Ellias & Merriam (2005) claim that this kind of learning develops the learners' ability to become self-directed individuals. When learning becomes self-directed, there is a shift from dependent identities to independent ones.

Rogers (1940) asserts that the role of an adult educator is to facilitate the learning process and allow the learner to learn naturally, be self-reliant, and develop their capabilities to the utmost for the betterment of society. The curriculum caters to adult learners' needs by presenting problem-solving group activities. It also assists in developing self-actualized and fully developed adults.

Tight (1996) contends that combining learners' understanding of knowledge with the activity will direct the learners to significant learning with new experiences, which will lead to the

learners' development. The educator's role is to facilitate learning conditions that enable the learners to become self-sufficient and develop their full potential.

Kolbs' theory of experiential learning maintains that adult learners learn better with experience, and they absorb information better when engaged as a whole individual. Teaching and learning become a shared activity. The theory also emphasises an experience-centred approach where adult learners assume an active role. The educator's role is to facilitate, guide, and assist during the learning process. The concepts resonate with the study because "the holistic approach to education and training aims to offer the learning approach, which develops a combined development framework which seeks to establish sustainable livelihoods by supporting the society as well as individual needs" (DHET, 2015, p.17).

1.7.7 Community Learning Centres

The (ABET) Act No. 52 of 2000 allowed the establishment of Private and Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) to replace the night schools under apartheid. "These adult learning centres offer adults with learning opportunities ranging from basic literacy to grade 12. A community college is an educational institution offering extensive programs within a single institutional structure. These community colleges will be financed by their single provincial government" (DHET, 2015, p.5).

Figure 4. displays a relationship between a Community College and a Community Learning Centre.

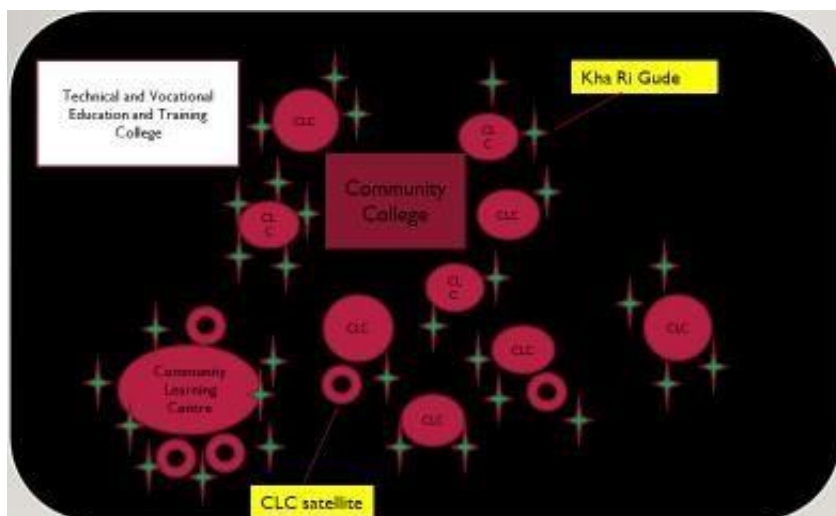


Figure 4: A Relationship between a Community College and a Community Learning Centre

1.7.8 Dropout, Retention and Throughput Rate in the CLCs

(a) Dropout Rate in the CLCs

DoE (1998) explains the concept of dropout as learners who voluntarily leave the system but are not academically excluded. Tinto (1997) refers to dropout as anyone leaving an institution at which they are registered. A modified definition of dropout as defined by Dhlamini & Heeralal (2014) states that it is the failure of individuals with specific abilities and goal commitments to achieve educational goals. Any adult learner who leaves school for any reason before graduation or the end of a programme of studies without being relocated to another institution is defined as a dropout.

Tinto (1993) highlights goal commitment as a crucial aspect of the dropout process. When learners' goals and commitments align with their institutional experiences, it strengthens their resolve to remain at the adult institution. He further argues that commitments influence the extent to which learners are dedicated to achieving their goals (goal commitment) and to the adult institution (institutional commitment) where they are enrolled.

Student integration is fundamental to the idea of attrition. Studies have shown that learners with a higher level of integration into a college's academic system will have a greater goal and institutional commitment (Tinto, 1993). Another concept by Nkontwana (2016) highlights that adult learners' integration phenomenon clarifies how diverse learners have different forms of dropout behaviour. He further cites academic and social integration as critical elements of student dropout and persistence. Makola (1975) asserts that South African learners are dropping out of adult institutions at a high rate due to three key factors: contextual, personal, and institutional factors. Diaz (2002) contradicts Tinto (1993) by indicating that uncontrollable issues affect the dropout results and that the high dropout rate is not symbolic of academic non-success, whilst Nala (2020) proposes that the idea of teaching adult learners with an ultimate goal to fulfil the relevant needs of the individuals is inadequate. Still, they must also be assisted in changing their way of thinking about their needs, which will reduce the high dropout rate. Adult learners

must also realise and understand the value of participating in learning institutions; otherwise, they will drop out.

The study aims to explore the AET Level 4 lecturers’ perceptions. It focuses on the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. It is based on the rationale of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training Act of 2013. The current AET Level 4 curriculum approach in the CLCs reflects an insufficient focus on offering various quality educational programmes. As a result, it is not clear to what extent the AET Level 4 curriculum

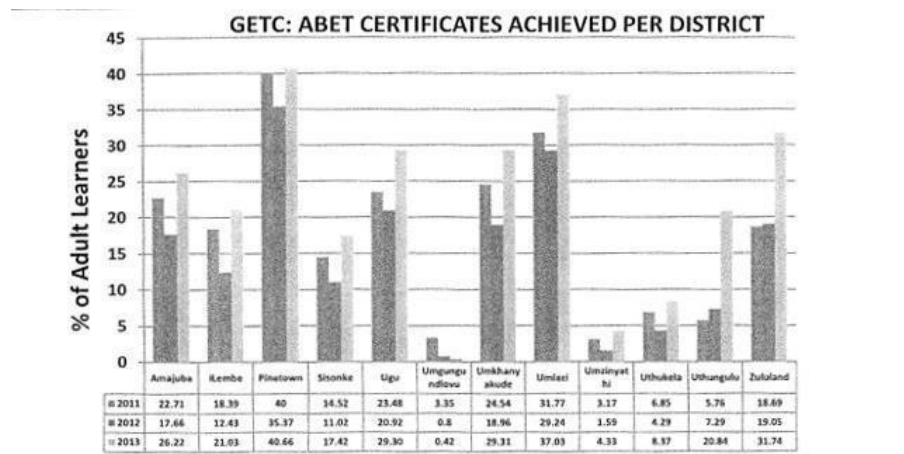


Figure 5: Percentage of Learners Who Achieved a GETC: ABET Certificate per District (KZN)

responds to the needs of the youth and adults not in employment or Education and Training and in need of attending AET classes (NEETs); therefore, a great challenge remains whereby the dropout and failure rate is high. A low retention and throughput rate is evident in the CLCs.

This fundamental notion is significant to the study. Gilbert (2000) indicates that the lack of retention, dropout, and failure rates have been challenged, particularly in higher education institutions. Various approaches to learners’ achievement should be considered at an individual, course program, institutional or system level. Therefore, a model for sustainable student retention will be part of the discussion in the next section to retain students.

b) Retention Rate in the CLCs

In the previous section, the study presented with why students leave school: Tinto's Student Integration Model (1975), which theorises that the social integration of learners increases their institutional commitment. Tinto (1975) maintains that retention is continued student participation in a learning event to accomplishment, which may be a course, program, institution or system in adult education institutions. Student retention also refers to how higher academic institutions keep learners constantly in the program from year to year until they complete the program. Another similar definition is by Crawford (1999), who postulates that retention is the upkeep of a constant enrolment in classes during the semester.

Walleri (1981) argues that measuring retention at community centres cannot solely rely on students' qualifications since not all learners aim for formal qualifications. Some participants join the CLCs to acquire skills and then move on. Therefore, retention can be simplified to program completion within a community college context. Swail (2002) delineates the impact of institutional effectiveness on reducing dropout rates and factors influencing learners' performance and decisions regarding continuing formal education.

Similarly, Anderson (1985) emphasises the importance of integration, stating that students may need help to persist if they are not socially integrated into college life. The synergy between academic motivation, conducive learning environments, and educational support could significantly impact student achievement and persistence in college.

The model aligns with Aitchison's concept of lifelong learning (2004), which emphasises the necessity for a supportive process that motivates learners to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and values. Anderson (2011) concurs with Swail (2002) in that the learners who feel integrated within the learning institution will likely be satisfied and committed, thus enhancing retention.

Conversely, Nala (2020) suggests that motivation is crucial to retention. Adults must recognise the importance of attending adult classes, and their motivation for learning must stem from within. Additionally, adult learners require assistance in achieving their goals, highlighting the importance of curriculum designers assessing the context of programs and planning them to meet adult learners' expectations. CLCs can more effectively retain adult learners by considering their expectations.

c) Throughput rate in the CLCs

Nkontwana (2016) defines throughput rate as the learners who graduate within a specified time qualification. It is also termed a student success rate who obtains qualifications or credits. Sondlo (2013) maintains that when learners enrolled in an education programme become actively engaged in all the teaching and learning activities and finish the programme within the specified period, that is known as throughput. The study will use motivation and persistence to influence the throughput rate in the CLCs.

Nala (2020) proposes the idea that motivation promotes retention. This means that the ambition to learn and achieve must come from within the adult learner. Motivation is vital for a student to join adult learning programs. There are two types of motivation, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Beck (2005), intrinsic motivation is the inner drive to want to learn, which must come from within the adult learner. Malone and Lepper (1987) assert that this type of motivation is what an individual does without outside encouragement.

Extrinsic motivation is when exterior forces compel an individual to want to achieve. Dhlamini (2012) maintains that extrinsic motivation comes from somewhere outside the person. A learner who is extrinsically driven has a belief that their success relies intensively on the facilitators. Meanwhile, Gilley and Maycunich (2000) say that adult learners tend to be responsive to outside motivation, such as promotions and recognition through prizes, praise, and certificates. Therefore, according to Nala (2020), if an adult learner is motivated to take part in an adult learning program, such an adult learner is expected to persist in the adult learning programme.

Niwagaba (2007) defines persistence as an adult staying in the program for as long as they can whilst participating in self-directed learning until they finish the learning program, while Anderson (2011) states that persistence, as it relates to students, is termed as continued participation in adult learning programs to graduate or finishing the program. Similarly, Nala (2020) further defines retention as an institutional measure and persistence as a learner measure because the students feel satisfied while participating in the learning institution. The feeling of being in the right place and the learner's connection with the learning institution will automatically drive persistence.

1.8 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework according to Lester (2005) is a collection of ideas which assists in understanding or interpreting a phenomenon. The study used systems theory as a theoretical framework to understand what the study concepts. Systems theory “is a model of understanding how a particular group is interconnected, interrelating, and interdependent on specific components and how they influence one another in that particular system as in one piece” (Green, 2015, 24). System theory is also a way of viewing the world that naturally leads to the case study since it aims to see the system as a whole, in much the same way you aim to do in a case inquiry

The study involved several stakeholders as participants. The stakeholders involved has to work together jointly because the system is viewed holistically. The theory was useful in helping to understand the concepts of the study. The researcher used the semi-structured interviews to find out from the participants what the problem was as well as to determine the relationships between the lectures, teaching, learning, learners and governance in the CLCs; therefore, the study looked at the systematic problem involving the institution as a whole and not look at the problem in isolation.

1.9 Research Methodology

The research study used a qualitative approach based on an interpretive design. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) maintain that an interpretive paradigm is characterised by the researcher interpreting and understanding how people make common sense of their worldview.

Mackenzie & Knipe (2006) maintains that the researcher depended upon the participants' views of the situation being investigated and recognised the impact of their background and experiences on the research study. The study sought to understand the lecturers' perceptions regarding the AET Level 4 on dropout, retention, and the throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The advantage of using an interpretive paradigm according to Cohen et al., (2011) is that it offers credible and justifiable results that could be replicated in the research study. The researcher used a case study as a research design. The use of the case study was most suitable in the research study because the investigation explored a specific issue without changing the context of the study (Neha & Rule, 2018) since the researcher aimed at providing an in-depth insight into the lecturers' perceptions of AET Level 4 factors that contribute to the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs and also helped in answering the critical research questions. A case study offered a unique case of dealing with real people in real

situations, thus allowing the readers to understand ideas clearly when presenting abstract principles or theories (Cohen et al., 2011). This is one of the advantages of the case study.

The researcher used purposive sampling to identify the participants. Cohen et al. (2011) assert that purposive sampling includes hand-picked cases by a researcher to be included in a sample because they possess specific characteristics. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) further say that purposive sampling occurs when the researcher chooses the study participants for a particular purpose. The two centre managers (former and current) were selected because they head the institution and are responsible for the smooth running of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. They also have vast experience and knowledge regarding the AET Level 4 curriculum of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The two former AET Level 4 lecturers were selected because they have more than five years of expertise and knowledge in the AET Level 4 curriculum, and they also possess background knowledge about the educational history of Edendale because most of them are residents of Greater Edendale. The two current AET Level 4 lecturers were chosen because they represent the academic system of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. They deal with learners daily and have experience teaching AET Level 4 adult learners

The study as indicated by Bertram & Christiansen (2014) has used multiple data-generating methods to obtain reliable data. The two CLCs in the Greater Edendale as a case study offered the study an opportunity to use multiple data-generating methods such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher addressed the critical research questions relevant to the study.

Merriam (1998) says that various documents can assist the researcher in discovering meaning, developing understanding, and discovering insights relevant to the research problem while Stake (1995); Yin (1994) states that Document analysis is appropriate for a qualitative case study because when it is done thoroughly, the research study generates detailed descriptions of a single program or occurrence. The study used government documents on AET policies and legislation, reports, attendance registers and mark schedules. These documents had information about the social occurrence the study wanted to investigate. The use of documents helped the researcher to gain insight into the research questions the researcher asked about the topic. Bowan (2009) articulates that the advantage of using document analysis is that it is less costly and less time-consuming and covers an extended study time frame.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to explore the lecturers' perceptions of AET Level 4 regarding the dropout, retention, and throughput rates in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. As a data-generating tool, the semi-structured interview is an unstructured, open-ended interview, allowing the interviewer to have better flexibility during the interview process (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 409). The method also helped the researcher to acquire first-hand information from the study participants. The primary purpose of the semi-structured interview was to understand people's experiences and how they construct the meaning of that experience. During the interview process, when the participants narrated their stories, the study participants got to reconstruct their experiences with the topic. They reflected on the meaning and made sense of their experiences within the social context in which they occurred, which is the two CLCs in Greater Edendale (Naidoo & Rule, 2006). One advantage of using the semi-structured interview is that it allows the researcher to have a one-on-one conversation with the participant and obtain clarity.

The third data-generating method the study used was focus group discussions. MacMillan & Schumacher (2014) defines a focus group as a small group of participants chosen to be interviewed to evaluate a problem, concern or idea.

The focus group discussions were conducted last because the researcher sought to explore whether the study participants would repeat the same responses in the presence of the centre managers. The researcher had a chance to engage with all the participants, and the research participants could express themselves freely.

The study used deductive analysis to analyse data. The researcher used deductive analysis to analyse data by looking at emerging themes and then fit into the theory. Braun & Clarke (2021) define thematic analysis in a qualitative paradigm focuses on meaning-making to gain an in-depth understanding of practices.

1.10 Ethical issues

According to the rights of participants in any investigative study, ethics is a critical issue that gives them respect and protects their dignity. For the researcher to be able to generate data for the study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the UKZN Ethics Committee (HSSREC). The researcher requested the gatekeeper permission from the Department of Higher

Education and wrote a permission letter to the Centre head of the institution to access the research sites. The researcher wrote an informed consent to the AET Level 4 study participants. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study and in the report's writing. AET lecturers and centre managers were identified using pseudonyms.

1.11 Guide to chapters

An overview of how the dissertation is structured chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduced the research by presenting the problem to be explored. It outlined the background and rationale of the study, the focus and purpose of the study. The location and the research questions as well as objectives were also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the literature related to the study and theoretical framework. Key terms were highlighted, and the chapter argued the different scholarly views on the lecturers' perceptions regarding AET Level 4 curriculum challenges regarding the dropout, retention, and throughput rate of adult learners in the two CLCs community learning centres. In the study, the researcher used the Systems theory as a lens to collect and analyse data.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The chapter presented a qualitative approach based on the interpretive design. It also outlined the research method, the use of the case study and the reasons for it. The study further presented data-generating methods and ethical issues. The last part of this chapter highlighted the data analysis procedure implemented by the study.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

The chapter presents data collected from participants from the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The data was coded, patterns were found in the codes, and themes were formulated. The study analysed data by looking at emerging themes that fit into the theory.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

The study discussed the findings using the relevant literature as a reference. The research study's findings were also discussed in light of the research questions and the theoretical framework.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and Recommendations

The chapter summarised what the research study has found out, as well as its limitations. It also provided recommendations that came up from the findings.

1.12 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the background and rationale of the study. The focus and purpose of the study were presented. The location and research questions as well as objectives were also highlighted. The chapter then outlined the literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology and ethical issues. The chapter concludes by presenting the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A literature review “summarises what has been said about the topic to understand better the problem being researched” (Bachan, 2017, p. 19). It places the researchers’ topic in a broader context of knowledge and offers a better understanding of the problem being explored. Green (2015) states that a literature review interprets a collection of relevant published and unpublished facts on a specific topic. When conducting a literature review, the researcher attains a chance to become familiar with the previous research findings and the methodology used by other researchers on the topic. As a result, the researcher can determine whether the topic is valuable to study.

The study aims to gain insight into AET Level 4 lecturers by exploring their perceptions regarding dropout, retention and the throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

This chapter will present the following concepts of the study: the brief historical background of Adult Basic Education (ABE) in South Africa (before and after 1994). Related studies on dropout, retention and throughput rate in the CLCs, theoretical framework and concludes with the chapter summary.

2.2 Historical background of Adult Basic Education in South Africa before 1994

The discussion of the historical background of ABE is imperative for the study because it gives context to the purpose of the investigation.

Mkhwanazi (2001) reports that at the end of the 2nd world War, in 1945, workers needed skills training and literacy as required by the industries; that era was known as industrialisation in South Africa. When the National Party government took over in 1948, it planned to foster ABE to the locals. Education policies and legislation of the 1960s laid legal inhibitions and constraints on non-governmental literacy programs. The fact that The Communist Party supported literacy made the Nationalist government see it as a platform to propagate communist ideologies. Furthermore, Mkhwanazi (2001) adds that the government feared that the launch of ABE might revive the black movement consciousness. Banning the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress in the 1960s removed essential sources of dedicated and controlled support for

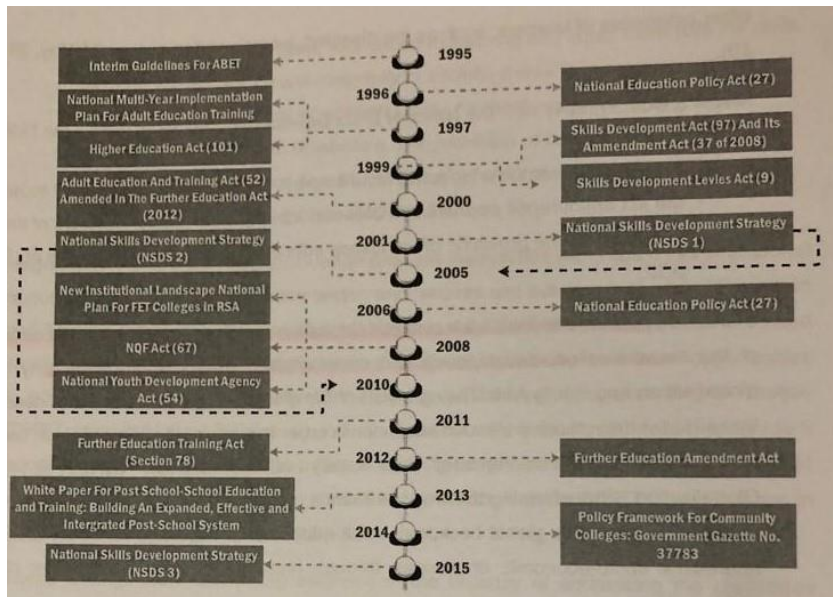
community-based projects. The economic boom of the 1960s pressured the private sector to acquire a more skilled workforce.

By the middle 1970s, ABE for black people was directly involved with the Department of Education after the De Lange investigation. The rationale for providing ABE programmes was to alleviate the shortage of skilled workers and increase companies' productivity. The department became responsible for the night schools in South Africa and developed and implemented literacy courses (Mkhwanazi, 2001, p.19). The non-governmental organisations facilitated much of the provision of non-formal adult primary education in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. International agencies such as the UNESCO Institute of Education based in Germany and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) have significantly supported literacy programmes worldwide- including in South Africa. Baatjies & Mathe (2004) articulate that this emancipatory adult education type is linked to Freire's (1970) theory of education, which is education for liberation that aims to transform the political activity, social transition and sharing of experiences through discourse. This education type is also linked to the community's needs and is an essential tool in the struggle for democracy and participatory citizenship forms. The focus was on functional literacy, English and Numeracy. Non-formal ABE is seen as authentic, revolutionary, inclusive, and a vehicle for social change.

During the 1980s, Nzimande (2007) states that the government brought around night schools because of the economic pressure arising from the demands of a skilled workforce and an international attempt to eliminate illiteracy. The role of night schools started to alternate during the 1980s. Instead of addressing the learners' and community's needs, the Nationalist Party government first limited the number of night schools by shutting many of them down, as well as forcing the night schools to focus on the production of trained workers because of the inadequate number of skilled workers in the workforce of the country. Courses in IsiZulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, English and Ndebele were introduced by the Department of Education and Training in 1986. The Anglo-American corporation, the churches, and the prisons set up night schools following the DET guidelines (Mkhwanazi, 2001, p.21). The country has three types of operational ABE programs: non-governmental organisations, ABE programs, private sector ABE programs, and state ABE programs. However, a new approach to ABE has emerged in South Africa and will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Adult Basic Education in South Africa after 1994

The key legislation and development policies governing the South African Education after 1994



are as follows:

Figure 2.1 A Timeline of ABET Policies and Acts

In 1995, the National Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Interim Guidelines framework was set up by the Department of Education (DoE) as the first Abet policy in South Africa. The curriculum focused mainly on an outcomes-based statement.

According to the History of Education in S.A., Yearbook (2015/16), the sub-directorates of ABET were established in the nine provinces. Then the Ithutheng ‘Ready to Learn Campaign’ was launched in 1996. In 1997, the Interim Guidelines were replaced by a policy on Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), Multi-Year Implementation Plans and a Regulatory framework was developed, which will transform night schools into PALCs—the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997). In 2000, ABET (Act 52 of 2000) was formulated to regulate the provision for the establishment, governance, and funding of PALCs and the registration and quality assurance of PALCs. The Higher Education Amendment Act, 2008 (Act 39 of 2008) and the NQF Act of 2008. The Umalusi Council sets the standards for the TVET in South Africa through the National Qualifications Framework Act and the General Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act of 2001. The FET Colleges Amendment Act, 2013 (Act 1 of 2013) creates a new institutional type, Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs). The PALCs will be

absorbed into the CET colleges, additional facilities and staff will be provided, and offerings will be extended to provide vocational or community-oriented programs. In April 2016, 9 CET colleges were established to facilitate the merger in all provinces. “The community colleges will cater to a population not integrated into the post-schooling system. The Minister transferred AET centres and TVET colleges to the DHET” (DHET, 2015, p.5). The new “ABE dispensation in South Africa is aligned with NQF requirements, and the curriculum provision is outcome-based. This means the learners should demonstrate their ability to get the required learning outcome. It is also combined with the mainstream provision of education. ABE will be coordinated within the NQF, ensuring links between different parts of a combined education system.” (DHET, 2015, p.6).

The provision of the new ABE programs will be merged into the new educational institutions known as community colleges. A community college is an academic institution that offers extensive programs within a single institutional context to a diverse range of learners with different abilities, levels of prior accomplishments and educational goals. The individual provincial governments will be responsible for funding the colleges. Adult educators and tutors will no longer have only subject matter knowledge. Still, they will be skilled in managing teaching and learning and learning institutions, have extensive training, and acquire confidence and skills to evaluate, improvise, adapt and produce learning materials and practices so that significant, relevant and contextualised learning will occur. It also offers the recognition of prior (experiential) learning (RPL); it is anticipated that adult learners will be able to demonstrate the required learning outcome before they are awarded credits. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has already introduced full-time administrative staff under the new Sub-Directorate of Adult Education to pay tutors (DHET, 2015, p.7).

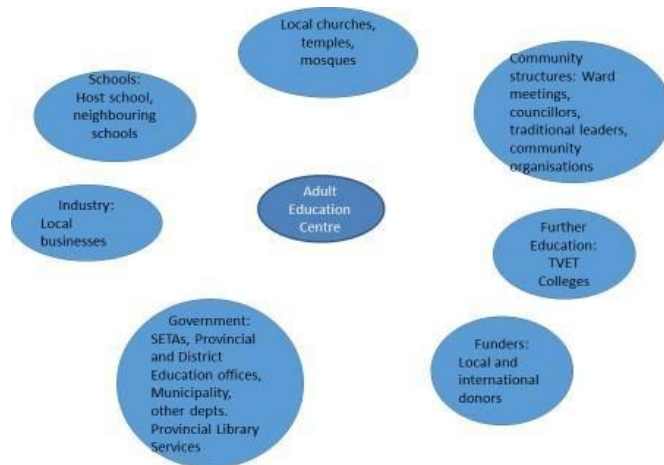


Figure 2.2 A Sub Directorate of an Adult Education Centre

The new ABE dispensation in South Africa involves three target groups of adult learners: employed, unemployed, and pre-employed adult learners, and it also pays attention to disabled learners. Mkhwanazi (2001) cites that the first target group are the employed learners who need reskilling to improve their existing skills. The second target group is the unemployed adult learners who live in impoverished rural areas. The third target is pre-employed adult learners. The group consists of youths who possess non-employable skills and who still need upskilling in life. Youth are the hardest affected by employment and poverty; therefore, they must gain the appropriate skills that the industries need. As stated in the National Qualifications Framework, the new ABE system has been cut to redress all the past discrepancies in providing ABE so that the different target groups will benefit considerably.

The curriculum developed by the new education system is in line with National Qualifications Framework requirements. Aitchison (2004) says that this curriculum will be outcomes-based, meaning the learners can demonstrate their ability to obtain the required learning outcomes. Regarding the learning programs, the National Qualifications Framework will specify the unit standards, which outline the required specific outcomes and their related performances. Knowledge, skills, attitude and values inform the new curriculum and particular outcomes. Adult Basic Education Level 4 is equivalent to the senior phase of compulsory schooling grades, a

General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), the first qualification on the National Qualifications Framework. The new education system has a perspective that promotes meaningful growth and ensures a higher status for adult learners. This will have a positive impact the socio-economic status of many South Africans.

However, the new ABE dispensation is a cause for concern. Based on the Post Education and Training Act (DHET, 2013), the study's rationale is that the current system of public adult learning centres needs to work more effectively. As a result, the Community Education and Training Colleges CETCs have been introduced as a replacement to address the shortcomings of the existing education system. The Continuing Education and Training Act of 2006 created a policy which served as a framework to formulate the Community Education and Training College as another type of institution within the Post-School Education and Training system, which has been effected from the 1st of April 2015. "The Act is responsible for the formal provisioning of the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA) Level 4, which is equated with the NQF, Level 1 and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) qualifications" (DHET, 2015, p.10).

The Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) aims to offer relevant programs catering to adult learners and community needs, contributing to their advanced educational levels. The AET Level 4 qualification has less impact on the contribution to skills development, poverty alleviation and unemployment. Bachan (2017) highlights that the CLCs do not have full-time staff and operate mainly in the evening because lecturers teach during the day and lecture during the evening; therefore, they cannot provide effective teaching. Furthermore, Nala (2020) indicates that the current AET Level 4 curriculum approach in the CLCs focuses on general education. As a result, it fails to attract several adults and youth interested in completing a school qualification and acquiring skills for the labour market to alleviate poverty. Another important point pinpointed by (Gumbi (2020) is that there is a need to be more focused on the quality and variety of AET Level 4 curricula for adult learners. As a result, it needs to be clarified to what extent the AET Level 4 curriculum responds to the needs of the youth and adults not in employment or Education and Training and in need of attending AET classes (NEETs). Therefore, Nala (2020) argues that a considerable challenge still needs to be solved, whereby a

high dropout, failure rate, and low retention rate in the (CLCs) are causes for concern. The next section will discuss related studies on dropout, retention, and throughput rates in CLCs.

2.4 Related literature on dropout, retention and throughput rate

In this section, I presented related studies. I presented associated studies within South Africa and related studies from the South African context, the African context and internationally.

The related studies the researcher reviewed were by Anderson (2011), Kuh et al. (2006), Hunter & White (2004), Peterson et al. (2001), which are based on European context research, and the other studies reviewed by the researcher are based within an African context as well as South African context, which the researcher thought are particularly relevant to the study because the topic focuses on the lecturers' perceptions on AET L4 regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs. The socio-economic context of Greater Edendale is predominantly a black community group and is characterised by inequalities, poverty and poor infrastructure.

Niwagaba's (2007) research explored the motivations driving adult learners to participate in education, the obstacles they encountered, and the strategies they employed to continue their involvement in adult learning programs. The study took place in two learning centres in Uganda.

The results indicated that adult learners engaged in activities that equipped them with skills valuable for their households and communities. These findings align with Knowles' 1980 theory, which posits that adult learners seek independence and self-direction and that imposing unwanted learning can become a barrier, potentially leading to dropout if not managed appropriately. Niwagaba (2007) also noted that adult learners and their educators highlighted activities that offered immediate application skills.

Understanding what motivates adults to participate in learning programs is one of the significant factors in increasing the learners' persistence in these programs. The findings indicated that intrinsic motivation made the adult join the adult learning programs to obtain knowledge. This might agree with the self-actualisation and the hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1954). The idea is also supported by Knowles (1989), who indicates that internal motivation is more effective than external motivation because this type of motivation arises from within an individual.

Niwagaba (2007) revealed issues with the rigid curriculum content provided by adult educators. The educators noted that they were required to teach both what the learners wanted and what the government mandated, yet the learners and the educators had a say in designing the curriculum. This reflects a similar situation where curriculum content was divided into Learning Areas without considering actual needs, a practice criticised in the 2013 Act, which influenced the study. The findings support Conrad's (2002) assertion that for adult learning to be effective, it must be relevant to the learners' circumstances. The study suggests that excluding learners from decision-making processes in adult education programs can overlook essential activities that would otherwise fulfil their needs and expectations.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) highlighted that motivation with the learners starts with the home environment. Similarly, Swail (2002) discusses the conditions that institutional efficacy in curbing dropouts, factors that influence learners' performances and contribute to a learner's decision to abandon formal education and training, and the role of the staff faculty and staff influence learners' decision to persevere

Mokubung (2002) reported the high dropout rate among learners at the Kgolediyamanka Adult Education Centre. This investigation is pertinent to my research because it gathers insights from ABET educators at the centre about why the learners drop out of adult learning programs. The study aligns with my research, focusing on lecturers' perspectives on dropout, retention, and completion rates at AET Level 4. The findings suggested that adult learners must be more concerned about class schedules and find the courses irrelevant. Additionally, the learning environment could be more conducive for them due to inappropriate teaching methods, challenging subjects, and unsuitable learning materials for specific classes. According to Mokubung (2002), to plan significant learning programs for adult learners, one must check with them and involve them in every step when deciding on their learning. This lack of consultation, particularly about the scheduling of classes and the workload, negatively impacts adult learners. The participants felt that being left out in the decision-making process of their learning programs resulted in an inadequate time allocation for classes. The awkward scheduling of classes results from the need for more consultation with adult learners. The shortage of learners' consultation tends to overlook one of the most vital characteristics of adult learners, which is that adult learners have several role involvements and, by implication, have many responsibilities.

“The program plans should be well placed to discuss the applicable time for classes with the learners. Learners must agree which time will be suitable for them to attend classes”. (Gravett & Rigby, 1991, p.11).

Another area for improvement is the overwhelming number of courses offered. Galbraith (1991, p.98) argues that to maintain adult learners' motivation, educators and program planners must recognise that adults face numerous competing demands for attention and energy. Galbraith stresses the importance of allowing learners to choose a manageable number of courses. Additionally, the lack of consultation often leads to selecting courses that do not meet learners' needs. Peterson (1983, p.150) advocates for adult learners to be active partners in planning, conducting, and assessing learning activities rather than passive recipients of pre-organized content over which they have no control. He further argues that because adults see themselves as self-directed, they strongly need to be recognised as such by others. They tend to avoid, resist, or dislike such learning programs if this need is met.

Long (1983) also emphasizes the importance of involving learners in the design and organisation of adult education programs, arguing that failing to do so can lead to frustration and loss of interest, resulting in dropout. Therefore, “adult education program planners must consider adult learners' needs and preferences when designing educational experiences” (Peterson, 1983, p.107).

Mokubung (2002) further maintains that educators of adults whose main focus lies in other professions or a specialised subject area must be trained in adult education methods and design a suitable adult learning situation. Adults are almost always self-directed learners and must be removed from learning experiences that do not satisfy them. A learner-centred approach to teaching that stresses the learner and their learning in the teaching and learning situation (Jarvis, 1995). This approach accommodates the ideologies about adult education because learners are actively involved in the teaching and learning situation. A learner-centred approach treats the learning-teaching approach as a mutual obligation of learners and teachers. The above perception is shared by Peterson (1983, p.85), who claims that enhancing adult learners' motivation to learn makes their learning more significant for the learner by ensuring that they are actively involved and more emphasis on the practical presentation of the content and that they tend to find often the concrete content to be more appropriate than the theoretical content. Another crucial factor is the environment conducive to learning. Peterson (1983) says that it is vital that the climate of the

instructional setting be warm and considerate, with mutual respect between teachers and teachers. This means that the dialogue should be stimulated at all times and that the role of adult learners as active role-players in the teaching and learning process is respected. Because the learners play a vital role in ensuring effective learning is achieved.

A study by Anderson (2011) linked adult learner satisfaction with retention with the role of background characteristics, academic characteristics, and satisfaction upon retention. The study sought to understand the factors that impact persistence and retention, which will enable adult learning institutions to serve this population of students better. The study's findings reveal that students may be satisfied with their faculty and organisational experiences but still drop out for reasons which have little to do with the institution.

This is supported by the literature which highlights the fact that “personal reasons such as family, work, time, money, health issues, and other non-academic issues impact persistence (Bean, 2005; Hanniford & Sagaria, 1994; McGivney, 1996, 2004; Wlodkowski et al., 2002).

Students aiming to achieve a bachelor’s degree were more likely to be retained.” Satisfaction with academic advising positively impacted retention, supported by the literature” (Hunter & White, 2004; Peterson et al., 2001; Wlodkoski et al., 2001). A student more satisfied with care and accessibility should be more likely to be retained. Adult learners may have other educational goals, such as taking classes to learn new skills or to promote their career, meeting prerequisites for a graduate program, or just individual enrichment. Anderson (2011) thus says that when measuring students’ success, learning institutions need to consider a range of educational goals as success measures for adult learners. The adult learners whose student-institutional principles and student-faculty values align with combining to define the institution and academic fit for the students. Students with a civilised institutional and academic fit are more likely to be satisfied with their college experience. Therefore, it is expected to be retained. Tinto (1975) proposed a model of social integration within the learning institution as disturbing students’ decision to withdraw or persist. Kerka (1995) argues that for adult learners, social integration may be defined as integrating the search for education into one’s life. Students may be satisfied with their faculty and institutional experiences but still drop out for reasons that have little to do with an educational institution.

According to Anderson (2011), while adult institutions may not change the student background characteristics, they can create facilities that support adult learners with various non-institutional influences such as employment, family, and other commitments that may affect their persistence. This could include an appreciation of and encouragement of family members to join in campus events, initiatives to encourage setting and attaining an educational goal and providing academic support to assist adult learners in retaining or improving their academic success or grade point average.

The study by Kuh et al. (2006), which investigates what matters to student success and reviews literature, asserts that in institutions where the staff uses effective teaching methods more often in their classes, students are actively involved and achieve more from college.” (Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reported that the institutional environments that students view to be inclusive and supportive and where expectations for performance are communicated to learners and set reasonably from higher levels. Furthermore, when students’ expectations and experiences are correctly aligned, students are more likely to be satisfied with their college experience and persist to graduation, which is a happy outcome for both students and institutions. On the contrary, student persistence and success are connected to how students interact with understanding adults on campus, both inside and outside the classroom. These interactions may “anchor a student’s initial aims and expand the commitment to graduate (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

Bean (1980), Spady (1970), and Tinto (1975, 1987) maintain that peer interactions are crucial in social integration because students are likely to persist in school where they feel comfortable and mingle with other students with the same interests and goals. “The more effective teaching and learning approaches related to compelling and introducing diverse perspectives are integrated teaching techniques, such as role-playing, group discussions and a supportive classroom climate” (Kuh & Umbach, 2004, p.54)

Nala (2020) explores the factors that lead to student retention at Siyazama Community Learning Centre. The study focused on student retention and aimed to understand the factors that led to student retention at Siyazama. It also focused more on reasons for dropouts or participation. The findings were classified as pre-entry attributes; the first is the family background, which is the most motivating factor that drives students to register for adult education. “When the student

comes from a family that significantly promotes adult student participation in a programme, the quality of student commitment and background directly influences the decision to stay or leave” (Tinto, 1993). Goals and commitments are characteristics of motivational factors that prepare them to face all the experiences they will meet at the campus. Student’s intentions and external commitments drive these. As the student enters an institution, these intentions and external commitments significantly affect the overall goal and institutional commitment.

Dlamini (2012) also focused on Tinto’s (1993) Model of Student Departure in a higher education Christian institution. Tinto’s model helped explain better retention and attrition at a Christian learning centre. She argues that Academic Integration is useful in determining who will stay at a specific learning institution and is highly related to persistence.

On the other hand, Rogers (2004) maintains that some students join adult classes because of the chances these classes will offer. He further points out that these adults decide to go to school to finish the program to obtain a better job; this is also termed as needs-driven. The other factor is institutional experiences, which allow students to register and give academic support. The findings supported these experiences because most participants agreed that support from educators, peers, and the curriculum motivated them to participate at the centre. The facilitators acknowledged variety and treated them equally irrespective of colour, gender, age and race. Gall et al. (2013) highlight that the facilitators should be available. Students’ needs should be provided for, and the individual support students get at an institution encourages them to persist until they finish the course. The study also observed that the support they get from their families motivates them to push harder to attain their goals. This view aligns with Tinto’s argument that peer group interaction within the academic system is a push factor to finish the programme. The curriculum is another factor which promotes student retention. When the institution offers relevant subjects, the students are fascinated by that particular institution and often stay. Students persist because the subjects they offer assist in their future endeavours. Mokubung (2002) and Dlamini (2002) maintain that curriculum delivery, teaching methods, and academic support are essential elements that must be addressed effectively to retain students.

Lastly, as the integration into the campus's social and academic environment increases, the students' goals and commitment will also increase, leading to continued participation and retention Tinto (1993) indicates that the curriculum offered must address the needs of the

learners and the environment should be conducive to learning and teaching, which motivates learners to stay; according to Tinto (1993), there should be a balance between social and academic systems. The three studies related to the researcher's related literature have also used semi-structured interviews to generate data similar to the research inquiry and have also used open-ended questions to interview the participants. Therefore, these previous studies are helpful and relevant to my study.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is a collection of ideas that helps understand or interpret a phenomenon. It helps the researchers in placing and conceptualising formal theories into their studies as a guide.

Bachan (2017) cites that the theoretical framework serves as the focus of the research and is related to the research inquiry being studied. Therefore, it guides the researcher's research design and data analysis strategy choice. The theoretical framework also guides the data collected for a specific study (Bachan, 2017, p.45).

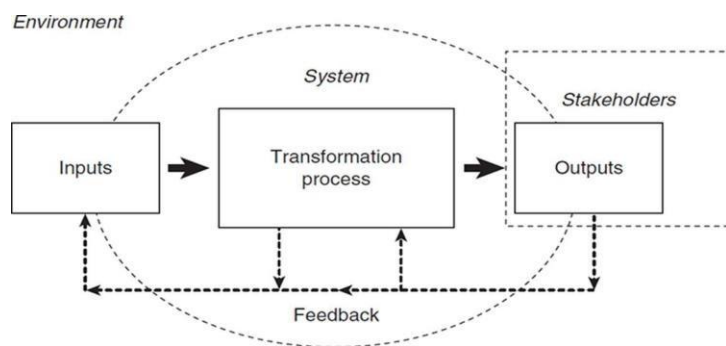


Figure: 6 Systems Theory

The research study adopts a systems theory thinking framework to explore the lecturers' perception of the AET L 4 on dropout, retention and the throughput rate of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The study used systems theory as a theoretical framework to understand what the study was about.

The theory originated from Ludwig van Bertalanffy's research in the 1940s - 50s. 1968, he published "General Systems Theory Foundations, Development, Applications". The aim was to

create a framework for specific basic laws which can be applied to fundamentally every scientific field (Green, 2015, p. 24) defines systems theory as a way of understanding how a particular group interacts and interrelates, depending on specific components and how they influence one another within the system as a whole. “Systems theory is a way of viewing the world that naturally leads to the case study since it aims to see the system as a whole like you aim to do the case inquiry. The difference is that systems theory and its various branches are bounded by quite firm frameworks for viewing existing interrelationships” (Thomas, 2016, p.56). Czarnecki further says that this is the model of understanding how a particular group is interconnecting, interrelating, and interdepending on exact components and how they impact one another in that particular system as one piece.

The study adopted systems theory as the main framework because the theory helped the researcher to understand the concepts of the research study in a broader context regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the CLCs. The study looked at the systematic problem involving the two institutions as a whole and did not look at the problem in isolation. Systems theory proved to be a useful and appropriate framework for the study because the findings of the research inquiry, which involved the inputs that, in turn, determine the outputs of the system, revealed that a lack of teaching resources and a suitable learning environment have an impact on transformation because teachers will not be able to teach effectively resulting in learners dropping out from the two CLCs as they may not comprehend properly. Systems theory also helped the researcher obtain a deeper understanding of the relationships between the lectures, learners, and governance in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter started with an introduction. The historical background of ABET before and after 1994 was first discussed. The chapter then presented related literature on dropout, retention and throughput rate. Several factors that may help reduce the dropout rate and increase retention and the throughput rate in the CLCs were highlighted. The theoretical framework that guided and shaped the study and the relevance of theory in the South African education context was also outlined. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presents a detailed discussion and description of the research design and methodology selected for this study. This chapter includes the interpretive paradigm within a qualitative approach. The study design that is used is a case study. The chapter further presents the data generation methods, instruments and data analysis, sampling and recruiting, trustworthiness of the study, ethical issues, and limitations. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.2. Research paradigm

A paradigm is described as a “specific worldview which explains what is adequate for the research and how it should be done. These worldviews are shaped by a particular belief about the environment of the social world” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 22). while Punch (2009) indicates that a paradigm represents a set of expectations about the world and what makes suitable techniques for investigating that world.

The research study used an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive paradigm occurs when the researcher interprets and understands how societies make sense of the world they live in. The research study used the interpretive paradigm because the researcher wanted to understand the lecturers’ perception of AET Level 4 on dropout, retention and throughput rate in the CLCs.

The study used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions as interactive processes to find out the phenomenon from the study participants. The paradigm fits well with the study because the researcher wanted to listen to the participant’s responses to questions according to their worldviews and life experiences. The researcher was enabled to analyse and interpret data and then construct meaning with the aim of obtaining a deeper understanding of the AET Level 4 lecturers’ perceptions in relation to the factors that contribute to the dropout, retention and throughput rate. The advantage of using an interpretive paradigm as maintained by Cohen et.al., (2011) is that it offers “credible and justifiable results and can be replicated” since the research study was able to use three data generating techniques to collect data.

3.3 Research Method

According to Bertram & Christiansen (2014), a research method is a plan of how the researcher aims to collect and analyse data in a systematic in order to answer the research question.

A case study is a systematic and in-depth study of one particular case in its context (Rule & John, 2011, p.7). The research study chose a case study design because it helped the researcher to understand how people and make meaning regarding their worldviews and experiences. The study, wanted to explore and understand the AET Level 4 lecturers' perceptions regarding the AET Level 4 dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. A case study offered a unique case to the researcher of dealing with real people in real situations while conducting interviews with the study participants. Cohen et al., (2011) further stipulate that it allows the readers to have a clear ideas rather than presenting abstract principles or theories.. The AET Level 4 lecturers and centre managers got a chance to voice out their real experiences and information on dealing with adult learners on daily basis at the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Likewise, in the study, the participants were the AET Level 4 lecturers who have taught and are currently teaching AET Level 4 in the two CLCs. The participants were able to express their own worldviews and share their own experiences within their real contexts, and this has led the researcher to gain better insight into their lived experiences. Cohen et al., (2011) also argues that the Case studies fall within an interpretive paradigm as the researcher aimed to capture the reality of the participants' lived experiences and thoughts of lecturers' perspectives regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the CLCs.

The study used a single case study (holistic) design to understand what informs the AET Level 4 lecturers 'perceptions regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale. The holistic investigation included a collection of in-depth and detailed data, which are rich in content and encompassed multiple sources of information, including document analysis, semi- structured interviews and focus group discussion the research study used. Shoaib & Mujtaba (2016) say that one advantage of a case study is that the researcher was

enabled to observe an occurrence in a wider context and get an in-depth, rich description of the phenomena. The criticism of a case study design according to Cohen et al., (2011) is that it depends on one case, which may lead to bias when generating data, and results may be more subjective than in other designs. For the researcher to avoid bias, different data generation methods were employed by the research study.

3.4 Research Approach

The qualitative approach aims to “understand occurrences from an individual’s insight, investigating relations among individuals as historical and cultural context people show” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 8). Qualitative researchers aim to explore the subjective experiences of people, which is why the study used a qualitative approach. The approach was relevant to the study because the researcher sought to gain insight and understand the AET Level 4 lecturers by exploring their perceptions regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Working within the qualitative approach has helped the researcher to use methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions for an overall viewpoint about the feelings and experiences of the research participants. Guba and Lincoln, as cited by Bertram and Christiansen (2014) highlights that qualitative approach also assisted the researcher to ask the research participants about their perceptions of what they see as the truth, significant and meaningful within their context. During interviews, the participants responded by reflecting on their own life experiences and world views about their perceptions and feelings regarding dropout, retention and throughput rate with the researcher.

The study is also of a qualitative nature because the researcher has used “various data generation techniques such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions to help understand the life experiences of the study participants. Furthermore, Cresswell (2003) states that the researcher used a qualitative research approach because the study was conducted in a natural context; she physically went to the site (CLCs) in Greater Edendale.

3.5 Location of the research sites

Figure 7: Imbali Location

The research study was conducted at the two CLCs at the Imbali Township in Greater Edendale, which falls under the Msunduzi Local Municipality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The ‘Imbali’ is the IsiZulu word for ‘flower’. Imbali Township was established in 1958 and the mid-1960s for the City workers as well as the job hunters away from the City of Pietermaritzburg. Laband & Haswell (1988) stipulates that in 1964, the Department of Bantu Affairs, in collaboration with the Pietermaritzburg Co-operation, took over the control of the Area. “The black people who were affected by the Group Areas Act became the first residents of the settlement to be known as Imbali Bantu Township. It is Pietermaritzburg’s oldest and biggest township, nestled 15 km West of the city. Greater Edendale falls under the Msunduzi Local Municipality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, which forms part of the Umgungundlovu District Municipality.

Greater Edendale houses crucial adult educational institutions such as Indumiso College of Education, Manaye Community College, etc. The researcher will be using the two satellite centres as research sites, which fall under the Manaye Community Education and Training College.

Centre A – Jabu Ngcobo CLC in an urban area

Nzimande (2007) asserts that Jabu Ngcobo Community Learning Centre plays a significant role in catering for the learning needs of the previously marginalised Imbali community as well as the informal settlement of Slangspruit with regard to the high illiteracy levels that KwaZulu– Natal has in the whole country. Jabu Ngcoco CLC is located at Imbali Stage 2 in Pietermaritzburg,

KZN, South Africa. The centre is located 20 km away from Pietermaritzburg. The centre was started by Jabu Ngcobo in 1988 to provide literacy programmes to the adult community of Imbali Township. The centre was later renamed Jabu Ngcobo. After 1997, a new regulatory framework was replaced by the ABET Act of 2000, and the centre was changed into a Public Adult Learning Centre. The centre is hosted by Ndabenhle Primary School and is dependent on its resources for accommodation and administration. The location is ideal for both the communities of Imbali and the informal settlement of Slangspruit.

This community learning centre started skills training in 2012 after its establishment by the KZN Department of Education. The centre gives a skills training programme for self-employment and wage-employment. Training courses in Travel and Tourism, Ancillary Healthcare and sewing have been offered. The course duration is one year. The skills training courses are different for each year and are basically designed as pre-employment training for both formal and informal industries. However, the centre needed help to continue implementing the skills training programme.

Centre B – Asikhululeke CLC in a peri-urban area

Asikhululeke Community Learning Centre is at Imbali Unit 18 at Fezokuhle Primary School. The centre was started in 2006 with Levels 1, 2 and 3 only. In 2008, the number of learners increased, and more students passed, which led to the opening of Level 4. As the number of learners increased, more teachers were hired. In 2015, the KZN City College (Manaye CETC) took over. In 2019, the number of CLCs was reduced because the number of adult learners was decreasing. The centre was not gazetted, and it ended up under Inkanyiso, which is located at Kwa Pata High School. In 2023, the centre had many adult learners. As a result, it was gazetted and was known as Asikhululeke Community Learning Centre. The public centre focused on the training programme on self-employment and wage-employment as envisaged by the Department of Education. The centre offers training courses in Ancillary Healthcare, SMME and Agricultural technology. According to the programme booklet, the end-goal is to increase household income and improve the living conditions of the graduates through skills training, self-employment and wage employment. The objectives of the centre are as follows:

-To empower adults by providing them with sustainable livelihoods, skills, and knowledge to enable them to become self-sufficient.

-To provide adults with training in vegetable farming and managerial skills and equip them to manage a business.

3.6 Sampling and Sample Size

Nieuwenhuis (2007) argue that sampling is defined as the method used by a researcher to choose a particular portion of a research population in a study. Sampling also includes decision-making about which people, events, situations, or behaviours should be included in the study while Bertram & Christiansen (2014) says that a purposive sampling includes cases that were hand-picked by a researcher to be included in a sample because they possessed specific characteristics.

The researcher used purposive sampling to identify the study participants. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) maintain that purposive sampling occurs when the researcher chooses the study participants for a particular purpose. Purposive sampling was suitable for the study because the researcher was led to the people who had the knowledge required by the study to understand the meaning of the occurrence. The knowledgeable people in the study were the two centre managers (one former centre manager and one current centre manager) chosen because they head the institutions and are responsible for the smooth running of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

The study participants also have vast experience and knowledge regarding the AET Level 4 curriculum of the two CLCs. The two former AET Level 4 lecturers were selected because they have more than five years of expertise and knowledge in the AET Level 4 curriculum, and they also have background knowledge about the educational history of Edendale since most of them are residents of Greater Edendale. The two current AET Level 4 lecturers were chosen because they represent the academic system of the two CLCs. They deal with the learners daily and possess experience teaching AET Level 4 adult learners.

The research study used pseudonyms to protect the participants and their right to confidentiality. The age group, gender, race, marital status, formal schooling, qualifications and years in the sector are highlighted. The research study consisted of 6 participants—two former lecturers from each CLC who have been teaching in the centre from 2010 to 2015. One former centre manager who has been supervising the centre from 2010 to 2015. Two recent lecturers from each CLC

have been teaching at the centre from 2015 to 2023. Five study participants are female, and only one participant is male, which poses a limitation to the study. The reason is that the two CLCs had more female lecturers than male lecturers.

Table 2. Participants' demographics for the study participants

| Pseudonyms | Age | Gender | Race | Marital Status | Area | Formal Schooling | Qualifications | Years in the sector |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Thandi | 50-59 | Female | African Black | Single | Township | Matric Certificate | ABET Certificate | More than ten years |
| Ndonga | 30-39 | Male | African Black | Single | Township | Matric Certificate | Matric | Less than ten years |
| Makhosi | 50-60 | Female | African Black | Married | Township | Matric Certificate | ABET Certificate, ABET Diploma | More than ten years |
| Shazelle | 50-60 | Female | African Black | Widower | Township | Matric Certificate | ABET Certificate | More than ten years |
| Celiwe | 30-39 | Female | African Black | Married | Semi-urban area | Matric Certificate | B, ED | Less than ten years |
| Sisi | 50-60 | Female | African Black | Married | Suburb | Matric Certificate | PTD, ABET Certificate, FDE, B.ED (honours) | More than ten years |

The table above indicates a clear picture of the sample. The participants were selected because they are knowledgeable, experienced and have expertise in teaching adult learners.

The lecturers should have taught adult learners for five years or more.

Thandi is a single African female lecturer who resides in the township of Imbali, and she has been teaching at the centre for more than ten years. She is also the centre manager at the Jabu

Ngcobo CLC. Her qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate from UNISA. She teaches Level 4 English, Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care at the centre.

Ndonga is a young African male lecturer who is single and also resides in Imbali Township. He is currently teaching Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Sciences and Natural Sciences Level 4 at Jabu Ngcobo CLC. His qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate from UNISA. He has been teaching at the centre for eight years.

Makhosi is an African female lecturer at Jabu Ngcobo CLC. She is married and resides in the Imbali Township as well. She has been at the centre for more than ten years, and her teaching subjects are Life Orientation. and IsiZulu Level 4. Her qualifications are Matric plus ABET Certificate and ABET Diploma from UNISA.

Shazelle is a widowed African female who lives at Imbali in Unit BB. She teaches IsiZulu, English and Life Orientation at Asikhululeke CLC. She has been at the centre for more than ten years, and she is also the centre manager. Her qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate.

Celiwe is a young, married African female who is a lecturer at Asikhululeke CLC. She has been teaching at the centre for seven years and is currently residing at S'thathing, a semi-urban area. Her teaching subjects are English, Maths Literacy and IsiZulu. She has a B.Ed qualification.

Sisi is a married African female who lives in the Panorama area. She is a lecturer at Asikhululeke CLC and has been teaching at the centre for more than ten years. Her qualifications are PTD, ABET Certificate, FED and B. ED (honours). Her teaching subjects are Maths Literacy and Early Childhood Development.

3.7 Data generation methods and instruments

The researcher used multiple data-generating methods to obtain reliable data. The two CLCs in the Greater Edendale as a case study offered the researcher an opportunity to use multiple data-generating methods such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to generate data. The researcher was enabled to address the critical research question which was relevant to the study.

3.7.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing documents. Various documents can “assist the researcher in discovering meaning, developing understanding, and discovering

insights that are relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1988, as cited in Bowan, 2009). Document analysis is appropriate for a qualitative case study because when it is done thoroughly, the study “generates detailed descriptions of a single event, society, program or occurrence” (Stake,1995; Yin, 1994, p. 4). The study used government documents on AET policies and legislation, reports, admission registers, and mark schedules for the educational background of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. These documents had the relevant information regarding the social occurrence the researcher wanted to investigate, which is the educational history of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

Document analysis was used as the first instrument to generate data by the research study because it covered a long timeframe of the inquiry, was less costly and less time consuming. Documents analysis helped the researcher to gain insight into the research questions the researcher has asked about the topic. It also assisted the researcher in making a contribution towards documenting the educational history of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Furthermore, it helped the researcher by providing focus and rationale to the study, as well as the background and context of the study. It also served as an additional data-generating tool to track change and development of the educational history of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale, as well as verifying the truth and reliability from other sources that were used in the study. According to Bowan (2009) the advantage of using document analysis is that it was less costly, less time-consuming and covered a long timeframe of the study that is the reason why it was utilized as the first data generating method by the investigation.

3.7.2 Interviews

An interview is a flexible tool which is utilised for data generation purposes and is usually based on the questions asked by the interviewer. Interviews assist participants in discussing their understanding of the world they live in and expressing how they look at situations from their own worldview. (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 409) while Bertram & Christiansen defines an interview as a process whereby the researcher and a research participant are involved in a talk. Seidman (1991) further cites that an interview also helps the researcher in examining an educational organisation or process through individual experiences of people by discovering history, experimentation or reviewing the current literature.

The researcher used the semi-structured interview as a second tool for data generating. The method helped the researcher acquire first-hand information from the study participants, which helped the interviewer in gaining insight and understanding of what informs the lecturers' perceptions on AET Level 4 regarding the dropout, retention and the throughput rate in the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale. The main purpose of the semi-structured interview was to understand people's experiences and how they construct the meaning of that experience. According to Naidoo & Rule (2016) during the interview process, when the participants narrated their stories, the participants got a chance to "reconstruct their experiences within the topic and reflected on the meaning and made sense of their experiences within their social context it occurred.

The research study selected the semi-structured interview for the following reasons. The researcher asked questions during the process and the participants responded to the questions by giving relevant answers. The researcher was with the participant all the time during the interview process to give clarity where needed. The semi-structured interview research instruments or schedules were used as a second data-generating instrument to gather data from the six study participants in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale because they offered the interviewer the flexibility to probe for details and a chance to communicate more with the participants", which added validity to data collection (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 409). Semi-structured interviews also worked as an extension tool because questions were open-ended, which allowed the interviewer to get more information by probing for details because the participants offered not just answers but also the reasons for their answers.

The participants who were interviewed were the centre managers and the former and current AET Level 4 lecturers in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The study involved six study participants. The two centre managers were chosen because they head institutions and are responsible for the smooth running of the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Two former AET Level 4 lecturers from each CLC have been teaching at the centre from 2010 to 2015, and one former AET Level 4 centre manager has been managing the centre from 2010 to 2015. There will also be two recent AET Level 4 lecturers from each CLC teaching at the centre from 2015 to 2023 and one AET Level 4 recent centre manager as study participants.

The research participants were selected because they are expertise and knowledgeable regarding the AET Level 4 curriculum of the CLCs. The two former AET Level 4 lecturers were selected because they have more than five years of experience in the AET Level 4 curriculum, and they also have background knowledge about the educational history of Edendale since most of them resides in Greater Edendale. The two current AET Level 4 lecturers were chosen because they represent the academic system of the two CLCs. They deal with learners on daily basis and they possess experience teaching AET Level 4 adult learners.

For the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between the components, the research inquiry used semi- structured interviews to determine what are lecturers' perceptions of the stakeholders' involvement in AET Level 4 regarding dropout, retention rate, and throughput rate in the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale. The disadvantage of using semi-structured interviews is that they are time-consuming because the researcher had to allow flexibility, and they should be conducted in a relaxed and conducive atmosphere (Nala, 2020, p. 44). The researcher had to reschedule interviewing participants most of the time because sometimes the participants did not show up for the interviews. Sometimes, the interviews took longer than the scheduled time because there was noise from a construction company in the CLC. The researcher has to repeat the questions and likewise the participant had to repeat the answers for clarity.

3.5. Focus Group Discussions

The third method of data generating the study used are focus group discussions. A focus group according to MacMillan & Schumacher (2014) is defined as a small group of participants chosen to be interviewed to assess a problem, concern or knowledge. Focus group discussions were used as a third method of data generating to help compare and consolidate the ideas from the study participants. The researcher conducted two focus groups in each site of the CLCs in the Greater Edendale. Each centre had three participants involved in the discussion, namely two AET Level 4 lecturers (one recent, one former) and the centre manager. The duration of each focus group discussion was approximately twenty-five to thirty minutes. The researcher broke the ice by greeting all the participants.

Focus group discussions were conducted with AET Level 4 lecturers as well as AET Level 4 centre managers. The focus group participants were carefully recruited because they are

knowledgeable and they deal with AET Level 4 on daily basis. The sample consisted of four AET Level 4 lecturers and two centre managers. Questions were asked in an interactive setting and the participants' responses were recorded by the researcher. Questions were posed to the group and the study participants had to indicate by the raising their hands if they want to respond.

The focus group discussions were conducted last because the researcher sought to find out whether the study participants would repeat the same responses in the presence of the centre managers. The researcher had a chance to engage with all the participants, and the research participants were able to express themselves freely during the process.

3.8 Data Analysis

MacMillan & Schumacher (2014) indicate that when the researcher analyses and interprets the data, it is referred to as data analysis. Meanwhile, Braun and Clarke (2021) highlight that thematic analysis in a qualitative paradigm is mainly focused on meaning-making with an aim to gain in-depth understanding of practices. The researcher used deductive analysis to analyse data by looking at emerging themes and then fit into the theory. The purpose of using deductive approach was to be able to summarize and interpret the data collected by identifying common themes and subtopics from each category. These categories were themes that appeared to be the main areas into which most responses from the study participants I had interviewed and analysed what they had said to me. Some of the themes were significant because they assisted the researcher in answering the research questions and, therefore, were vital to the study. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and then coded according to the coding methods.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the study

Trustworthiness is an approach utilised in qualitative research styles. There is a need to make sure that the study is trustworthy. Carlson (2010) states that the researcher is responsible for providing evidence that the whole research process is commendable. The entire data generation and analysis procedure resulted in the credibility of the findings in the study, and the following measures were undertaken to ensure the quality of the investigation.

Credibility was enhanced by member checking. Member checking allowed the participants to confirm whether the interview transcript reflects what they said. It also ascertained that the respondents understood the phenomenon researched in the same way as the researcher. Member checking also ascertained confirmability, ensuring that the data generated and analysed can be

confirmed. All the participants responses were audio-recorded recorded, thus providing more accurate data than the researchers notes. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) maintain that recording data generated and using an audio-recording device is another method of increasing credibility in an interpretive study. The researcher can guarantee that the study is credible because some records and transcripts have been sent back to the study participants to listen to. The researcher had to ensure that the data generated would remain confidential and not be traced back to the study participants.

Triangulation refers to collecting data from multiple sources, using different methods to support findings generated in the study and strengthening the study's credibility (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In the study, the researcher used three data-generating techniques to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the research. Tools that the researcher used were document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions. Documents, such as AET policy documents, reports and the chronological order of records regarding the educational history and background of the two CLCs, were used by the researcher to verify the truth.

Lincoln and Guba (2014) refer to transferability as the degree to which the study's findings can be transferred to other contexts, settings or respondents. The researcher piloted the interviews. Piloting helped with clarifying ambiguity. Piloting the interview schedule before using it was done to check for ambiguous questions, simplify them, and ensure that the study researched what it intended to do.

Bertram & Christiansen (2014) stipulates that conformability occurs when data are checked throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure findings would likely be repeatable to others. Member checking also ascertained confirmability, ensuring that the data generated and analysed can be confirmed. All the participants' responses were audio-recorded recorded, thus providing more accurate data than the researchers' notes.

Reliability / dependability of the interviews that were conducted with the participants as a second data generating technique and focus group discussions was also used as a third data generating technique where the participants and the researcher were engaged in a group discussion. The researcher was able to gain useful data to answer the research questions. Triangulation according to Bertram & Christiansen (2014) is defined as using three data-generating techniques and asking the same question in more than one way, allowed the researcher to compare data from different

sources. The comparison assisted the researcher in evaluating the accounts of different participants. The researcher used different sources, namely, the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion to get deep information regarding the lecturers' perceptions of AET Level regarding dropout, retention, and throughput rate 4 in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale.

3.10 Ethical issues

Ethics is a sensitive issue, according to the rights of participants in any investigative study, which gives them respect and protects their dignity. Niwagaba & Rule (2015) say that main principles regarding ethics were taken into consideration before and during the process of the study. These included informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, anonymity and non-maleficence.

The researcher observed the informed consent issue by getting permission in writing from the Department of Higher Education and the centre managers from the two CLCs in Greater Edendale to conduct research in their learning institutions. (Appendix B). Secondly, ethical clearance from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (UKZN) was granted to the researcher to conduct research. (Appendix A). Consent forms were provided to the study participants after the researcher had approached the head of the centre, introduced herself, and stated the purpose of the research and the participants' rights and roles. The provision of the consent forms to the study participants was to make sure that their participation was voluntary.

Furthermore, participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from participating in the research should they wish to do so. The study participants signed the consent forms after they had agreed to be interviewed and audio-recorded (Appendix C). This was done to ensure that the participants' autonomy was guaranteed and that no harm was caused as a result of their partaking in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study and in the writing of the research report. The AET Level 4 lecturers and centre managers were identified by using pseudonyms. The researcher also ensured that the data was handled and stored in a safe place known only to the supervisor. The researcher shared findings with study participants.

3.11 Conclusion

The study was conducted under the qualitative approach. The characteristics of the qualitative approach and the reasons why the researcher chose this approach to conduct study, were presented. The location and sampling of the study followed. The method for data analysis which the study had used was also presented. The researcher also outlined the three methods which were chosen for data generation. Issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, conformability, dependability and ethical consideration were also explained in the chapter. Chapter 4 will focus on presentation of the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the findings

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the research design and the methodology used in the research study to generate data. This chapter presents data generated for the investigation exploring the lecturers' perceptions on AET Level 4 regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The findings have been organised into three main themes: the input process, transformation process and output process, which are the components of the systems theory. The following research questions guided the research study:

1. What are the lecturers' perceptions regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?
2. What are the lecturers' perceptions of factors that promote, retention, and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?
3. What are the lecturers' perceptions of strategies used to minimise the dropout rate and improve retention and the throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale?

4.2 Summary of themes from research instruments

The following table represents the themes from each research instrument used.

4.2.1 Table of themes from Document analysis

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Input processes | AET Level 4 are mainly dropouts from the mainstream schooling Most lecturers possess Matric plus a one-year ABET Certificate from UNISA. |
| Transformation | Education Department committed to a "holistic approach" to education and training (DHET, 2015, P.14). |
| Output | Objectives of AET Act, 2000(Act No.52 of 2000) to offer vocational skills and programmes. |

4.2.2 Table of themes from Semi-structured interviews

| INPUT | TRANSFORMATION | OUTPUT |
|---|--|--|
| AET Level 4 learners are failures or dropouts from the main school. | Teaching material that they have is not enough for teaching and learning. | |
| Lecturers have attended numerous AET workshops. | The teaching method/approach lecturers use is a learner-centred method. | |
| The classrooms they use are for the primary school therefore the furniture is suited for younger children | Teaching and Learning (Formal and non-formal provisioning) engage learners actively with discussions and activities. | Shortage of business skills is a major concern for the two CLCs. |
| Lecturers motivate their learners in the CLCs. | Social factors are a barrier to learning because of poverty and crime in the area. | |
| | | GETCA requirements are needed to obtain the qualification, which requires a minimum of 120 credits / six Learning Areas, |

4.2.3 Table of themes from Focus group discussions

| | |
|----------------|--|
| INPUT | Infrastructure is lacking, such as adequate furniture and photocopying machines. |
| TRANSFORMATION | Student retention will be promoted if teaching time is extended, and business skills are incorporated. |
| OUTPUT | Vocational skills such as ECD and ANHC, as well as knitting and sewing, must be provided in CLCs. |

4.2.4 Other emerging themes

| | |
|---------------|--|
| SUPPORT | Support from the DHET is not good. |
| RELATIONSHIPS | Lecturers have a sound relationship with the learners. |

4.3 AET Level 4 Curriculum offered at the two CLCs

The curriculum offered at Jabu Ngcobo CLC and Asikhuleke CLC comprises the following learning areas. The fundamentals are IsiZulu, English Second Language, Mathematical Literacy, Mathematical Sciences, and Life Orientation. Life Orientation is offered as a core subject. Under

the vocational and occupational categories, subjects offered are Ancillary Healthcare, Early Childhood Development and Natural Sciences.

Adult education “includes several practice areas, such as vocational education, human resource development, continuing professional education, and literacy education” (Jarvis, 1990). Within the formal context of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa, Adult Basic Education ABE refers to all the learning programs for adults beginning from level 1 to level 4, which is equivalent to grade 9 in public schools or NQF level 1 in the (Adult Basic Education and Training Act No.52 of 2000, p. 6). This means that “ABE is parallel with nine years of schooling. It also incorporates two fundamental learning areas, core and learning areas in the elective category” (Rule, 2006, p.115).

4.3.1: Learning Areas offered in Level 4 (DHET 2014)

| Subject category | Subject |
|------------------|--|
| Fundamentals | Language; Literacy and Communication (LLAC) - anyone, Language and Mathematics (MLSC) or Mathematics and Mathematics Sciences (MMSC) |
| Core | Life Orientation (LFO) |
| Academic | Human and Social Sciences (HSSC), Economic and Management Sciences (EMSC), Arts and Culture (ARTC), Natural Science (NATS), Technology (TECH), Additional Language |
| Vocational | Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (AAAT), Ancillary Health Care (ANHC) , Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME), Travel and Tourism (TRVT), Information and Computer Technology (INCT), Early Childhood |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| | Development (ECD) Wholesale and retail (WHRT). |
| Occupational | ANHC, NATS, TRVT, WHRT |

4. 4 The Input processes

4.4.1 Document analysis

The study used admission registers with information regarding the educational history of the CLCs in the Greater Edendale. These include the admission register from the Manaye CET College. The Manaye Community College admission book – (2019,2021, 2022 to 2023) was the first document to be analysed regarding gender, location of learners, their ages and the learning areas they are doing in the CETC.

Table 4.1: AET Level 4 learners admitted in 2019,2021, 2022 and 2023 in terms of gender.

| Gender | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Female | 60 | 105 | 144 | 40 |
| Male | 6 | 3 | 24 | 22 |
| Total | 66 | 108 | 168 | 62 |

The above table indicates that more females are admitted for tuition each year. Furthermore, the enrollment increased from 2019 to 2022 but decreased in 2023. The learners became demotivated because they were not resulted due to the DHET restructuring. There is no record of AET Level 4 learners in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.2: Location of AET Level 4 learners in 2022 and 2023.

| Location/ Places | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Greater Edendale (Imbali, Edendale. | - | - | 76 | 26 |
| Elandskop and Sweetwaters) | | | | |
| Pietermatitzburg Central | - | - | 39 | 13 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|----|
| Northdale, Swayimane, and Wartburg | - | - | 31 | 16 |
| Inhlazuka, Midlovo. Mkhambathini and Richmond | - | - | 07 | 4 |
| Other | - | - | 15 | 3 |
| Total | - | - | 168 | 62 |

The above table indicates that 76 out of 168 AET Level 4 admitted in 2022 were from Greater Edendale. In 2023 a similar case, 26 out of 62 AET Level 4 learners were from Greater Edendale. Some learners are within walking distance and do not pay for transport, so it is easy for them to attend classes. I could not get the 2019 and 2021 documents because some official documents were destroyed in the CETC office because of flooding.

Table 4.3: Ages of AET Level 4 learners in 2019,2021, 2022 and 2023.

| Years | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| 1950-1959 | 2 | - | - | 1 |
| 1960-1969 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 1970-1979 | 11 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| 1980-1989 | 19 | 23 | 25 | 7 |
| 1990-1999 | 28 | 58 | 85 | 20 |
| 2000-2009 | 5 | 18 | 52 | 27 |
| Total | 66 | 108 | 168 | 62 |

From 2019 to 2023, only a few AET Level 4 learners born between 1950 and 1979 attended classes. From 2019 to 2023, AET Level 4 learners who were born between 1980 and 2009 are the students who are attending more classes. This information shows that the CLCs have more dropouts from mainstream schools; therefore, most of the learners in the CLCs are young adults. The new legislation has moved from PALC to CETCs and accommodates all learners, even those who have dropped out from the mainstream.

Table 4.4: Learning Areas taken by AET Level 4 learners in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

| Learning Areas | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| ANHC4 | - | 4 | 44 | - |
| ECDV4 | 26 | 96 | 58 | - |
| WHRT4 | 17 | 39 | 43 | - |
| AET/AET | - | - | 27 | - |
| AET/NQF | - | - | 3 | - |
| MLMS4 | 14 | 25 | 3 | - |
| AET/FP | - | - | 15 | - |
| LCEN4 | 6 | 27 | 2 | - |
| LIFO4 | 3 | 24 | 2 | - |
| AAAT4 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 66 | 216 | 188 | - |

The above information tells us that more AET Level 4 learners were interested in doing Early Childhood Development, followed by Ancillary Health Care in 2022. In 2021 and 2022, AET Level 4 also showed an interest in the Wholesale and Retail Learning Area. More learners require skills to be employed in creches and home-based care. Some learners also want to be employed in retail shops. Learners have shown less interest in Agriculture (AAAT) because of the need for more resources. Learning Areas in 2023 were not provided by the CETC because the admission registers for 2023 went missing; the college could not find it; therefore, we could not get the information, which is why the spaces are blank. The next section of the chapter will discuss the lecturer.

4.4.2 The Lecturer

According to the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995), a lecturer is any individual who teaches, educates or trains other people or gives professional educational services at a college. This person is appointed under this Act as a lecturer. Section 20(1) of the CET states that the Minister will appoint the staff of a public college in the Department's organisational structure in terms of the Public Service Act. The study participants are AET Level 4 lecturers who should have taught adult learners for five years or more. This is biographical information as it appears on the demographics.

Thandi is an African female lecturer who is single, resides in the Imbali township, and has been teaching at the centre for more than ten years. She is also the centre manager at the Jabu Ngcobo CLC. Her qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate from UNISA. She teaches Level 4 English, Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care at the centre. Ndonga is a young African male lecturer who is single and also resides in Imbali Township. He is currently teaching Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Sciences and Natural Sciences Level 4 at Jabu Ngcobo CLC. His qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate from UNISA. He has been teaching at the centre for eight years.

Makhosi is an African female lecturer at Jabu Ngcobo CLC. She is married and resides in the Imbali Township as well. She has been at the centre for more than ten years, and her teaching subjects are Life Orientation. and IsiZulu Level 4. Her qualifications are Matric plus ABET Certificate and ABET Diploma from UNISA. Shazelle is a widowed African female who lives at Imbali in Unit BB. She teaches IsiZulu English and Life Orientation at Asikhululeke CLC. She has been at the centre for more than ten years and is also the centre manager. Her qualifications are Matric and an ABET Certificate.

Celiwe is a young, married African female who is a lecturer at Asikhululeke CLC. She has been teaching at the centre for seven years and is currently residing at S'thathing, a semi-urban area. Her teaching subjects are English, Maths Literacy and IsiZulu. She has a B.Ed qualification.

Sisi is a married African female who lives in the Panorama area. She is a lecturer at Asikhululeke CLC and has taught at the centre for over ten years. Her qualifications are PTD, ABET Certificate, FED and B. ED (honours). Her teaching subjects are Maths Literacy and Early Childhood Development.

4.5 Data generated through semi-structured interviews

4.5.1 Input processes

Input processes involve various resources and factors that contribute to the learning process. This may include not only tangible resources like educational materials, facilities, and funding but also intangible elements, which encompass the skills and knowledge of the instructors, the motivation and goals of the adult learners and the support systems available within the community. The input process of the system's theory answers questions regarding their views on the AET learner, workshops attended and classroom infrastructure.

Views on AET learner

N: “AET learners come to the centre with the aim of obtaining a certificate so that they may be accepted for NCV in the FETs”.

M: “It is important for learners who come to the centre to finish AET Level 4 and get a GET Certificate, then qualify to register with the TVET colleges and acquire more skills.”

C: “The learners who attend AET classes do not qualify to get into tertiary education. As a result, they try to close the gap by attending the program so that they will write the Amended Senior Certificate”

SI:” The learners who are attending have failed or dropped out of the main school, and they want to get the certificate to enrol further in tertiaries and take some courses. It means they get another chance to do much better and want to have opportunities to improve their lives.

Training workshops attended:

N:” In more than ten workshops held by DHET, we were taught how to teach adults and assessments.”

M”: I have attended a few workshops outside the district, which were provided by our centre managers, coordinators and supervisors from the CET college. It made me understand deeper and follow certain criteria as we teach adult learners”.

C:” I have attended many workshops organised by the college. They bring experts to these workshops to help with technology. They gave us their contact numbers so we could contact them after they had gone. They teach us to make lesson plans to be up to standard.”

SI:” I have attended more than 15 workshops conducted by the district coordinators. We were taught how to compile a portfolio of evidence for the learners and lecturers. How do I write lesson plans and assess the learners?”

Classroom infrastructure

N: “I am using a primary school classroom; therefore, the furniture suits the younger learners because it is a primary school.”

M:” I am using the classroom from the school. It has furniture, electricity, doors, windows and chalkboard.”

C:” It is a well-structured classroom but a mainstream school classroom. We should wait until they come out, then clean it and organise the furniture.”

SI: “One site is okay, but two sites must be corrected. They do not have electricity, windows and doors.”

Motivational strategies

C: “I pray with my students when they are stressed. I also motivate, share and interact with them. The government should support us by giving sponsors or stipends because the learners are not working.’

N:” The importance of communication, especially because most learners are females, is that it is easy to talk women to women and encourage them to finish GETC.”

M:” Tell the learners they must know what they want and be honest with them by defining the GETC, stating that it is not a matric certificate but qualifies you to be able to do the Amended Senior Certificate (Matric).”

S:” We motivate learners by organising a farewell party.”

SI: “The college management rewards students by organising functions and giving them food and laptops to those who pass outstandingly.”

4.5.2 Data generated through focus group discussions

Classroom infrastructure emerged as a theme in the focus group regarding the input process.

Classroom Infrastructure

“The Department of Higher Education must do away with using mainstream schools as AET centres; they must have their own classrooms and infrastructure, such as furniture and photocopying machines.”

4.5.3 Transformation processes

The transformation process in a community learning centre includes activities, interactions, and educational methods employed to facilitate learning and personal development among adult

learners. This involves the instructional strategies teachers use, the engagement of learners in classroom activities and discussions, and the adaptation of curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the diverse adult population.

4.5.4 Document analysis

The study used government documents to present data as one of the data-generating methods in a transformative process. “Community Education and Training Colleges shall be funded under National Norms and Standards as provided for terms of section 23 of the CET Act,2006, as well as through other funding streams” (DHET, 2015, p.14)

The programmes of CETCs shall offer a “holistic approach to education and training to be adopted in order to offer learning in which both soft and hard skills are developed within an integrated development framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and the that supports community and individual needs” (DHET, 2015, p.14).

Another objective is” to support -of –compulsory school- going-age youth and adults who experience a number of interrelated barriers to participation in AET, including physiological, psychological, situational and structural barriers. Most of these are directly related to the physical and learning disabilities as well as socio-economic conditions of youth and adults” (DHET, 2015, p.7).

4.5.5 Semi-structured Interviews

Teaching material, teaching methods or approaches, teaching and learning and teaching environment are the themes that emerged in the transformative process in relation to the systems theory.

Teaching material

T: “We use textbooks and SBAs when we teach.”

N:” I use textbooks and college supplies, though sometimes there must be more. I also use newspapers and technology. The workbooks needed to be more, and the learners had to share; sometimes, we wrote on the board so that everyone could see what was supposed to be done.”

M:” From the workshops we attended, they gave us handbooks and guidelines.”

SH:” The materials we receive are the policy document, annual teaching plans and documents relating to exams and assessments. I normally use textbooks when I teach.”

C:” The college gives us files for SBAs, two choir exercise books for Maths, pens and pencils. We also receive textbooks and workbooks.”

SI: “The Department of Education gives us books and stationery, but we need more.’

Teaching method/approaches

N:’ My approach is learner-centred. I love that approach.’

M:’ My teaching approach involves learners in my teaching. Teaching methods involve class discussions and group discussions’.

C:” I teach using different approaches, like combining learner-centred and teacher-centred so that the learner will obtain more knowledge.”

SI:” I use the discussion method, question and answer or exploring method. Basically, I use all methods to teach adults”.

Teaching and learning

N: “The role of students when I teach is to make them understand what I teach them. I ask them questions.”

M:” I expect learners to participate in the discussions on the lessons taught. I also observe and look out for those who are too shy to come out of the box because they need to be engaged.

C: ‘I ask them questions and monitor them while they are writing’.

SI: “I give my learners a chance to engage with what I am teaching and allow them to share their knowledge about the subject. It gives them confidence and increase their pass rate if you involve them when teaching.”

SI: “It is better to engage with my students while teaching. I encourage them to talk and not to be shy, and I create an environment where learners can understand what I am teaching. The learners also do classroom activities.”

Teaching environment

N: “The centre is around the community, and we have security to look around the centre. They feel safer as we study in the afternoon.”

M:” The centre is in the middle of the township, and the school is fully secure. There is no noise because we are surrounded basically by households.”

C: “The teaching environment is quite good because the classes are learner-friendly. It is not easy for the students to come to the centre because most of them walk on foot. The centre is affected by crime because learners are scared to walk when it is dark because there are cars that hijack people in the area.”

SI:” The centre is far from students, and there are few who attend because they have to walk long distances to get to the centre. Crime does the centre because we have to dismiss them early so that they do not get robbed when they go back to their homes.”

4.5.6 Focus group discussions

The following theme was put on the table

Student retention

The lecturers must come fully prepared to teach in class so that those learners who failed in the mainstream must be fully accommodated to achieve and be guided to what they want to do.

Learners must also realise the importance of AET. Teaching time must be extended because more than 2 -5 pm teaching contact time is needed.

Learners need to be motivated to learn and be provided with skills to assist them in getting employment and also guide them towards their goals. If skills can be provided, we can make learners remain in the centre so that they can be well equipped because skills can make them able to generate income when they finish attending AET classes, and this may encourage them not to drop out but remain at the centre. They can also go to TVET colleges to learn other things.

4.6 Output processes

Outputs in this context include the outcomes and achievements resulting from the learning process in the community learning centre. These encompass outcomes like increased literacy or job skills and improved self-confidence, critical thinking abilities, and a sense of empowerment

among adult learners. Outputs may extend beyond the individual level to include broader community impacts such as increased social cohesion or economic development.

4.6.1 Document analysis

The objectives of the Adult Education and Training AET Act, 2000 (Act No. 52 of 2000 and the Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006 (Act No.16 of 2006) were “to conceptualise a workable institutional model for community education and training that is distinct in its ethos and mission, provides a diversity of programmes, qualifications or part- qualifications of which articulate with qualifications of existing institutions and is oriented towards provisioning for communities and ensures Lifelong learning opportunities” (DHET, 2015, p. 7)

The Task Team must establish the Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) and Community Learning Centres (CLCs) together with TVET Colleges “to offer vocationally – oriented skills and programmes leading to sustainable livelihoods outside of the formal sector. Non-formal learning is a planned learning activity not explicitly designated as learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part-time qualification, often associated with learning that results in an improved workplace” (DHET, 2015, p.15).

4.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Data that emerged regarding the output process of the system’s theory involves GETC requirements, technical and business skills, and support.

GETC Requirements

N:” Learners need to complete the SBAs and the examination.’

M: “The learner must achieve a minimum of 120 credits to get the certificate C: It is supposed to be learners who have passed six learning areas.”

SI:” GETC requires 120 credits.”

Technical and business skills

T: “The college must add skills because, today, skills contribute a lot of reducing the unemployment rate in South Africa.”

N:” In the future, they must learn skills so that they can remain in college and get money for survival.”

S:” TVET colleges must work closely with councillors to recruit learners to the CLCs”.

T: “It would help if the learners gain skills by doing subjects like ANHC and ECD, which can teach pre- schoolers.”

M: “In future, we need skills and have CLCs of our own. If we have our own centres, we can have baking skills programs so that they can have their bakery in the community to fight poverty, and we can have computers and bricklayers to build houses for them”.

C:” We motivate learners to register so that they will go to college and learn some skills to work for themselves as well as earn some money because unemployment is a problem.”

SI:” I will be happy if we taught them skills because although GETC is essential, it would be better if learners have skills as well to work together in the community, such as government co-operatives, then it is easy to retain them.”

4.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

A theme that emerged from the focus discussion was business skills.

Business skills

The SETAs must work with the communities and provide the stipend. It must also give them skills they will use to generate income. The learners are motivated when they get certificates and vocational skills such as ECD and ANHC. They can learn skills like knitting and sewing, and they can develop themselves by buying machines using skills they get from AET.

4.7 Other emerging themes

Support

“Support through funding is there, but the process of procuring the centre takes long. The budget for the sector needs to be bigger based on what is expected from the centres”.

“The department must organise workshops and subject meetings (clusters) and must work closely with the community. It must also offer vocational skills such as Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Healthcare.”

T: “We get support in terms of materials’

N:” Communication encourages the learners to come to the centre to make them see the importance of learning.” M:” We need support from the department; they must organise meetings and training to develop the lecturers. We also need the photo coping machine so we do not have to go to town to make copies”.

S: “As a centre manager, I support my staff by holding meetings and encouraging them to study further to develop themselves.”

S:” We get support from the community and council as well; we have a good relationship because the council organised a hall in Unit BB for AET classes”.

C: “We get support from the Department of Education regarding workshops and learning materials.”

T: “I support my staff by giving and sharing with them information and getting posters for them. I run exams for them, train them and appoint them as invigilators.”

T:” I support the learners by giving them stationery to write exams and make ID copies for them.”

Relationships

“Relationships with the learners are good/harmonious because learners cooperate, and the learning environment in the centre is conducive.”

“We have a good relationship with our centre manager because she helps us if we have challenges. Also, learners have a good relationship with the lecturers as they have created a WhatsApp group to communicate with them about everything.”

Themes that were identified by the study were as follows: views on AET learner, training workshops, motivational strategies teaching environment, social factors, institutional resources, support, GETCA, business skills, relationships, classroom infrastructure, teaching approaches and teaching and learning.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter started with an introduction and then presented data that was generated for the research study using three data-generating methods, namely, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions on exploring lecturers’ perspectives regarding AET

Level 4 about dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Themes were put into tables. Curriculum-related matters and the lecturer were also outlined as themes. The data presented in the chapter was organized under the input, transformation and output processes, which are the components of the Systems theory. The chapter ended with a conclusion. Discussion of findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the data collected from the study participants, which provided the foundation for interpretive analysis. The study will now discuss the findings that emerged from data generated from the participants to explore the lecturers' perceptions in relation to dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs. The discussions are based on themes which came up in data with regard to the research questions of the inquiry.

The discussion will be in the light of Systems' theory of "understanding how a particular group is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent on specific components and how they influence one another in that particular system as one piece" (Green, 2015, p.24).

5.2 Discussion of findings

The research study has discovered several things about the relationships and interconnectedness between the stakeholders in the CLCs. These aspects are now discussed below.

Theme one: Who is the AET Level 4 lecturer?

According to the participants' demographics for the AET Level 4 lecturer (refer to Table 6) indicates the following AET Level 4 lecturers' information.

Out of six participants, 5 lecturers are females and only one male lecturer.

This indicates that by nature women are nurturers because they have more patience and tolerance especially when it comes to teaching adult learners.

The age profile shows that 66% of lecturers are between the ages of 50 and above.

The finding means that the lecturers are older therefore the learners may easily relate to them as they offer life lessons along the curriculum they teach at the centre.

Four of the six lecturers are married:

This shows the resilience in the lecturers where they have to balance family responsibilities and teaching at the CLCs during the afternoon.

Most of the lecturers resides in the township.

The finding also indicates that most lecturers are closer to the centres they teach therefore it is easy for them to go to the CLCs and they are also known and familiar to their communities.

All of them possess over 10 years of teaching experience.

Through the finding, the lecturers have vast experience and expertise with regard to teaching adult learners.

Four of the six lecturers have matric plus ABET Certificate as a qualification which is a one – year course teaching certificate and lecturers have a B.Ed qualification. The ABET UNISA certificate prepares one to teach adults at very low levels than AET Level. The B.Ed on the other hand depending on the institution offering such qualification very few provide adult education. The learners who are attending classes in the CLCs are mostly matric dropouts and failures from the mainstream schooling system.

This is an important finding which is relevant for the study because it is not clear to what extent this qualification equips the AET Level 4 lecturers to cope with the demands of their job.

It seems there is a disjuncture between the students' learning needs and the lecturer training.

Theme two: Who is the AET Level 4 learner?

The admission book (refer to Table 8) indicates the AET Level 4 learners that were admitted in 2019 to 2023 in terms of gender in the Manaye College admissions book.

The finding relates to gender which shows that 80% of the learners are females.

Due the historical background, females were denied learning opportunities. After apartheid era, women realised that being educated offered more employment opportunities.

Enrolment increased between 2019 to 2022 but decreased in 2023. The decrease is due to the fact that learners were not resulted due to DHET restructuring and this resulted in learners dropping out because they were demotivated.

The finding on (Table 9) regarding the location of learners indicates that in 2020 and 2023 most learners attending classes were from the Greater Edendale.

This finding relates to the study because Greater Edendale was previously marginalised due to Group Areas Act therefore disadvantaged in various ways. The learners are finding an

opportunity to learn because they want to empower themselves moreover, most learners are within a walking distance to the centre because they do not have to pay for transport and it becomes easy for them to attend classes. The CETC Act which has mandated a shift from PALC to CETCs accommodates all the learners in the CLCs even those who have dropped out or failed from the main stream schooling to attend adult classes.

The Continuing Education and Training and Training Act, 2006 created a policy which served as a framework to formulate the Community Education and Training College as another type of institutions within the Post-School Education and Training system which was effected from the 1st of April 2015. The Act is “responsible for the formal provisioning of the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA) Level 4 which is equated with the NQF, Level 1 and the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) qualifications” (DHET, 2015, p.10).

Furthermore, the finding from Table (10) in the admission book shows that the age profile of AET Level 4 learners from 2019 to 2023 are learners born from 1990 to 2009. This means that very few adult learners are attending classes. The statistics from the documents show that young learners, who are mostly dropouts or failures from the mainstream schooling system, are attending adult classes.

Hence, another objective of the CETC Act is” to support -of –compulsory school-going age youth and adults who experience several interrelated barriers to participation in AET, including physiological, psychological, situational and structural barriers. Most of these are directly related to the physical and learning disabilities and socio-economic conditions of youth and adults” (DHET, 2015, p.7).

Therefore, this has an implication on the teaching and learning environment in the two CLCs as well as the adult learners’ needs.

Theme three: Curriculum Provision

AET Level 4 curriculum was offered at Manaye CETC in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

| Learning Areas | 2019 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| ANHC4 | - | 4 | 44 | - |
| ECDV4 | 26 | 96 | 58 | - |
| WHRT4 | 17 | 39 | 43 | - |
| AET/AET | - | - | 27 | - |
| AET/NQF | - | - | 3 | - |
| MLMS4 | 14 | 25 | 3 | - |
| AET/FP | - | - | 15 | - |
| LCEN4 | 6 | 27 | 2 | - |
| LIFO4 | 3 | 24 | 2 | - |
| AAAT4 | - | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 66 | 216 | 188 | - |

Table 5.1: Learning Areas taken by AET Level 4 learners in 2019, 2021 and 2022.

The finding indicates that the curriculum provision is mainly on formal qualifications. Female learners are mostly doing Early Childhood Development (ECDV4) with the aim of getting into creches, which is government-funded and also creates opportunities for self-employment. The statistics demonstrate that ECDV4 is the most popular subject being enrolled at the centre.

The programmes of CETCs shall offer a “holistic approach to education and training to be adopted in order to offer learning in which both soft and hard skills are developed within an integrated development framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and the that supports community and individual needs” (DHET, 2015, p.14).

The Mission Statement states that “The KZN CET is committing itself to: serve the youth and adults by providing formal and non-formal education and skills based on programmes that are responsive to the socio-economic problems including unemployment, illiteracy and poverty. It also promotes an education that provides opportunities for lifelong learning and entrepreneurship that empowers people to participate actively in the economy” (DHET, 2015, P.4).

The provision of the AET Level 4 curriculum in the CLCs is based mainly on formal learning.

The findings from the input process indicate that lecturers are not trained properly to deal with the challenge of teaching the matric dropouts and failures. The concept of Lifelong learning of integrating both formal and non-formal education for developmental and poverty alleviation purposes and a holistic approach is not evident in the curriculum implementation in the CLCs.

It is not clear to what extent the outcomes are linked with skills so that the CLCs will reduce dropout and increase the retention and throughput rate of learners.

Theme four: Classroom infrastructure – learning environment

The finding regarding the classroom infrastructure in the two CLCs is that they are using a primary school classroom. Therefore, the furniture suits the younger learners. It has electricity, windows, chalkboard and doors. Sisi said: “It’s a well-structured classroom, but the mainstream school classroom. We have to wait until they come out, then clean the class and organise the furniture. The class have electricity, doors, windows, chalkboard and furniture.”

The learning environments the lecturers are using for teaching have the furniture. However, it is not learner-friendly because they had to use primary school chairs which are smaller, whereas the learners are adults, and that makes the learners feel uncomfortable. Sometimes they cannot start classes on time because they should reorganise everything before the afternoon classes resume.

This suggests that adult learners’ needs are not sufficiently met in terms of furniture, and as a result, they feel uncomfortable during lessons. This affects the teaching and learning process because the learning environment is not conducive to learning. Time factor is also a problem because AET provision only takes place from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. Therefore, effective teaching time is wasted since the learners have to wait for the mainstream school learners to leave before starting their own adult lessons.

Tight (1996) maintains that the role of an educator is to set a conducive learning environment to guide learners’ inquiry and engage in discourse for effective learning to take place (Tight, 1996). A further barrier to AET provision is the “shortage of institutional identity or capacity because

most CLCs operate mainly during evening hours, and this condition does not offer enough opportunities for effective tuition (DHET, 2015, p.16).

Pascarella and Terenzini, (2005) maintain that the institutional environments that are seen by students to be inclusive and supported, the higher the expectations for learners' performance. Another factor of student engagement is how the adult learning institution uses its institutional resources and organises curriculum, other learning opportunities as well as support services to encourage learners to participate in learning experiences and activities that can lead to the desired outcomes. If students have a decent institution and academic fit, they are more likely to be retained. Anderson (2011) further postulates that a student who 'fits' in at the learning institution is likely to be content therefore will be committed and will possibly be retained.

Thus, the learning environment in the CLCs is not ideal for adult learners and there is no sound relationship between schools and AET.

Theme five: Institutional resources (teaching material)

Lecturers normally use textbooks when they teach. The college sometimes gives them textbooks but they are not enough. They also use newspapers and technology (cell phones). The workbooks and stationery from the Department of Education are not enough, and the learners have to share, sometimes, they write on the board so that everyone can see what is supposed to be done. The other materials they receive are policy documents, annual teaching plans and documents relating to exams and assessments.

The lecturers in the two CLCs are committed to teaching and learning, but clearly, the teaching material is not enough. For effective learning to take place, adequate resources or teaching material is needed. The support they get from the college with regard to resources is falling short; therefore, there is a challenge regarding enough teaching material. The supply of adequate resources has been indicated as a factor that contributes to hindering effective teaching and learning in the centres. This issue is in line with the Report by the Ministerial Task Team Committee on the funding review framework of TVET College (DHET, 2017), which revealed that the CETCs are underfunded.

Institutional commitment is promoted by allocating sufficient resources, teaching materials and human resources in order to attain student retention in an academic institution (Tinto, 1993,

2014). Similarly, Swail (2002) echoes the same opinion when he highlights the conditions that institutional ability has in reducing dropout, factors that influence student's performances, as well as that contribute to a student's decision to leave formal education and training. He maintains that the mutual benefit that any educational institution can offer is the combination of academic motivation, appropriate learning environments as well as adequate institutional support. This could have a powerful effect on student achievement and persistence in college. Makola (1975) supports Swail (2002) by saying that South African adult learners are dropping out of the CLCs mainly due to three important factors, namely, contextual, personal and institutional factors.

It is evident through the findings that the teaching resources in the CLCs are not enough and that the Department of Higher Education is not providing enough support with regard to the teaching resources.

Theme six: Motivational strategy

Communication emerged as an important factor when motivating students especially because most learners are females. They always encourage them to finish GETC. Lecturers are honest with learners because they tell them that GETC that is not a matric certificate but it enables you to be able to do the Amended Senior Certificate (Matric). One lecturer also prays with the students when they are stressed. She also motivates, shares and interacts with them regarding their personal issues.

The CLCs motivate learners by organising a farewell party. The learners are motivated when they get certificates, such as ECD, ANHC. They are also motivated when you tell them that they qualify to go to the TVET when they acquire skills. The college management reward students by organising functions, give them food and laptops to those who have passed outstandingly. Furthermore, the department should intervene and support the learners by giving them sponsors or stipend because the learners are not working.

An understanding of what motivates adults to participate in adult learning programs is one of the significant factors for increasing the learner's persistence in the programs therefore motivation is crucial for students to participate in adult learning programmes. The findings according to Niwagaba (2007) indicate that intrinsic motivation made the adult joined adult education

programs to acquire knowledge, Dhlamini, (2012) argues that a learner who is extrinsically motivated has a belief that his or her success relies heavily on the facilitators meanwhile Gilley and Maycunich (2000) say that learners are responsive to outside motivation such as promotions, recognition, in the form of rewards, praise as well as certificates. Another important factor that Galbraith (1991, p.98) cites is that in order to sustain adult learners' motivation, educators and planners of adult learning programs have to design meaningful learning programs and involve them in every decision which is made regarding their learning. Nala (2020) adds that motivation is crucial to retention. Adults must recognise the importance of attending adult classes, and their motivation for learning must stem from within. Therefore, if a learner is motivated to participate in an adult learning program such a learner is most likely to persist in the adult learning programme.

This finding regarding motivation is most important because adult learners face barriers and numerous challenges in everyday life situations.

Theme seven: Formal and non-formal provision

According to the findings of the research inquiry, the AET Level 4 lecturers prefer using the learner-centred method, which involves learners when teaching. Sisi commented, ' In my view, it is better if I engage my students while I am teaching.'

They also use combined approaches involving the learner- and teacher-centred approaches so that the learners understand better. The teaching and learning interaction revealed that lecturers engage their learners while teaching and also encourage them to participate in class, not to be shy and create a learning environment where learners can understand what is being taught by conducting class discussions and activities. They also give the learners a chance to engage with the lecturer while teaching and allow them to share their knowledge about the subject. It gives them confidence and increases their pass rate if you involve them in teaching.

Andragogy, fostered by Malcom Knowles (1990) promotes and fosters self-directed learning. His philosophy asserts that an adult learner is free, autonomous and developing. Meanwhile, Tight (1996) further says that the teaching method is learner-centred. The role of an adult educator is to facilitate learning processes and allow learners to develop to his/her full capacity.

Another scholar, Jarvis (1995), echoes the same view of an educator assuming the role of teacher-learner and learner-teacher and further says that effective learning and teaching take place and a suitable learning environment is being created. This will result in learners wanting to be involved in the learning process. Mokubung and Dlamini (2002) also share the same opinion that curriculum delivery, methods of teaching together, and academic support are the most vital elements that must be addressed effectively if the institution wants to retain students.

The above finding indicates that the AET Level 4 lecturers in the two CLCs are trying very hard to do their job. They actively involve learners when presenting the subject matter. According to their perspective, they are delivering and by so doing, they are trying to retain students; however, the policy speaks a different language. It says: The programmes of CETCs shall offer a “holistic approach to education and training to be adopted in order to offer learning in which both soft and hard skills are developed within an integrated development framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and the that supports community and individual needs” (DHET, 2015, p.14).

The policy framework indicates that both formal and non-formal qualifications would be integrated; in reality, the actual curriculum implementation in the CLCs is focused on the formal qualifications where mostly the matric failures and dropouts have found a place to complete their matric. This could negatively impact the learners who come to the centre for upskilling through non-formal education, as they may leave CLCs without having finished the AET programme. Therefore, a holistic approach is ‘lip service’. It is not really implemented in the CLCs.

There are decent intentions in all the policy documents, acts and different papers. For example, formal qualification in both CLCs has in reality become spaces where matric dropouts and failures get a second chance and many of them particularly women students seem to be attracted by the prospect of getting into the Early Childhood and Development (ECD) which is a nursery provision that is funded by government and creating opportunities for self-employment.

Regarding non-formal learning, it’s a pie in the sky; there is no provision as such.

Theme eight: Social factors

The findings from the study participants were on the social factors which impact them. Celiwe indicated that it is not easy for the students to come to the centre because most of them walk on

foot. The centre is affected by crime because learners are scared to walk when it is dark because there are cars that hijack people in the area. Sisi also highlighted that the centre is far from students. As a result, there are few who are attending because they have to walk long distances to come to the centre. The lecturers also revealed that since crime affects the centre sometimes, they have to dismiss the learners early so they do not get robbed when they return to their homes.

Another social barrier which came out during the interview is poverty. They stated that they cannot avoid the learner dropout because the CLCs' location is far from the learners' home. Other learners cannot come back to write exams because they need transport fees and there is nothing that they can do about that. My perception is that the learners in classes drop out because of the employment opportunities they get during the year. We cannot stop learners because poverty is a reality, they want to feed their families. So, if employment comes, we normally allow them to go for it because the AET program does not offer any incentives,' says Ndonga.

What is evident about the above comment is that although the learners want to come to the CLCs to learn they feel unsafe because of the crime that is happening in the area. This statement means that the lecturers have no control over crime, unemployment, or poverty in the area, which can lead to students dropping out of the program. This means that the learners may be satisfied with the institutional experiences but still drop out for reasons that have little to do with the learning centre. This is supported by the finding which highlights social reasons such as poverty, unemployment and crime. Diaz (2002) indicates that uncontrollable factors influence the dropout, results and throughput rate therefore high dropout rate is not symbolic of academic non-success. The social factor impacts heavily on the quality of learning and teaching activities and the throughput rate in the learning institutions because some of them do not pass at the end of the year as they have missed exams because of these challenges.

Tinto (1993) observed that integration of the academic and social environment has a lasting impact on retention and graduation. There has to be a balance between social and academic systems. The above findings correlate to Tinto's (1997) Model of Student Integration which he classifies as institutional experiences. Tinto argues that academic institutions should not only provide the students with an opportunity to learn, but should also provide learners with support as well. Tinto's argument is backed up by some participants. Spady (1970) and Tinto (1975) further cite that a learning institution which gives adequate support to both academic and social

factors during college years is likely to retain students. They also postulated that the bigger the academic and social integration of adult learners in the CLC, the greater the chance of persistence. Nkontwana, (2016) highlights that the learners' integration phenomenon explains the academic and social integration as crucial elements of student dropout and persistence. Swail (2002) goes on further and says that the value of student achievement and persistence in the academic institution is based on the integration of academic motivation, appropriate learning environments as well as social support.

From the above finding, social factors are also a cause for concern in the CLCs.

Theme nine: GETCA Requirements

The participants' responses on their views regarding GETCA requirements were that (GETCA) as stipulated by the new curriculum with the (concept of holism) is equivalent to NQF Level 1 in South Africa as well as business skills. The requirements of GETCA are that learners need to have completed SBA tasks and write the AET Level 4 examination. They are also supposed to have passed six learning areas and achieve a minimum of 120 credits to get their (GETCA) General Education and Training Certificate for Adults, which is their exit point.

Unfortunately, Manaye College could not provide the Examination results from 2019 to 2023 because the office where the results were kept was flooded. As a result, all the records were destroyed. The examination results as the output component would have been analysed if the study was able to access them.

GETCA is important, and the lecturers felt that they would be happy if the college added skills so that the learners are taught skills as well to enable them to work for themselves and earn money to alleviate poverty in the community and reduce the unemployment rate in South Africa. This initiative by the government would motivate the learners to register in the CLCs and it would be easy to retain learners in the centre.

Tinto (1993) maintains that goal commitments indicate a degree to which individuals are committed to achieving their desired goals or outcomes. These goals and commitments will, therefore, strengthen the learners' intentions, resulting in him or her deciding to continue to participate and finish the programme.

The above finding is supported by the literature which states that goal commitment is viewed as a vital component.

Theme ten: Support

Support emerged as a finding in the study. The participants had different views regarding support. Some lecturers said that they need support from the Department so that it will organize meetings and training to develop the lecturers further. They need the photo coping machine so that they do not have to go to town to make copies. The Department must also organise workshops and subject meetings (clusters) and work closely with the community. It must offer vocational skills such as Early Childhood Development, Ancillary Healthcare and AAAT (Applied Agricultural Technology). The CLCs also need support through funding because the budget for the sector is too small based on what is expected from the needs of the centre. Some lecturers said that they do get support from the Department of Education regarding workshops and learning materials

One centre manager said that as the manager of the centre she supports her staff by having meetings and encouraging them to study further in order to develop themselves. One lecturer said: ‘Through communication, I encourage the learners to come to the centre to make them see the importance of learning. They get support from the community and council as well they have a good relationship because the council organised for us a hall in Unit BB for AET classes.

The finding is that the study participants feel that the support they get from the Department is not enough with regard to meetings, workshops and funding. However, the lecturer does offer support to the learners through communication. Gall et.al. (2013) highlight that the facilitators should be available, students’ needs should be provided for, and the individual support the students get at an institution encourages them to persist until they finish the course. The support they also get from their families motivates them to push harder in order to attain their goals. Therefore, support by the DHET is not sufficient in the two CLCs according to the findings.

Theme eleven: Curriculum innovation

The curriculum offered at the two CLCs was also mentioned by the lecturers. The centre offers formal school learning areas as prescribed by DHET, namely, IsiZulu, English Second Language, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Ancillary Healthcare, Early Childhood Development and Natural Sciences. The learning areas are relevant to the needs of the AET Level 4 class. From the

discussions with the study participants it was mentioned that besides the curriculum offered at the centre, the lecturers feel the need for technology. Makhosi said: 'my perception regarding an increase in pass rate is when learners have technology and internet, it is easy to teach them because they are young and familiar with technology and the pass rate will increase' and Celiwe said: 'My ideal classroom is a class with all the infrastructure including technology.'

In order for the centre to retain students, the participants said that they, as lecturers, must come fully prepared to teach in the centre so that those learners who failed in the mainstream must be fully accommodated to achieve and be guided to what they want to do. Learners must also realize the importance of AET. Teaching time must be extended because the 2 pm -5 pm teaching contact time is not enough.

Mokubung (2002) and Dlamini (2002) state that curriculum delivery, the methods of teaching together, and academic support are the most vital elements that must be addressed effectively if the institution wants to retain students. Furthermore, the curriculum is another factor which promotes student retention. When the institution offers relevant subjects, the students are fascinated by that particular institution and often stay. Students persist because the subjects they offer assist in their future endeavours

Mokubung (2002) further argues that if one wants to plan significant learning programs for adult learners, one must check with them and involve them in every step when deciding on their learning. This lack of consultation, particularly about the scheduling of classes and the workload, negatively impacts adult learners. The participants felt that being left out in the decision-making process of their learning programs resulted in an inadequate time allocation for classes. The CLCs can more effectively retain adult learners by considering their expectations.

The two CLCs have a shortage of technology in the curriculum.

Theme twelve: Business skills

The finding is that SETAs must work with the communities and provide the stipend. It must also give them skills they will use to generate income. The learners are motivated when they get certificates and vocational skills such as ECD and ANHC. They can learn skills like knitting and sewing and they can develop themselves by finding machines with skills they get from AET programmes. The participants said that in order for the college to retain students, the college

needs to add skills because learners will see the need to come to the college, and this will contribute to reducing the unemployment rate in South Africa.

Thandi responded by saying: “We motivate learners to register so that they will go to TVET colleges and get some skills to work for themselves as well as to earn some money for survival. I would be happy if we teach them skills because although GETC is important, it would be better if learners have skills as well to work together in the community such as government cooperatives”. She further commented that “In the future, we need skills and we need to have CLCs of our own. If we have our centres, we can have baking skills programs so that the learners can have their own bakeries in the community to fight poverty. If we can have computers as well, bricklayer courses for the learners to be able to build houses and alleviate poverty.”

The policy states that the “The programmes of CETCs shall offer a “holistic approach to education and training to be adopted in order to offer learning in which both soft and hard skills are developed within an integrated development framework that seeks to improve livelihoods, promote inclusion into the world of work and the that supports community and individual needs” (DHET, 2015, p.14).

A student may have other educational goals, such as taking classes to learn new skills or to promote a career, meeting prerequisites for a graduate program or just individual enrichment. Anderson (2011) thus says that when measuring students’ success, learning institutions need to consider a range of educational goals as a success measure for adult learners. Walleri (1981) argues that measuring retention at community centres cannot solely rely on students’ qualifications since not all learners aim for formal qualifications. Some participants join the CLCs to acquire skills and then move on.

The above finding has come up a lot of times. The finding is that the CLCs should provide skills alongside the formal (GETCA) qualification.

Therefore, there is a shortage of business skills offered in the two CLCs.

Theme thirteen: Relationships

Lastly, the emerging theme was the relationship among all stakeholders as informed by the systems theory. A finding is that relationships with the learners are good/harmonious because

learners cooperate during the teaching and learning activities. Lecturers have a good relationship with the centre manager because she helps them if they have challenges. Learners have a good relationship with the lecturers as they have created a WhatsApp group to communicate with them about everything.

Wenger (1998) postulates that the relationships that are created in the community of practice bind the members together. Peer relationships and mentors are defined as significant elements in promoting retention as students develop a sense of learning, belonging and commitment to the group. The sense of mutual engagement is a context for creating knowledge; therefore, the student is comfortable exploring and sharing ideas without fear of intimidation and developing a sense of ownership of their learning. However, the relationship the CLCs share with the DHET is not clear as to what extent.

5.3 Data analysis in relation to System Theory

The section focused on the findings drawn in relation to theory. These conclusions were made from data collected from the participants. The theoretical framework made the findings more meaningful. The study was guided by the research questions. The systems theory describes the relationships and interconnectedness between the components and the nature of relationships. The components of the system include the input processes, transformation processes and output processes. Through the lens of input, transformation and output processes, the study gained valuable insights into the realities faced by AET Level 4 lecturers within their educational context.

According to the inputs, the finding is that the teaching material is not enough and the support from the DHET is not adequate. Therefore, the inadequate support and teaching resources will have a negative impact on the CLCs and AET Level 4 learners may dropout as a result because the nature of the relationship with the department is somehow lacking.

The finding of the transformative component is that lecturers try very hard to teach by involving learners in their teaching, but the policy framework towards a holistic education approach is a 'lip service' that is not really implemented in the CLCs. There is a shortage of non-formal learning (upskilling); the actual curriculum is focused on formal education. Although teachers

engage learners in teaching activities the curriculum does not meet the learners' needs. If the holistic approach was implemented, learners could be retained in the CLCs.

The finding from the output processes was the CLCs must also provide skills to alleviate poverty and unemployment rate in South Africa. The above finding of the output process is that the CLCs ought to provide skills alongside the formal (GETCA) qualification. This is one of the strategies to retain learners and increase the throughput rate in the CLCs. It is evident that all the components within the systems need to work together to curb the problem of dropouts in the CLCs.

Through the analysis, a variety of perspectives on lecturers regarding dropout, retention and throughput have been explored. Various factors that promote retention and throughput rates in the two CLCs have been investigated. Several factors emerged as potential drivers of implementation, supportive leadership and professional development opportunities.

5.3 Conclusion

The chapter started with an introduction. Themes were used in the discussion of findings in the chapter. The findings that emerged were that skills need to be taught alongside (GETCA) which is a formal qualification in the CLCs. There is also a shortage of institutional resources in the centres. Another finding is a social factor which affects the learners' attendance in the CLCs. Motivational strategies are essential as adult learners are faced with barriers and numerous challenges. Discussion in relation to the theoretical framework was presented. In the next chapter, the study will present a summary of how the study unfolded, including a summary of the key findings.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, recommendations and limitations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study. The background and rationale of the study is briefly presented. Reflections are on the research design, data generating tools used and sample selected. The summary of the key findings of the study is presented and the theoretical framework used is discussed briefly. Conclusions in relation to the objectives of the study is outlined. Limitations of the study findings are also presented. The chapter ends with the recommendations that emerged from the findings.

6.2 Background and rationale of the study

The study explores lecturers' perceptions of the Adult Education and Training (AET) Level 4 on the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. Ever since the beginning of the democratic era in 1994, the South African government has implemented several curriculum changes has been put in place by South African government. AET policies and Acts aim to correct the injustices of the past. The idea of redressing the inequalities of the past through the legislative framework is relevant to the socio-economic context of Greater Edendale.

The study's rationale is based on Post-School Education and Training DHET (2013) which maintains that the existing Public Adult Learning Centers system needs to work more effectively. As a result, CETCs have been introduced as a replacement to address the shortfalls of the current education system. Gumbi (2020) also highlights the fact that the current AET Level 4 curriculum and approach in the CLCs focus on general education. As a result, it fails to attract several adults and youth interested in completing a school qualification and acquiring skills for the labour market to alleviate poverty.

The purpose of the research study is to gain insight into the experiences of AET Level 4 lecturers by exploring their perceptions of AET Level 4 about the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale and to find strategies to reduce the dropout and envisioning that through the lecturers' perceptions, the functionality of the two CLCs in the Greater Edendale will be improved by ensuring increased retention and the throughput rate.

The study forms part of the Greater Edendale project. The data presented in the study was generated from the study participants of the two (CLCs) in Greater Edendale at the Imbali

Township. The study participants were two centre managers and four AET Level 4 lecturers. They were chosen because they are knowledgeable, experts and have vast experience of teaching adult learners in the CLCs.

The research study used a qualitative approach based on an interpretive design. The study used a single case study (holistic) design to understand what informs the AET Level 4 lecturers' perceptions regarding the dropout, retention and throughput rate in the two CLCs in Greater Edendale. The holistic investigation included a collection of in-depth and detailed data, which are rich in content and encompassed multiple sources of information, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions the research study used to obtain reliable data. Purposive sampling helped ensure that the most suitable and relevant participants were involved. Thematic analysis has been used to analyse data. The document analysis and transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions were presented and simplified to identify patterns and themes.

The theoretical framework that guided the study was "System Theory" which is about understanding how a particular group is interconnected, interrelating, interdependent, and influencing one another in a specific system.

The findings of the research study reflect an examination of thematic areas in relation to the research questions of the study. The findings are presented below.

6.3 Summary of the key findings

The researcher has used the research questions to structure this section.

6.3.1. Who is the AET Level 4 learner/lecturer

The findings under the input processes indicate that there is a desperate need for AET Level 4 lecturers to be trained properly. Most lecturers possess a one-year ABET UNISA certificate/qualification, which does not equip them enough to teach the matric dropouts and failures who are attending classes in the CLCs. The AET Level 4 learners attending AET Level 4 classes are mostly females from the Greater Edendale. Due to the historical background, females were denied learning opportunities. They come to the centre to finish AET Level 4 and to acquire more skills to improve their lives. It seems there is a disjuncture between the students' learning needs and the lecturers' training. This is an important finding which is relevant for the

study because it is not clear to what extent this qualification equips the AET Level 4 lecturers to cope with the demands of their job.

Furthermore, the learning environments the lecturers are using in the CLCs for teaching and learning are not learner-friendly; therefore, they are not ideal for adult learners, and there is no sound relationship between schools. This suggests that adult learners' needs are not sufficiently met in terms of furniture. As a result, they feel uncomfortable during lessons. This affects the teaching and learning process because the learning environment is not conducive to learning. Therefore, effective teaching time is wasted since the learners have to wait for the mainstream school learners to leave before starting their own adult lessons.

According to the findings, there is inadequate teaching and learning material in the CLCs because the Department of Higher Education is not providing enough support for funding the teaching resources. Motivation came up as a vital factor for learners in the CLCs because it serves as some form of encouragement for them to keep pushing and persevere and not give up. The literature revealed that if the learners persevere, they are likely not to drop out of the centres. If the CLCs are seen to be retaining learners, motivation plays a crucial role.

Another finding is that the results show that the support they get from the Department is not enough about meetings, workshops and funding. However, the lecturer does offer support to the learners through communication. Therefore, support from the DHET is not sufficient for the two CLCs, according to the findings.

6.3.2 Formal vs Non-formal Provision in the CLCs

The current AET Level 4 curriculum approach in the CLCs puts more emphasis on formal qualifications. The lack of balance could negatively affect student retention and could lead to a high dropout rate and a decline in the CLCs. The policy framework indicates that both formal and non-formal qualifications would be integrated; in reality, the actual curriculum implementation in the CLCs is focused on the formal qualifications where mostly the matric failures and dropouts have found a place to complete their matric. This could negatively impact the learners who come to the centre for upskilling through non-formal education, as they may leave CLCs without finishing the AET programme. Therefore, the finding is that a holistic approach is not really implemented in the CLCs.

Regarding the policy documents, acts and different papers, clearly, formal qualification in both CLCs has in reality, become spaces where matric dropouts and failures get a second chance and many of them particularly women students, seem to be attracted by the prospect of getting in the Early Childhood and Development (ECD) which is a nursery provision that is funded by government and creating opportunities for self-employment. The results indicate that non-formal learning provisions are not provided in the CLCs.

Adult learners experience a number of interrelated barriers to participation in AET, such as crime, poverty and unemployment. The learners also feel unsafe because of the crime that is happening in the area. The finding with regard to the social factors shows that they impact heavily on the quality of learning and teaching activities and the throughput rate in the learning institutions because some of them do not pass at the end of the year as they have missed exams because of these challenges. It becomes clear that social factors are also a cause for concern in the CLCs.

6.3.3 The Business Skill

This finding has repeatedly shown that there is a shortage of skills offered in both the CLCs. Although a General Education and Training Certificate for Adults is essential, it would be better if the college upskilled the adult learners so that they would be self-sustained. The SETAs must work with the communities and provide the stipend. It must also give them skills they will use to generate income. The learners are motivated when they get certificates and vocational skills such as ECD and ANHC. But if the learners can learn skills like knitting and sewing, they can develop themselves with skills they get from AET programmes. Clearly, this finding reveals a shortage of skills in AET programmes.

Lastly, on relationships, a finding is that relationships with the learners are good/harmonious because learners cooperate during the teaching and learning activities. Lecturers have a good relationship with the centre manager because they help them if they have challenges. However, this finding is not clear enough with regard to the relationship between the DHET and the CLCs.

6.4 Reflection on the theoretical framework

Systems theory proved to be a useful and appropriate framework that echoed the research inquiry. The systems theory describes the relationships and interconnectedness between the components. This means that the interaction within the stakeholders is dependent upon the nature of the relationship between the components. As shown in Figure 6, there is an input component, the

transformative component and the output component. All the arrows start from the inputs, which is the foundation from which everything is built. These include the various resources in the learning process, like funding, facilities and educational materials, skills and knowledge of instructors, motivation and support systems within the community. The finding is that the teaching material is not enough and the support from the DHET is not adequate. Therefore, inadequate support and a shortage of teaching and learning resources will have a negative impact on the CLCs and AET Level 4 learners may drop out as a result because of the nature of the relationship between the department and the CLCs.

Most lecturers possess a one-year ABET UNISA certificate/qualification, which does not equip them enough to teach the matric dropouts and failures who are attending AET classes in the CLCs. It seems there is a disjuncture between the students' learning needs and the lecturers' training. This is an important finding which is relevant for the study because it is not clear to what extent this qualification equips the AET Level 4 lecturers to cope with the demands of their job.

The second component is the transformative process, which involves all activities, interactions, and educational methods teachers use to facilitate learning, personal development, and engagement of adult learners in classroom activities to meet their needs. The results indicate that within the transformative process, the lecturers try very hard to teach by involving learners in their teaching and learning activities, but the policy framework towards a holistic education approach is only a 'lip service' that is not implemented in the CLCs. The finding reveals a shortage of non-formal learning (upskilling) since the curriculum focuses on formal education. The policy framework indicates that formal and non-formal qualifications would be integrated, whereas, in reality, the actual curriculum implementation in the CLCs is focused on the formal qualifications where mostly the matric failures and dropouts have found a place to complete their matric. This could negatively impact the learners who come to the centre for upskilling through non-formal education, as they may leave CLCs without having finished the AET programme.

The third component of the system is the output process. Outputs in this context include the outcomes and achievements resulting from the learning process in the CLCs, which encompass outcomes like increased literacy or job skills, improved self-confidence, and a sense of empowerment among adult learners. Outputs may include broader community impacts such as

increased social cohesion or economic development. The finding from the output processes was the CLCs must provide business skills to alleviate poverty and unemployment rate in South Africa. Although a General Education and Training Certificate for Adults is essential, it would be better if the college upskilled the adult learners so that they would be self-sustained. This is one of the strategies to retain learners and increase the throughput rate in the CLCs. Therefore, whatever foundation from the input will directly affect transformation and result in the output processes. The interrelatedness among different components influences one another. It becomes evident that all systems need to work together to curb the problem of dropouts in the CLCs.

For the working centre to effectively attain its goals, the lecturers depend on the centre managers for support. If the work environment, which is the CLCs in Greater Edendale (system), is experiencing challenges, the learners need to communicate the problem to the lecturer; maybe the challenge is bigger than the lecture, and he/she can take it to the centre manager. This ensures the smooth operation of the adult learning centre as the lecturers are reliant on the centre manager for support and also the centre manager is dependent on the governance for quality implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, interrelationship and interconnectedness in the Systems” theory are important.

6.5 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is evident that there are some issues that need to be addressed in the two CLCs.

1. Qualifications vs dropouts from mainstream

Based on the findings, there is no proper relationship between the mainstream school and AET lecturers. There must be a sound relationship between schools, AET and college. The recommendations based on the findings are that educators need to be adequately trained to teach effectively to mainstream school dropouts.

2. Learning environment

The learning environment is not conducive for teaching and learning it could be better if AET can have their own classes or use other alternative venues such as churches.

3. Skills vs formal education

Skills taught in the CLCs must be linked with AET policy so that learners may be provided with adequate skills for self-sustainability and self-employment. CLCs should provide skills alongside the formal (GETCA) qualification to retain learners. If the CLCs are seen to be retaining students, they need to add skills alongside formal education (GETCA).

4. Support

If the CLCs are committed to improving retention and throughput rates, the DHET should strive to offer a more comprehensive and supporting learning environment. This would better serve the needs of adult learners

5. Holistic approach

There is a need for a holistic approach to be implemented and outcomes have to be linked with skills as stipulated by AET policy in order to attract and retain students, increase throughput and reduce the dropout rate in the CLCs. This initiative by the government would motivate the learners to register in the CLCs, and it would make it easy to retain learners in the centres. A holistic approach (Lifelong Learning) must integrate formal and non-formal curriculum approaches, and skills taught in CLCs must link with the AET policy to suit the adult learners' needs.

6.6 Limitations

The researcher had to conduct a small-scale study within the constraints of a tuition schedule. The tuition was only two hours. The researcher had to communicate with all participants and not to impose her schedule on them. Given this context, it took more than eight weeks to collect data at the two CLCs as appointments had to be made for the days that the learners were not attending classes. In the end, this was overcome by following the schedule recompiled together.

The study only focused on lecturers' perceptions. As a result, the learners' perceptions were excluded.

The study had only one male lecturer; the other 5 lecturers were females; therefore, most of the views were coming from female lecturers.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presents the background of the study. The findings were summarised, including the views on AET learners and lecturers, formal and non-formal education and business skills. The researcher went further and reflected on the theoretical framework which was used in the study. Recommendations and limitations concluded the chapter.

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