UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

School of Education

Exploring the Approaches of a Community Education and Training College in Creating and Managing Community Partnerships for Quality Service Learning

By

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In partial fulfilment of the degree of…..

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval.

Professor Chikoko

Date:

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, ----------hereby declare that This dissertation is my original work and does not contain any elements previously submitted for a degree at any university. Any use of published material has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This case study sought to explore the approaches of a community education and training (CET) college in KwaZulu-Natal, in creating and managing community partnerships for quality service learning. The study explored the perspectives of two centre managers, five lecturers from two community learning centres and two partnership unit managers from the community college . The study was conducted within the confines of interpretive paradigm . Data were generated using semi-structured individual interviews, which data was thematically analysed. The transformational leadership theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. The study discovered that the formation of service-learning partnerships in the CET college is not organised into a defined, transparent structure. It demonstrates that, while relationships have been established with many stakeholders for service learning, there is a lack of coherence in the administration of such collaborations. The centre managers and lecturers do not have a comprehensive understanding of how to formally establish, administer, monitor, and record the centre-community created partnerships. As a result, there is a lack of clarity on partnership management roles and expectations. The study again found that formal and funded partnerships applications are centralised in the college partnership unit on behalf of the community learning centres (CLCs) even without their knowledge. Resourcing of centre community engagements and learning support material are centralised in the college central office and there is no centre financial management capacity. To achieve and be effective, change requires strong leadership and management influence. The study recommends that all centre managers take part in training intervention programmes such as workshops, short business and leadership courses, mentorships, and seminars on the application, formation, and management of formal and funded service-learning partnerships. The CET college should evaluate its standard procedure for CLC funding norms in terms of centre-sourced funding. CLCs must be empowered and allowed to enter contracts for financial gain, and centre managers must be taught in financial management and reporting. The study further recommends the concept of change management be applied to allow for a more transparent and

collaborative approach to the creation and management of college-community service-learning partnerships for quality responsive learning.

Keywords: Approaches, Community Colleges, Partnerships, Management, Service Learning

List of Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	Adult Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CET	Community Education and Training
CET Act	Continuing Education and Training Act, 16 of 2006
CETC	Community Education and Training College
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Viruses
HoD	Head of Department
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPCDI-CETC	National Policy on Curriculum Development and Implementation in Community Education and Training Colleges
NP-CET	National Policy on Community Education and Training
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OED	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSET	Post Education and Training System
PQM	Programme Qualification Mix
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
USA	United States of America
WPBL	Workplace Based Learning

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is focused on exploring the approaches of Community Colleges in creating and managing community partnerships for quality service learning. The focus of this chapter is to put the study in perspective and inform the reader of its objectives. The demand for community colleges in South Africa is high due to high rates of skill shortages and unemployment among the youth (Khuluvhe, 2021, p.3). As a result, Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) were founded with the goal of tackling skills shortages and youth unemployment (Wyner, 2019). In South Africa (SA) community colleges use an all-inclusive and self-motivated approach to education. Their ideology incorporates all areas of educational training and focuses the interest of all offered programmes on the economic demands of communities (Lovett et al., 2018, p39). Rule, Chatty, Baloyi, and Daniels, (2015) observed that programme development and training in community learning centers require hands-on and practical visionary leadership, whereby clear aims and objective outcomes are consulted on and communicated with the larger communities (p6). This was done to assess the efficacy of community colleges in South Africa. Community learning centers need to be able to offer curricula that are pertinent to the lives of their learners and their adult positions within the community.

The implication, therefore, is that the curricula provided by community colleges ought to consider and address the needs assessments of the communities they serve. The question is whether the current CETCs can train youth and get these communities ready for the workforce and economic independence. To effectively address their needs, the institution should establish relationships with labour unions, community organizations, and sponsors of high-calibre, needs-based learning programs (Wolhunter & Wet, 2017). This can be done by assessing the college's level of engagement with the communities it serves. Due to the low educational attainment and skills gap on the youth and adults, community colleges must quickly increase the delivery of high-quality education (Mlachila and Moeletsi 2019).

As a result, this chapter addresses the background of the study, problem statement, and main research questions. The significance of the study and limitations are then discussed, along with succinct definitions of the essential terms that form the basis of the dissertation. The conclusion and the structure of the paper are outlined at the end of the chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In the post apartheid era, adult education in South Africa has experienced significant transformation. Among these changes are policies that expressed well-meaning objectives for the sector. A single national non-racial system was implemented following the release of the Why do you have policy documents italicised? *White Paper on Education and Training* on March 15, 1995. Consequently, in order to target out-of-school youth and adults in a manner similar to that of Further Education and Training (FET), a directorate for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was created. The *Adult Education and Training Act of 2000* replaced the term ABET with AET. Any adult learning and training program registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level-01, as defined by the *National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008*, is referred to as Adult Education and Training (AET).

But in South Africa, the percentage of unemployed people, adults, and out-of-school youth who lack a basic education or training is startlingly high and still rising (Branson et al., 2014, p106). Therefore, in 2015, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) included AET programs into its portfolio, which is now known as the Community Education and Training Colleges (CETC) offerings. The CET model represents a shift from the current basic adult education system; this shift entails a new location, new structures, and new terminology.

A change in the way community education and training colleges (CETC) operate has been pushed by the National Post-School Education and Training (NPSET) structure. This shift is in favor of a system that is continuously in contact with other organizations, stakeholders, and processes that are similar to and complementary to it, rather than the traditional adult education training program that provides adults with a foundational education. As part of its objectives, the National Development Plan (NDP) calls for leadership that can oversee and manage the shift from traditional classroom learning to high-quality, community-responsive service learning by 2030. These objectives include expanding access to higher education institutions,

eliminating poverty, and improving employment prospects (*National Planning Commission, 2012).*

The goals of community colleges, their place in the larger educational system, and the steps that need to be taken to make them into institutions suited for their intended purposes have all been debated by Land and Aitchison (2017), Rule et al. (2015), and Simkins (2019). In the context of public and private stakeholders, community colleges continue to struggle to establish a set of quantifiable, meaningful results around which to center their human and material resources as well as their production models (Wyner, 2019). The importance of competency-based training and workforce training programs has been brought to light by changes in higher education, particularly in the community college sector. This has led to the demand of accountability and transparency in the quality of the education offered in community colleges (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). Accountability is focused on assessment of teaching and learning outcome quality, the productivity of an institution and institutional efficiency (Ayers, 2015).

Many community colleges were founded with the intention of addressing pressing issues facing their communities, including youth development, unemployment, and skill development (Beach, 2012). Community colleges are a means to educate students from the younger generation and provide a real-world example of how they can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to find work and prosperity (Raby & Valeau, 2016). Community colleges serve youth who might not be enrolled in formal education or training programs, according to (Wolhuter et al., 2015). Hence, the admission requirements for these community colleges are minimal: the applicant should be 18 years and older and should be capable of benefiting from the instruction offered. However, in countries where the community colleges form part of the tertiary education, the applicants are required to have completed secondary school education or a diploma (Land & Aitchison, 2017).

The *Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act 16 of 2006*, repealed the Further Education and Training Act, and gave the CETC a legal standing in South Africa. Establishing a nationwide co-ordinated continuing education and training system that fosters cooperative governance and offers program-based vocational and vocations training is deemed imperative by the CET Act's preamble *(CET Act 16 of 2006)*. Similarly to this, the White Paper on Post School Education and Training (WPPSET-DHET) (2013)'s preamble aims to address the demands of the nation, the labor market, and the populations that the institutions serve. It

further supports the CETC in fulfilling its specific responsibilities by promoting adult basic and further education, as suggested by Section 9 of the South African Constitution, and clarified by the *CET Act 16 of 2016.*

The *National Policy on Curriculum Development and Implementation in CET Colleges (2017)* is based on the principle that the newly formed CETCs need to start appropriate and good responsive programs and qualifications, address issues of poor teaching and learning, subpar delivery quality, lack of program diversification, and inadequate focus on community needs. As a result, the NP-CET has offered a framework for a program qualification mix (PQM) that stresses adaptability and responsiveness in creating programs that are motivated by the developmental priorities of the community (DHET, 2015a, p.8). The PQM seeks to provide learning approaches and activities that enhance livelihoods, promote integration into the workforce, and cater to the specific requirements of the community. Community colleges must provide a variety of courses and skills programmes that fall into one of the three NQF sub-frameworks. (DHET, 2015a, p13). CETC must create partnerships and linkages within the frame of the PSET system and other investors and interested parties.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

There is enough evidence in the literature to conclude that there have been issues that hinder the productivity of the community college institutions in South Africa. These difficulties include a lack of funding, insufficient resources, poor quality education and overall subpar infrastructure. These challenges have caused the community colleges to be viewed as inferior due to inadequate adult education delivery. (Mbatha, 2022; Wyner, 2019; & Wolhuter et al., 2015). Land and Aitchison (2017) have pointed out that the ideal institutional model for the community college requires learning that will enable people to satisfy labour market. It has however, been noted that a significant number of college-aged and adult students lack literacy and numeracy skills in South Africa which necessitates a conventional learning model to respond to the need of a highly skilled labour force that is spurred by the innovations of technology and globalisation (Land & Aitchison, 2017; Hunter, 2010).

According to the national policy on community colleges, CET colleges must form alliances and cooperate with many community stakeholders, for good quality learning, The national policy on community colleges states in section 4 that, community colleges must establish tight

relationships with local government agencies, employers, labor unions, and civil society organizations in order to better match their programs with the needs of the community. To offer excellent formal and informal education and training programs, community colleges must again collaborate with other post-school institutions (NP-CET, 2015). It is not adequately known how community colleges establish and manage functional partnerships as a tactic to achieve quantifiable and significant results. To ensure meaningful partnerships, this calls for an emphasis on leadership and the roles of partners.

There is enough evidence of introduced effective sector-specific strategies and the adult education has seen significant changes since the end of apartheid (Prinsloo, 1999; Aitchison, 2003; & Zeelen et al., 2011). These adjustments include the outlined policies that expressed admirable aspirations for the college. The transition of adult education from the Directorate of Adult Basic Education (ABET) to a community college model, which is intended to foster a magnitude of economic development through community responsive programs, has been restructured because of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (RSA, 2013b). However, there is also a wealth of literature that demonstrates evidence of inadequate implementation of these policies in the adult education sector (Mbatha, 2022; Wyner, 2019; & Wolhuter et al., 2015).

The community college model in South Africa is influenced by the Adult Education and Training (AET) system's past experiences. This, therefore, indicates that the CET college model, leadership, may be heavily influenced by and rooted in the previous traditional patterns of decision-making if a new leadership model is not developed for the current environment (Mbatha, 2022). The question is whether the established community colleges can be able to handle the trans-formative change and create plus manage the stakeholder relations to promote partnerships for quality service learning as outline on the CET policy. Therefore, it is important to discuss the role played by the CET college leadership in creating community partnerships for quality service learning.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study pursues to respond to the following three critical questions:

1. In what ways does the selected community college engage with the local communities in developing its programmes?

2. How does the community college use the community partnership approach as a strategy for quality service learning?

3. What skills are needed to better manage the quality service-learning partnerships at the college and to achieve better outcomes in terms of building and maintaining such partnerships?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A study of college-community partnerships is imperative particularly for the community colleges as they are meant to respond to the needs of communities they are based in.

The study is conducted knowing that there exists an empirical literature on the past patterns of the adult education and training sector that had poor learning outcomes for adult learning in communities. This is also worsened by the existing literature on the unresponsiveness of community colleges' programmes to the economic needs of the communities. While acknowledging these views, however, scholars such as Land and Atchison (2017) and Rule et al. (2015) acknowledge that community colleges are a perfect solution to sponsor community service learning as their programmes are situation based and responding to the timeous needs and not conforming to a linear curricular. This research may contribute to the understanding of creating partnerships for service learning and its applicability to the process of college improvement and of skills development. It can be inferred that community-college partnerships need to be created and sustained if community responsive programmes are anything to go by in the community college sector. At the end of the study, I hope to contribute to knowledge on place-based partnerships approach, policy and leadership practice that can be employed to create and implement community quality service learning. I expect the study to reveal the approaches of leading community partnerships for quality service learning, through exploring the practices of two community learning centres in a community college. The study aims to approach a college-community collaboration for high-quality service learning using the placed-based community development paradigm. This paradigm was inspired by Dewey's (1902) view of schools as social hubs, where they serve as centres for intellectual development and economic development (Valli, Stefanski, & Jacobson, 2018).

An in-depth undertaking of the possibilities for a place-based approach from this study may contribute to the possibility of future partnerships being established under the principles of this concept The study further identifies the challenges of using this approach and factors that

strengthen the implementation of this approach and those that may hinder its application. In my view, it is in the public interest to know the community-college role in the creation of partnerships with local organisations for responsive quality learning. I am convinced that should there be a working together of community colleges and the community organisations, a new culture will develop wherein there will be trust for the quality in programs offered and motivation from the learners knowing that what they learn directly responds to their social and economic needs. The big beneficiaries will be the adult learners and their communities whose learning outcomes will be improved. The leaders of the community colleges who bear the responsibility of coordinating stakeholder relations will also benefit on how to form and sustain partnerships with communities and local organisations to realise the goals of quality service learning.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Clarifying the following constructs is important since they influenced the study's premise and operation:

1.6.1 Partnerships

Axelrod (2018) states that a partnership is a potential for a kind of synergy created for the purpose of developing and implementing a plan by and for the parties involved, even though not all partners will be always equally active. According to Coburn et al. (2013), defines a partnership as a cooperative relationship of persons or groups that take on a specific duty or purpose to achieve a common objective, such as enhanced teaching and learning outcomes in a school. Stakeholders in a partnership are equals who stand to gain fairly from the partnership's outcomes, based on these two criteria; but, in practice, this can be challenging to accomplish because of ingrained power disparities across stakeholders. To achieve their aims of establishing high performance and improved student outcomes, educational institutions build partnerships with a variety of stakeholders in the hopes that these relationships will help the school realize its vision, purpose, and goals (Caluza, 2022).

According to Sanders and Epstein (2005), the number of education partnerships is growing because they are effective in addressing issues in the classroom such as student dropout rates and subpar performance. Nevertheless, because of the schools' limited resources, there is a power imbalance that must be addressed. Partnerships are usually multidimensional concepts

with an emphasis on achieving their goal. The manner they are designed and coordinated gives them strength. All organisations and individuals involved in partnerships connect with the principles of a common mission and goals that are at the core of their shared vision, regardless of the circumstances (Khuzwayo, 2019; Myende, 2018; OECD, 2006). In this study the term is used to define the collaborative initiative that involves a broader community to align the college and community resources, expertise, and accountability to address economic challenges and enhance quality conditions for learning.

1.6.2 College Community Partnership

The college community partnerships are defined as reciprocal collaborations with cooperative efforts between local, regional, national, and international groups aimed at exchanging resources and expertise in a way that benefits both parties. College-community partnerships strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility, address pressing societal issues, improve curriculum, teaching, and learning, foster research, creative expression, and scholarly work. They also help to prepare informed, involved citizens and advance the public good by improving civic and cultural life in our communities (Taylor and Lepper, 2019).

Naidoo et al. (2019) suggest that mutual and reciprocal provision of services characterizes the relationships between the community and education. The concept of "mutual provision" of services implies that the community will get services from the institution and vice versa. According to Sanders (2005), the school-community might comprise a variety of interested parties, including colleges, government organizations, local profit, and non-profit organizations (NPOs), organizations focused on research, political organizations, and faith-based organizations (FBOs). The organizations may come together to build a school community despite geographical borders if it is understood that they have an interest in what schools are doing.

College-community partnerships are described in this study as mutually beneficial interactions between the school and the community. This connection is defined by the joint efforts of the external and internal school communities to achieve the common objectives. Mutual benefit is

another quality that distinguishes the connection. The college community, as defined by this study, is not limited by physical bounds (Sanders, 2005); rather, it considers other organisations or people who consistently engage with the college and who have a persistent interest in the community college.

1.6.3 Service Learning

Service learning is defined as a course-based, credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in mutually identified and organised service activities that benefit the community and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of personal values in civic responsibility (Hatcher et al., 2019, p5). Although this definition places service learning with the formal curriculum, it is acknowledged that there are definitions of service learning that include both curricular and co-curricular programmes and that can focus on service learning and engage students in reciprocal partnerships with community constituencies. Research indicates that co-curricular programs can provide meaningful opportunities for understanding the development of civic learning (Hatcher et al., 2019, p5).

Dymond et al,(2008) define service learning as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. It is based on the elements of integrated learning, quality service, collaboration, student voice, reflection and evaluation (Dymond et al., 2008). Service-learning elements are deliberately tied to the learning objectives of the course and are meant to develop responsible students that productively and directly contribute to their community through their service. However, in this study I emphasise the formal curricular nature of service learning and means of community engagement.

1.6.4 Management and Leadership

Management is an ongoing process whereby individuals within an organisation seek to plan their actions and make best use of their resources to accomplish diverse responsibilities of the organisation with optimal efficiency (Bush 2011). According to Algahtani (2014) management is defined as a set of processes that keeps a business running by solving problems and maintaining daily operations to enhance output and performance. In this study management

is defined as a process of preparing, arranging, leading, and heading whilst learning and empowering oneself and others for the fulfillment of institutional goals (Myende, 2018).

Leadership on the other hand is a process of influencing other people and it facilitates the effort of a person or group to complete its objectives (Amalia et al., 2020). In this study leadership is defined as an ability and a process of developing, guiding, and influencing other people to implement activities for effective and efficient achievement of quality learning. This concise conceptualisation of management and leadership show that the key components involve a process of influence, strategic direction, and guidance of other people for an attainment of an ultimate goal. For me this means that, creating and managing community partnerships for quality service learning requires both managerial and leadership capacity from the CET college.

1.7 STUDY DELIMITATIONS

It must be stated as of utmost importance that every research faces certain predicaments that contribute to its imperfections. Firstly, the study sought to explore the approaches of one community college in creating partnerships for quality service learning. It is therefore focused on one community college in KZN and is a case study of only two community learning centres of the KwaZulu-Natal CET college.

1.8 CHAPTER ORGANISATION AND OUTLINE

The research report will consist of five chapters, which are subdivided as outlined below:

Chapter One: introduces the thesis. Here the background of the study is discussed, the statement of the problem is clearly stated and the key research questions for the study. Following to that are the significance of the study and the limitations as well as brief definitions of the key terms used in the thesis. I then present the structure of the thesis at the end of the chapter and conclude.

Chapter Two: provides a detailed account of the reviewed literature to give an understanding of the community colleges' nature and the service-learning concept. Firstly, I describe the background of the college-community partnership. Secondly, I discuss the rationale behind

community college partnerships and the factors that strengthen the community collage collaborations. The last section of this chapter explains the theoretical framework within which the study is located which includes the place- based partnership approach and the transformational leadership.

Chapter Three: discusses the research design and methodology that was employed in the study to achieve the research aims. These include the interpretivist paradigm, the qualitative research approach, the case study method, purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. I also explain how I considered the concept of trustworthiness in my study. Towards the end I include the limitations of the study as well as ethical considerations that I observed in the study.

Chapter Four: presents a descriptive data analysis and the interpretation of the data that was collected through questionnaires and the interviews with the target participants. The data was gathered through semi structured interviews and focus groups which are discussed at length in chapter three. This chapter responds to the three critical questions that guided the study. Data is presented and analysed in accordance with thematic analysis approach which transcriptions of semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Chapter Five: a summary of the study and conclusions drawn from research findings from chapter four. The last part of this chapter makes recommendation in respect of policy, practice, and theory.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a review of the existing literature is presented intended to provide a scope of research that has been done on the concepts and implementation of partnerships for service learning between community colleges and various community stakeholders. The research will initially draw on published literature pertaining to the theories and concepts, as well as research topic to give an understanding of global definitions of community education and strategies used for quality service learning. I firstly discuss the literature on community education, community colleges and partnerships, service-learning approach to get an understanding of how other scholars view the creation, implementation, and management of partnerships for service learning to improve the quality of learning in community colleges. Secondly, the chapter critically discusses the leadership theory that guided the study and the service-learning model as an ideal approach for quality learning and community development. This chapter is divided into two sections. Section A presents the review of related literature and Section B, presents the theoretical framework.

SECTION A: RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION

Scholars believe that the term "community" may be divided into three main categories: first, communities can be characterized by geography, such as individuals who reside in the same neighborhood. Second, by the means with which they are related, such as racial or ethnic background, culture, religion, political affiliations, degree of education, or socioeconomic standing. The third level function of a community; it is the group that does comparable duties or has a similar profession, and via action interactions, they absorb a sense of character shared by the community (Lyn, 2015; Tett, 2010; Wallerstein et al., 2005, p. 34). However, even though a community's members are concentrated in a certain area, it should be noted that they are not uniform. The members of the group are still unique people with different opinions and ideas (Tett, 2010). For this reason, despite certain similarities, a collective audience should not

be seen and treated the same way (Lolwana et al.,2018,). Several questions that should be considered when defining and working with a community, according to Flicker et al. (2008) and the OECD (2019) include: who are the community representatives, with more influence and what kind of influence they have over the people; are the important members employed by community-based organisations; who has the time, resources, and flexibility to collaborate with you; and who is classified as "outside" the community. In this study, I examine a selected CET college's construction and administration of partnerships with the communities to whom it is intended to deliver literacy, vocational skills, and second chance programmes. The community consists of the (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) NEETS, youth and adults with little or no formal education, as well as community organisations and other stakeholders that may collaborate with the college to deliver excellent service learning. It is critical to understand what constitutes a community and how that community identifies itself. For the purposes of this study, a community is defined as a collection of individuals who have a similar or shared identity and use a localized system of interactions to meet its everyday needs.

Community education, often referred to as community-based learning or community training and development, is an effort by the government and or community organisations to advance social progress and education by working with local communities via a variety of official and informal means (Fashesh, 2003). One notable and frequently discussed feature is that a curriculum and activities are designed through consultation with community people (DHET, 2015a). A well-known method to community education must liberate people's lives, values, essences, and ways of thinking from hegemonic influences, allowing them to express their thoughts and behaviors more freely. This enables a framework for autonomous activities in community colleges (Fashesh, 1995). The goal of community learning and development is to improve the quality of life for individuals and groups of all ages by essentially empowering and capacitating them to engage in democratic a process (Lovett et al., 2018).

Community education embraces all approaches of conducting education and development programmes within local communities. Community colleges also include current educational properties as well as those of basic school institutes, colleges, and community organisations in the community to assist all target groups that are often not served by traditional educational curriculum (Tattum & Tattum, 2017). The latter is known as the formal education system,

whereas community education is often referred to as informal education. It has long been a critical aspect that the formal education system is failing large sections of the population in all countries and there is the concern of taking learning and development opportunities to socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals and impoverished areas, although it can be broadly provided (Lovett et al., 2018). Land and Aitchison (2017) contend that every person ought to have the chance to pursue a lifetime of learning, professional development, and social advancement. “The goal of community education is to teach the community how to recognise and address developmental issues on all fronts—personal, social, political, and economic" (DHET 2012b, p. 32–33).

Community education places a strong focus on learning that arises from people's behaviors and the social welfare that communities provide (Paquette, 2017). Its technologies and curriculum include a variety of popular learning applications and motivations. Community education is aimed to engage and inspire individuals from all walks of life in learning that is based on what is relevant to their needs and interests (Paquette, 2017). Education that is relevant to the pupils involved is created in response to community objectives and exigencies, which are determined by people rather than by following the prescribed curriculum. This style of education provides a complete and dynamic approach to public education. It is a concept that encompasses all aspects of educational programming and steers each of them toward community needs (Lovett et al., 2018). Community education serves as the channel agent, directing resources to address identified community concerns.

In SA, community education comes in a wide range of initiatives that provide vital opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage in lifelong learning, improve their skills, and make meaningful contributions to their community. They include, but are not limited to, early childhood development (ECD) programmes offered through community caregivers, where ECD services are provided by registered members of the Department of Social Services to provide critical educational and developmental experiences for young children, often preparing them for a smooth transition to grade R. (Labuschagne, 2015). Primary health care (PHC) community education programmes: The projects seek to improve the level and quality of community participation in the delivery of health care, to improve the reach and quality of PHC services in the community and to form the basis for a wider social

development agenda (Gibbs and Campbell, 2012). These programs aim to promote healthy lifestyles and educate individuals on various health topics. Examples include nutrition workshops, HIV and AIDS education, and stress management or disease prevention seminars, empowering individuals to take charge of their well-being. Community education system in SA has been established and formalised through a green paper for post school education and training whereby CET colleges were developed to harness the potential for development and social cohesion that exists in some community and popular education initiatives. Therefore, community college programmes should tie and respond to all community services and educational needs helps to bring about change since community colleges reach out to everyone in the community (Lovett et al., 2018).

This education contributes to the creation of an atmosphere in which all men feel secure and confident, allowing them to develop and thrive in a community that values education as a vital function of community life (Lovett et al., 2018). Community education fulfills the people's most pressing needs since it encompasses all aspects of the community's well-being and responsibilities, allowing life and learning to coexist (Nsele, 2020). It, therefore, stands to reason that policy and practice for community education and training should be founded and based on a democratic society which views collective improvement in quality of life as the primary goal of its educational initiatives. Having explained the concepts of community and the community-based education, I now look at the community college concept.

2.3 COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONSTRUCT

While the phrase "community college" varies depending on the country, in South Africa it typically refers to inclusive post-secondary educational institutions that are open to the public and provide varying combinations of four post-secondary education and training options (Land & Aitchison, 2017). In the context of the United States, community colleges are defined by Raby (2009) as a distinct type of post-secondary education that provides academic curricula leading to an associate in arts or sciences degree, as well as short-term and semi-professional terminal courses and, in certain situations, the ability to transfer to four-year university programs. Community colleges, in conjunction with universities and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, constitute a third institutional form in South Africa.

Their purpose is to provide general access to education at a post-secondary level in both urban and rural areas, for a variety of curricular and programmes with an element of academic, technical and career- directed programmes for youth and adults with various learning modalities (Mbatha, 2022).

In the classic sense of the word, community colleges have been designated to fill a specific role in the higher education system: to support individuals who for various reasons have never had the opportunity for post-secondary education and training but still need to support themselves to lead fulfilling lives in the competitive global societies of today (Wolhunter et al., 2015). As the table below illustrates, community colleges throughout the world provide a variety of community education options.

Table 1: Forms of community college education (Land &Aitchison, 2017)

	Vocational education	Non-Vocational education
Formal education and training	Technical and Vocational education providing formal qualifications at various levels (usually secondary and tertiary)	General and secondary (school equivalency) education/ ABE as well as higher education for formal qualifications
Non-formal education and training	Work-related courses organised by employers or training organisations not for a qualification but often with some certification	Adult and community education courses based on voluntary participants' own learning interest and needs for personal and social growth and with no certification and often organised by nongovernmental and community-based organisations

The table above illustrates the nature of community colleges as offering a variety of programmes for undergraduates at a higher education level. In various states like the USA, Canada and Malaysia community colleges provide continuous vocational education or certification of varied competences, allowing people to improve their employability. These skills are obtained through either service experience or modularised training (Allais, 2012; Randeree, 2014). As a result, the intellectual processes of planning, organising, assessing, and regulating, which are used to develop a curriculum, are linked to the desired outcomes. For South Africa, CETC experts such as Allais (2012), Wolunter et al. (2015), and Nsele (2020) discovered poor linkages between provided general education, vocational education/training, and employment. It is in this regard that the study seeks to find out how the college engages the community in developing its programmes to ensure responsiveness and value to community educational needs.

Wolhunter et al. (2015) indicated that from its beginnings in the United States of America (USA), community colleges have displayed certain characteristics that define their identity. First and foremost, they provide post-secondary school tuition and instruction. Second, they keep strong relationships to their local towns, companies, and industries through forging partnerships for learning and work experience opportunities to be responsive to community needs. In this context, an adaption was recommended for South African community colleges. Thirdly, they are well-positioned to provide a diverse curriculum and courses. Community colleges also provide full-time, short-term, and part-time courses to both young and older students (Wolhunter et al., 2015). These institutions are termed "Junior Colleges" in the United States, and they have evolved in reaction to social change (Raby & Valeau, 2012). Junior colleges were established and were increasingly influenced by the rules of economic growth and development, new post-industrial economy competition, modern technology, computer-centered information systems, the call for vocational education, the expansion of adult lifelong community education, and limited entree to higher education (Deagan & Tillery, 1985; Levin & Kater, 2013; Ratcliff et al., 1994).

In Canada these colleges are referred to as Why italicise this? *Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATS).* These colleges perform a research function and serve as links between the world of education and that of work. According to Canadian experience, graduates without work are more likely to enroll into these institutes to gain occupational certifications. In developing countries such as India and Malasia, community colleges are adult education centres that offer skills training, courses for the underprivileged, literacy, general education for

adults, and vocational education (Landand Aichison, 2017). Likewise for emerging countries, community colleges in South Africa have evolved from Adult Education and Training (AET) centres to Community Education and Training Colleges (CETC) following the adoption of the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training in 2013 (DHET, 2013b). The idea that the community college structure is still not widely used in Africa may have originated from the fact that colonisation in African nations has left their higher education systems peering a lot like those in European nations where the community college model is less developed (Wolhunter et al., 2015). As stated above, community colleges' free admissions policy and lower tuition have helped numerous nations across the world. They are also perceived as a tool for massifying education and achieving social equality. Additionally, they frequently work with particular areas and let the private sector contribute significantly to the programs they deliver. Community colleges are successful in meeting the requirements of dropouts and NEETs and have been shown to play a vital role in delivering technical and vocational skills for communities and their economy (Wolhunter et al., 2015).

In South Africa, community colleges were altered and adjusted to provide access to out-of-school students as well as adults, especially the NEETs, by offering a mix of formal schooling at an intermediate level (DHET, 2013b). The CET policy (2015) states that CET colleges must provide enough formal training as well as vocational programs that prepare individuals to participate equitably in the mainstream economy. Furthermore, CETCs should collaborate with local governments, civil society entities, company and labour organizations, and tailor programs to their requirements. These transitions are informed by democratic values of community engagements and information sharing. The following discussion will focus on how adult education in communities has been fragmented to offer flexibility with the objective of enhancing efficiency and closer relief to community needs.

2.4 DECENTRALISATION OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Since educational facilities are set up in places where people live and are run by people for people, they are inherently a part of the communities in which they exist (Caluza, 2022). The worldwide evolution of schooling systems considering technical, social, and political developments, and financial conditions has resulted in interconnections that decentralises education (Majeed & Al-Salam, 2023). Community colleges in SA came at a time when there

had been major changes done to the adult education and Further Education and Training (FET) policies to allow for the development of life-long learning and confirming adult learning a basic human right (Aitchison, 2003; Prinsloo, 1999; Tawaiah & Quan-Baffour, 2021). The promulgation of the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) came with alterations that resulted in new priorities, values and principles for education and training system. One such change was the emphasis on interdepartmental cooperation especially between education, labour, and social services (Mbatha, 2022).

The constitution, and the educational policies of SA as such have democratised education. *The South African Constitution (Act No 108 of 1996 as amended)* clearly stipulates it in terms of s29 (1) that "Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; (1) and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures; must make progressively available and accessible. It is crucial to remember that democratic education demands decentralisation of educational governance, which implies that stakeholders from within and outside a school community should collaborate to oversee its educational facilities (Mncube & Harber 2012; Myende, 2014; Sayed, 1976); Zeleen et al. (2011) argued that decentralisation of education is key in the implementation of adult and community educational policies. Their basis was that achievement of policy objectives encompasses actions by public and private individuals or groups noting that these policies are distributive in nature. The study by Zeelen et al. (2011) concluded that community-based education works better with interdependence of various parts of the communities, organisations, sharing of resources and engagements.

Community colleges provide broad access and the flexibility to adjust paths to meet the needs of businesses, the workforce, practical and personal development programs, and formal curriculum programs. This has placed people at the center of democratic identity and a decentralized learning system (Bailey et al., 2016; Rhoads & Valedez, 2016). According to Wolhunter et al. (2015), a research of community colleges in many regions of the world has shown that they can mobilise their communities to engage and contribute to their needs. This has been made feasible by their capacity to resist being dominated by national authorities through mission policies. By embracing a democratic learning paradigm, community education may address the pressing issues and genuine concerns of individuals living in tough situations

(Dhet, 2013b). The problem for community colleges is to offer learning opportunities in a cost-effective and efficient way, while also satisfying the occupational and training needs of student constituency and in an increasingly knowledge-based economy (DeCastro & Karp, 2008). This difficulty has grown over the past several years as a result of an expanding student body, an uncertain economy, less financing, more accountability for student achievement, and an imbalance between students' college readiness and the sector's technological expectations (De Castro & Karp, 2008). This study seeks to learn how, this community college manages to navigate through the issues of low funding and expanding student body to achieve quality in their programmes.

CET institutions are under pressure in SA to address the problems that NEETs face in terms of offering quality education and responding to their educational demands. According to Myende (2018) and Mbatha (2022), the youth confront a variety of problems in obtaining decent education, including but not limited to poverty, criminality, dropout rates, and a lack of educational resources. Various techniques have been developed to improve the ability of institutions to provide quality education despite the aforementioned constraints. The policy, in the form of the White Paper for Post Education and Training System (RSA, 2013b) and the National Policy for CET Colleges (2015), define the goals of creating a more comprehensive, effective, and integrated post-secondary education and training system. The national policy on community colleges reinforces the necessity for these institutions to cooperate in SA, stating that CET colleges should form partnerships, identify, and engage with many community stakeholders to ensure excellent learning. Section (4) of the policy states that community colleges must have tight partnerships with the community at large, including local government, social welfare organisations, companies, and labour organizations, in order to match programmes with their needs. Furthermore, community colleges must collaborate with other areas of the post-secondary system to deliver quality formal as well as informal education and training programs ((Dhet, 2015a). Caluza (2022) emphasises that for collaborations to benefit communities, individuals of the partnership are required to be deeply committed to the collaboration's goal and ideals. She also says that student participation is critical to the design, implementation, and assessment of community collaborations for learning and training programs. Aitchison (2003), Mbatha (2022) and Zeleen et al. (2011) all agree that the massive transitions in adult and community education that have resulted in policy change require effective implementing agencies with strong implementer dispositions to create and manage

this transformation through a participatory management approach. The study looks at how this transformation is implemented and explores how partnerships are created and managed to facilitate quality service-learning in response to local community needs in a community college. It is thus important that I discuss the notion of partnerships.

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership is an agreement to work together on a project that will benefit all parties, minimizing effort duplication and producing benefits that could not be obtained by one partner working alone (Lingnau & Sattelberger, 2015). Partnerships are described as a type of synergy whereby all parties involved, based on their respective positions in the relationship, establish and implement a strategy (Axelrod, 2018). Partnerships are formed for various purposes and are identified by their circumstances and environments. Governments and other institutions have planned to form partnerships largely focused on business, labor market, politics, and social concerns in an effort to bring service delivery in organizations (Caluza, 2022; Harrison, 2018). Studies have demonstrated the usefulness of partnerships as an institutional model and tool for bolstering the governance framework and overcoming policy shortcomings (Lingnau & Sattelberger, 2015; Starker, 2018; Harrison, 2018). According to the OECD's (2006) *Successful Partnerships A Guide*, the reason partnerships are more common now is that the existing policy frameworks have not been able to satisfactorily address the various issues arising from our complex society. Thus, it may be argued that partnerships help societies realise their objectives more quickly. Regardless of the context, a wealth of research on partnerships indicates that institutions, governments, organisations, and individuals participating in partnerships identify with the shared vision and goals they seek to realise through these alliances (Caluza, 2022; Khuzwayo, 2019; Lingnau & Sattelberger, 2015 & Myende, 2018). In this exploration the study seeks to view how the college forges community-based partnerships to align their programmes to be responsive to community needs.

Community-based partnerships give local organisations a way to collaborate and modify their policies to better meet the demands of the local economy and populace (OECD, 2006)Not in reference list. Thus, a crucial component of local governance is partnerships. Area-based partnerships often aim to unite all relevant stakeholders in a region who can equally contribute

to address a certain problem. This necessitates gathering all relevant parties at one table, including social stakeholders, business owners, FBOs, NGOs, education sector representatives, civil society members, and many more (Khuzwayo, 2019). This effort is undertaken to determine the interests of all stakeholders, therefore gaining a deeper grasp of policy and identifying a shared solution to a common problem. According to Myende (2018) all stakeholders in a partnership must have strong influence, as well as a sense of ownership and acknowledgment as key players. School-community development partnerships have worked through different approaches in SA education psychology, where schools partner with communities to improve academic performance and or use the communities' available assets to support experiential learning for their communities. Myende (2018) found that academic performance in scarce resourced schools of rural areas in SA can be improved with the use of asset-based approach as a strategy for schools to partner with their communities for identification and mobilisation of community assets to respond to rural education challenges. Similarly, community-based partnerships require an ownership approach to their formation, wherein parties perceive a strong sense of identification with and contribution to the partnership's aim and activity. Respect, mutual understanding, and individual abilities and competences should be the foundations of partnership (Kretzman& McKnight 1996; Myende, 2018).

Local partnerships are predicated on the idea that individuals or groups possess skills and competencies that might be vital support systems in cooperative efforts to enhance educational institutions (Krumm & Curry, 2017). As a result, I am broadening my definition of partnership in the research to include a planned collaborative effort that combines all the talents, abilities, and resources in a shared strategic vision to achieve compatible goals within a specified organizational framework. In an area-based collaboration, all organisations within the community, including educational institutions, and individual partners connect to form college community relations. Thus, it is imperative that I clarify the concept of college community partnerships.

2.5.1 Community Colleges and Community Based Partnerships

Community based partnerships are collaborative relationships between entities formed to address shared objectives. Community based partnerships can be as diverse and varied as the communities in which they're located and the issues they're formed to tackle. As described in chapter one the term college-community partnerships refers to the relations that are formed with corporative efforts between local organisations, regional, national, and international groups aimed at exchanging resources and expertise in a way that benefits both parties that may provide access to services and experience required by the student population of the community college while adding value to the partnering institutions (Taylor and Lepper, 2019). The college community, as described by this research in chapter one, is not restricted by geographical boundaries; rather, it includes additional organizations or individuals that frequently interact with the college and have a long-term interest in the community college (Sanders, 2005).

College-community partnerships are implied on the idea that community education institutions have a duty to go further above the generation of knowledge and actively disseminate and apply it across their local communities, as well as solve community related issues. There is a wealth of literature from different scholars such as Land and Aichison (2017), Wyner (2019) and Wolhunter et al. (2015) that have captured evidence of effective community-based partnerships created for business, other institutions of learning, research institutions, faith-based organisations. The National Plan for the Post-School Education and Training system's goals and objectives, which specify that CET colleges must create better connections between education and other training institutions and the workplace, support the national policy for CET colleges' claims even more. In addition to improving the interaction between companies and community colleges and all educational institutions, the goal and anticipated result of this project is to forge strong partnerships between employers for workplace-based learning (WPBL) providers (DHET, 2023c). There is, however, a gap in literature that shows how the SA CET colleges have created, managed, and sustained partnerships with other stakeholders in the communities for the provision of quality learning. The study concurs with Myende (2018), who proposes that the phrase "partnering stakeholders" in school-community partnerships may not be referring to partners in the same geographical location, but rather to all parties with an interest, including those beyond the area. Therefore, this study regards the college-community partnership as the cooperation of stakeholders that share the interest and vision of quality

learning through combined inputs, resources and commitment for a betterment and success of a people in the community.

Community colleges worldwide have an extensive record of collaborating with community organisations and other groups to deliver services. Since its start in the middle of the nineteenth century in Australia, when afternoon sessions were given to assist individuals improve their studies and literacy skills, community colleges have collaborated with community secondary and primary schools to offer lessons (Daughtery, 1994). In the Philippines, a community school serves as a primary or secondary school throughout the course of the day before transitioning to a community college at the end of the day. Similarly to SA, primary and secondary schools' infrastructure is used to provide afternoon learning sessions under supervision of the host school administration and teachers who are assigned a temporary lecturing position for community college adult tuition (Cohen, 2003).

Community colleges have cooperated with many institutions, including employers for contractual training and high schools through articulation and transfer relationships (DeCastro & Karp, 2008). For example, in America, community colleges in Canada are well-known for serving as a bridge between the worlds of education and employment. According to Wolhunter and De Wet (2015) community college graduates in Canada account for at least 70% of new jobs created by medium-sized businesses. This is because the federal government of Canada appropriates significant funding to community colleges to assist the most disadvantaged groups attain career directed qualifications at low costs and thereby bridging the gap of unemployment. The Chicago city community colleges system consists of seven campus community colleges that provide students a pre-baccalaureate curriculum that is aligned and translates to different associate degrees and certifications designed to prepare students for employment. Employers collaborate with universities to express training requirements, create apprenticeship programmes, and provide career possibilities that are relevant to both industry and communities. Advanced manufacturing, health care, business and professional services, transportation and distribution and logistics, engineering, and computer science are among the industries that collaborate with Chicago's community colleges. They call these colleges "Centres of Excellence" (Tessler and Lewy, 2022). In Illinois, Carl Sanburg College and Maytag a refrigeration manufacturing center, partnered and customised the college's

manufacturing certificate and degree programs to satisfy the labor crisis and employers' demands (Kirsek & Carducci, 2003). In Ethiopia, the government permitted community colleges to meet companies and discuss their training requirements; then, students were taught in line with the demands of the employers, which led to major employment for graduates (Rivombo & Motseke, 2022). The SA constitution (1996) and the CET policy (2015) have expressed the fundamental rights to education and learning, declaring the urgent need for community colleges to partner with various stakeholders to ensure quality community adult education. The study therefore seeks to view how the community colleges participants have viewed this fundamental right in SA to forge working partnerships to ensure responsiveness and added value to community education.

Many countries, including Mexico, India, Canada, and Ethiopia, have had success utilizing community colleges to reduce unemployment (Gaviria, 2012; Gregorutti, 2012; Oesch, 2010; Rivombo & Motseke, 2022). These countries have established two-year "degree-level" short-term skills programs to assist impoverished and needy children who cannot enroll in traditional four-year degree programs. Furthermore, community colleges in these countries have begun to provide a wide range of short skills courses and vocational certificates in high-demand industries such as food gardening, building and plastering, plumbing, and sewing. These initiatives were designed largely to assist at-risk youth, particularly those from underprivileged communities, in obtaining self-employment (Gaviria, 2012). One can infer clearly from the above review that community colleges' programme success and articulation process is informed by the assessment of labour market trajectories and the forming of partnerships to create pathways for students through training system into the workplace. Lolwana et al. (2018) claim that articulation process for community college students is perfected when in done with an understanding of other institutions' programme alignment and creation of intelligent relationships with the labour market system. It therefore stands to rationality that community colleges in SA form community engagements that are to facilitate the creation of relationships in a form of partnerships with the labour markets to train their students through service learning. The study shall explore at what informs the creation of learning college community partnerships in an SA CETC with popular community organisations and what value it brings to the learning experience.

2.5.2 Essential Elements for a Successful College-Community Partnership

Strategic links and collaborations can extend over college doors to provide extra services to address students' fundamental requirements and improve the variety and quality of their learning (Majeed & Al-Salam, 2023). Whereas active engagement of community partners helps and enriches college efforts to address living situations that influence both teaching and learning, because the partners share responsibility for setting high standards and ideal accomplishment criteria. It is important to note that partnerships and activities at community colleges are not specialized or fixed, but rather chosen and tailored for a specific partnership that requires unique attention to flourish (Majeed & Al-Salam, 2023). In a multitude of literature, many academics on school and college-community collaborations have shared similar key term elements for bolstering successful partnerships. Badgett, (2016); Bringle et al. (2002); Caluza (2022); Kisker and Carducci (2003), Krumm and Curry (2017); Myende, 2018) all acknowledge that school/college community partnerships with community business entities and the private sector must be enhanced by solid organizational attributes and strategies for leadership that are fundamental to the establishment of productive relationships. They identified three critical features that surfaced repeatedly during their analysis of effective educational institute-community collaborations. First, there must be identification of a community need or prospect that necessitates collective action, such as growing unemployment rates, the entry of a new enterprise into the community's economy, or the demand for social welfare resources. At this point, conversation and interactions between the community college and local business leaders and public leaders are of vital importance in terms of the community's economic development, labor demands, and social welfare. This helps to uncover similar interests or community issues that may be effectively addressed through collaboration.

Secondly, as part of their declared mission and goals, organisations and communities must engage in a deliberate process of exchanging ideas and knowledge. It has been discovered that shared and complementary interests frequently emerge at this period, forming the foundation of a successful partnership (Badgett, 2016; Kisker & Carducci, 2003). The third factor is to provide value and benefit for every partner. Business organizations are motivated by profit maximisation, therefore partnerships must provide concrete economic or political advantages to all parties involved (Bringle et al. 2002; Kisker & Carducci, 2003).

Reciprocity is essential for creating productive collaborations that benefit academic institutions, local businesses, and the community (Rhodes, 2022). Community colleges provide services such as academic competency, study facilities, and assistance to students needing hands-on experience. In return, community partners supply critical local insight and practical scenarios in which academic ideas can be utilized, boosting the value of training and students' educational experiences by means of direct learning and civic involvement (Rhodes, 2022). According to Kisker and Carducci (2003), the ideal way to preserve a relationship is to regularly review the value being offered while being flexible and sensitive to the business's rapidly changing demands. They claim that community schools desiring to engage in collaborative ventures with the corporate sector must prepare project proposals that clearly demonstrate the advantages to all parties, including the company, the institution, and the community at large. In studying the ways to creating and managing college community partnerships, this research hopes to explore how the institution develops proposals for engagements with possible partners for service learning, as well as what parts of engagement are included.

Effective management and leadership are another organisational feature required for the formation of successful collaborations (Caluza, 2022; Myende, 2018). Partners must thus explicitly define the partnership's objective and how its performance will be judged (Kisker & Carducci, 2003). Leaders develop dedication and cooperation to ensure positive interactions (Myende, 2018). While college and corporate executives are not the sole organisational leaders involved in the formation of productive partnerships, they assume critical roles in setting up the primary vision, goals, and values that will inform all subsequent project discussions (Bringle et al. 2002; Krumm & Curry, 2017; Mbatha, 2022). Linked to the partnership’s leadership is its management which is of paramount importance as the coordination and implementation of set goals rest on the process of following up on and maintaining effective, productive, and harmonious relations with partners (Thomas, 20217; Bringle et al. 2002). Kisker and Carducci (2003) identify the final ultimate technique for developing effective partnerships as shared governance and responsibility. The governance takes a form of committees and usually tasked by the college management board to propose and advise on the actions the college might introduce to draw in resources and the community buy in to the project. This is a worthwhile strategy because it dependably engages with the pursuit, needs

and challenges of the community at the preparation and execution of the partnership activities. These effective leadership steps serve as a critical thread that may deeply attract the community college, community organisations and the community into the life of learning. The study intends to determine the leadership practices the community college applies in creating service-learning agreements with organisations whilst leveraging good returns for all parties involved.

2.5.3 College-Community Partnerships Conceptualised as Relationships

The college and its host community should have the strongest link among higher education institutions and governmental bodies. Beyond the budgetary resources supplied to schools of learning from public financing, higher education relies on public agencies to provide added value to the functions they undertake, such as service-learning approaches (Miller & Nadler 2022). An analysis of campus-community partnerships as connections might occur at an individual level (e.g. faculty, agency workers, community residents, students) or at the level of the institution. In each case, relationships exist that differ in the features they include and reinforce (Miller & Nadler 2022). To assist determine the institutional and individual actions that may be done to start, establish, maintain, and nurture a good partnership with the community, careful consideration must be given to the stages and dynamics of relationships.

College-community relationships are challenging due to cultural variations in how higher education and the community develop knowledge and address issues (Bringle et al; 2002). College academics believe that knowledge is held by specialised professionals such as educators and departmental heads, but community members believe that knowledge is multicultural and widely disseminated among other people through regional traditions (Bringle et al., 2002). Johnson (2020) found that in SA, community engagements are very much affected by cultural, political, and institutional power dynamics. This is because educational institutions are not directly in the political sphere are therefore challenged in wield political influence. Educational institutions believe they have more power and knowledge than the communities they serve, and communities are dissatisfied with the offered programmes that do not benefit them. In SA there are no guiding frameworks for the implementation of community engagements, yet the educational policies have placed the social responsibility for education institutions to engage and partner with communities in educational activities (Johnson, 2020).

Communities tend not to welcome education institutions relations because they are known for using their communities to tick their strategic goals.

Community figures are more proactive and results-oriented since they oversee making everyday decisions affecting their communities. College-community relationships are frequently perceived as motivated by charity rather than justice. Charity occurs when resources and surpluses are transferred from one community to another, but equity occurs when assets are viewed as reciprocal and distributed among members of the same community (Myende, 2018). Myende (2018) discusses school-community collaborations in which communities apply resource-based or asset-based theories. This is where communities and stakeholders combine their resources to enhance educational circumstances. Relationships are therefore formed by combining each other's academic or community strengths in a democratic, collegial, and participatory manner to construct an effective, well-coordinated collaboration aimed at common goals and a shared vision.

Literature shows that the involvement of stakeholders in community-college partnerships largely depends on college leaders' ability to recognise and exploit the wide range of experience, talents, assets, and support system that significant players and stakeholders provide to the partnership (Caluza, 2022; Krum & Curry, 2017). Mombourquette (2017) opines that, while community people are expected to contact institutions to develop needs-responsive partnerships, it is believed that leaders should take the lead in partnership planning. This researcher advises that for the success of the partnership, the colleges must collaborate with the community in determining the domains that must form part of the project by creating a set of shared objectives, allocating duties, and time periods for the partnership activity. *The National Policy on Post-school Education and Training*, recommends that communities must be encouraged to provide the services to schools. Community participation in schools is believed to help stakeholders and communities establish a feeling of ownership over community colleges (DHET, 2015a). Community-college collaborations are thought to provide more local-engaged programs that benefit both community organisations and learners (Lewis 2019). The study examines how well a college-community relationship in the context of service learning, a fundamental academic function of the community college, is formed with a

knowledge of a mutual benefit of which allows the community to access the college's approved project-based resources while students acquire knowledge about addressing their own needs.

2.5.4 Managing a College Community Partnerships

Efficient college community alliances with community organisations and the private sector require strong organisational structures and principles of leadership, which are crucial to the development of effective relationships (Kisker & Carducci, 2003). The college-community relation is symbiotic since mutual benefits are expected; hence relationship management is critical (Majeed & Al-Salam, 2023). Managers have a critical role in ensuring that the necessary resources are coordinated and available, and that they are used to deliver the best outcomes possible. Kotter, (2002); Kappa, (1991 and Wajdi, (2017) all believe that while working with communities, organisations must provide excellent managerial coordinating, planning, budgeting, and monitoring abilities to achieve quality.

Khosa et al. (2013) goes on to outline the steps that managers should take when planning and organising college-community projects, such as profiling the challenges and prioritising interventions, developing a framework for transformation and an intervention matrix, defining an implementation model, and presenting a budget and work plan. Management is therefore a broad process by which organisational goals are attained via the effective use of resources, including human capital (Wajdi, 2017). Relationship management includes people management, supervision, and monitoring (Kotter, 2001). It is so critical to provide favourable conditions for the successful administration of equal responsibilities. According to Kotter (2001) management duties are task-oriented and include training employees, guiding them, and resolving disagreements while upholding ethics and discipline. In many college-community relationships, students' voices are typically overlooked (Caluza, 2022). However, Loria (2018) emphasises the importance of incorporating learners' feedback into the partnership's design, execution, and assessment. Many researchers agree on four critical conditions that must be addressed to build an atmosphere favourable to effective relationship management (Kotter, 2001; Northouse, 2007; Wajdi, 2017). The following are the conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of partnership management:

- Recruitment of managers and team members based on merit.
-Respect for employees and managers.
- Demonstration of knowledge and awareness of service responsibilities, duties, and purpose.

-Maintain a well-functioning support system, including clear staff administration, transparent processes, and monitored activities.

It is stated that managing community partnerships needs a technical, human, and cognitive skill set involving bargaining and interpersonal abilities (Mestry, 2017). It has been claimed that CET colleges lack the capacity to implement policy guidelines because many college leaders and managers migrated from the basic education AET system to form part of the new dispensation when community colleges were established in South Africa without any tests for technical, human, and conceptual skill sets (Mbatha, 2022; Tawaiah & Quan-Baffour, 2021). This has a negative impact on the quality-of-service delivery and reduces the rate of progress and response to CET programme aims. It is for this reason that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (Dhet, 2013b) advocates that competency for college leadership at the council and management level is vital for ensuring that the system transforms in the desired direction. Mbatha, (2022) concluded that a soft systems methodology and change management strategies should be employed as an attempt to foster improvement and quality service in the CET space.

2.6 SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACH TO COMMUNTIY COLLEGE EDUCATION

The growth of service-learning in higher education, as well as an increased focus on community participation, provides opportunity for colleges and universities to form campus-community collaborations for the greater good (Bringle et al., 2002). The call to civic engagement has reignited interest in strengthening institutional citizenship, establishing new college-community projects, and instilling a wide sense of civic duty in higher education (Bringle et al. 2002; Dhet, 2013b). Civic engagement allows colleges to develop deep relationships with community organisations and employers to learn about in-demand jobs and the skills required for them, as well as design programs that benefit both employers and students through cross-sector pathways and service learning (Griffin et al., 2021; Khosa et al., 2014). Service-Learning is a teaching and learning technique that combines meaningful community work with training and evaluation to improve the learning process, instill civic duty, and enhance communities (Pacho, 2015; Dymond et al., 2008). The key tenet of this method is that it may use both school and community resources to solve significant concerns in local areas. An effective service-learning programme must include planning, orientation, training, and evaluation (Khosa et al.

2014). It is built on integrated learning, excellent service, collaboration, student voice, reflection, and assessment (Dymond et al., 2008). Service-learning aspects are purposefully linked to the course's learning objectives, with the goal of developing responsible students who contribute constructively and directly to their community via service.

The philosophical and pedagogical roots of service learning are based on John Dewey's (1952) theory of experience and education, encompassing his views of democracy as an aspect of life in which everyone must be involved in order to bring social justice, the concept of learning from experience, and the connection of the school to the community (Pacho, 2015). According to Caver (2001), Dewey's idea of service learning explicitly relates the programme's curriculum to the learning received via participation in activities, making service experience integral to both the process and the result. According to John Dewey, the feature of quality in service-learning pedagogy may be ensured by effect analysis and reflection on results (Pacho, 2015). The effect is judged by whether the event was instructive and will benefit future experiences. The experience quantum is the accumulation of prior experiences that must be directed toward growth and development (Pacho, 2015). Second, experience operates on the interaction principle, which states that learning occurs because of a transaction between the learner and the environment. The inference here is that information must be learned in a scenario to be useable through recall and application; otherwise, it is separated from experience and lost or cannot be transferred to other situations (Pacho, 2015).

As stated by Griffin et al. (2021), the service-learning model allows for a shorter time frame for skilling, up-skilling, and re-skilling students, as well as assisting students to join and re-enter the labor market sooner than standard courses. They say that it functions as a career ladder and employment experiment, with opportunities for progression through extra education and training. Furthermore, ties are made between professional organisations and community colleges to help college programmes keep current with relevant material and pedagogy while also building on their knowledge and expertise (Maier et al., 2021). An American Sinclair community college created a partnership with a local hospital through accelerated career programmes by engaging in a service-learning programme which they called “Engaging Adults to Graduate and Lead to Efficiencies (EAGLE) Program”. For example, an accredited programme was created in partnership with a local hospital and aligned to the targeted hospital

IT system career programmes that students could attend for specific timeframes while gaining experience (Griffin et al., 2021). A community of Rhode Island and Alamo colleges has entwined service learning into all its skills programmes, recognising that such endeavors may assist prepare students for employment while also ensuring employers that they are equipped to work in their chosen field (Griffin et al., 2021). I believe that partnerships for service learning improve adult training by not only preparing students for work, but also providing exposure to acquire business acumen, allowing them to join the business world with confidence for long-term economic growth.

Caluza (2022) contends that analysing student outcomes is the best way to measure success and effectiveness in learning institutions, including community education. She goes on to say that inability to attain success from the institution's learning goals is concerning for both students and the community. The community college has developed an image as a less than legitimate higher education institution: "a halfway school for losers," "a self-esteem workshop," and "a place where old people go to keep their minds active a little" (Beach & Grubb, 2011). During the higher education institution performance evaluation in America between the late 1990s and the turn of the century, community colleges were put into a position to generate student and learning achievement evidence to demonstrate institutional effectiveness. However, the reports showed the lack of student learning outcomes in community colleges and thus their government funding was reduced significantly (Beach & Grubb, 2011).The New York and Rhode Island community colleges developed and implemented a monumental transitional system that used a service learning approach, resulting in significantly improved performance-based reporting and exceptional student learning outcomes for retention, graduates transfers, and job placements (Beach & Grubb, 2011). Numerous scholars have disputed the SA CET colleges, finding them to be below average. Rivombo and Motseke, (2022) discovered that CET colleges fail to provide favorable results due to a lack of effective planning and budgeting. CET institutions lack suitably qualified lecturers, administration, resources, and facilities, resulting in failure to satisfy the labor demands of local companies (Mbatha, 2022; Nsele, 2020; Rivombo & Motseke, 2022). All learning institutions are expected to produce quality results regardless of the resource challenges they face (Caluza, 2022). When educational institutions fail to provide the desired learning results, there is a presumption that the school would establish performance-improvement plans. These are intervention initiatives designed to improve school performance

as part of the institution's transformation strategy. The centrality of learner success in this study stems from the realisation that quality of community-based adult education can be made practicable by a service-learning approach. This study seeks to explore how the CET College has been supported by the state to provide responsive quality programmes.

2.6.1 Community Based Partnership Approach to Service Learning

Community development or place-based partnerships are the most complete frameworks for forming partnerships that promote high-quality service learning. This approach views schools in communities as social centers that provide a wide range of services while also aiming to boost community productivity and economic growth. Dewey's 1902 century-old concept of schools as social centers for communities to address critical economic, cultural, and political issues inspires the approach (Wolhunter, 2011). The place-based approach to service learning creates a collaborative route to community development in which community members, students, local organizations, and government agencies empower one another to address challenges and build their own communities. In this approach, community college programmes are developed that maintain social networks and social capital, which leads to community social support when faced with obstacles (Myende, 2014).

The service-learning strategy is consistent with the criteria I mentioned earlier for developing college community-community relations: need identification, engagements, sharing of knowledge and resources, benefits, accountability, and leadership. According to Myende, (2014), Eloff and Ebersohn, (2001), and Kretzman and McKnight, (1993) the availability of excellent leadership is the most important asset in developing any type of school collaboration; without it, the partnership would fail. They believe that talents and qualities such as leadership, communication skills, the capacity to obtain money, and trusting and respectful relationships are valuable advantages. Many studies have concluded that continued support for community colleges need specific attention to developing leadership skills among its leaders as change agents and champions for community college training initiatives (Mbatha, 2022; Maier et al., 2021; Zeelen et al., 2011). Leadership training in negotiation, grant writing, and organisational transformation is essential for managing cross-sector initiatives including service learning (Maier et al., 2021). The project aims to determine what and how talents, competencies, social

resources, and human assets may be leveraged to promote quality service learning at a CET college.

2.7 THE KEY ISSUES IN LITERATURE

The literature has captured the concept of community colleges in that, although they may vary in their mission form country to country but they all still share the objective of being responsive to the economic needs of communities they serve, through providing programmes that are designed to eliminate poverty and give economic stability for the people. Community colleges in SA have come as result of a function shift of adult basic education that did not incorporate responsive skills programmes and experiential learning (DHET, 2013b). South Africa has been dramatically affected by past policies and inequalities that affected the employment and education particularly the adult community-based education. The establishment of the democratic government in 1994, immediately brought changes to the structure of adult education that democratised and decentralised education by constitutionalising and introducing policy frameworks that will regulate the market provision of training and ensure that education and training for adult learning is responsive to their specific needs (Randeree, 2014). However there has been minimal progress towards evolving their level of education and training in SA as most of these colleges' learning centres lack proper infrastructure and facilities to infuse and accommodate interactive learning experiences (Randeree, 2014). The literature focused on the creation of partnerships for the CET college as mandated by the CET policy (2015) to ensure that programmes offered by the colleges are responsive to the communities (DHET, 2013b). This literature captured that community engagements to this effect require the leadership of the CET colleges to strategically plan for this new function and this requires the ability to create and manage partnerships. It is, however, not clear how the State and the DHET recognises and support the community college' framework for guided community engagements that are sure to yield value added results.

The main issue that has emerged on this composition is that the development of college-community partnerships for quality service learning depends on the leadership skills and strategies that are established by a vision and clearly stated goals that are equally shared by parties involved (Caluza, 2022). It has been shown through literature that community engagements by institutions of higher learning for creation of partnerships is not devoid of challenges and exerted with cultural and political pressures, thus causing lack of trust and

barriers to smooth implementation of partnership activities (Johnson, 2020). It is in consideration of these factors that the creators and managers of community education partnerships for service-learning institute approaches with strong leadership theory frameworks that will guide the process for these community engagements. In the exploration of Dyfoos (2002), concept of the community development or place-based partnership as the comprehensive model for CET college partnership, the literature established that the model bases these learning institutions as the places fit for purpose to provide services that seek to strengthen the community's economy. Service learning is a formal but non-rigid approach to learning that accommodates the adult learner in the best manner thus responding faster to their needs. The research aims at exploring approaches to improving the quality of community education with particular emphasis on service learning whereby the learning curricular is infused with practical quality service enabling learners to acquire the necessary tools for better economic prospects and employment opportunities.

SECTION B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The significant changes in the policy framework that saw the transition of the adult basic education institutional structure to post education and training system emerging as community-based education has raised considerable research on the topic of community colleges especially in SA. The subject on the vision, mission and the quality of community college education has been a focus of the round table discussions of many scholars including Land and Aitchison (2017); Mbatha (2022); Wolhunter et al. (2017) and Wyner (2019). Although several research efforts have examined effective programmes, these studies have typically concentrated on the personal and professional qualities of the senior organisational leader and how this individual has facilitated exemplary organisational performance. Successful leaders must be able to manoeuvre through different areas such as policy, budgets, human resources, and myriad other topics (Mbatha, 2022). The implementation of change in community colleges is crucial because of their missions, which involve the delivery of numerous quality programmes and services to diverse audiences (Cejda & Leist, 2013). Community colleges share an intimate link with local communities and therefore are more effected by changing conditions then other sectors of higher education. With varying definitions of leadership as well as changing directions in post-school education specifically the community colleges, leaders must understand their leadership styles and be able to call upon them to enact change (Howell et al., 2022). It thus stands to reason that leaders gain increased level of awareness and involvement

with communities they serve so they may be able to offer relevant support (Cejda & Leist, 2013). The concept of effective participation in a form college-community partnership for quality community education has been central to the discussion of literature in this study. The question is what competencies, skills, knowledge, behaviours, and traits community college need to possess for the effective reformation the adult life-long learning experience in communities.

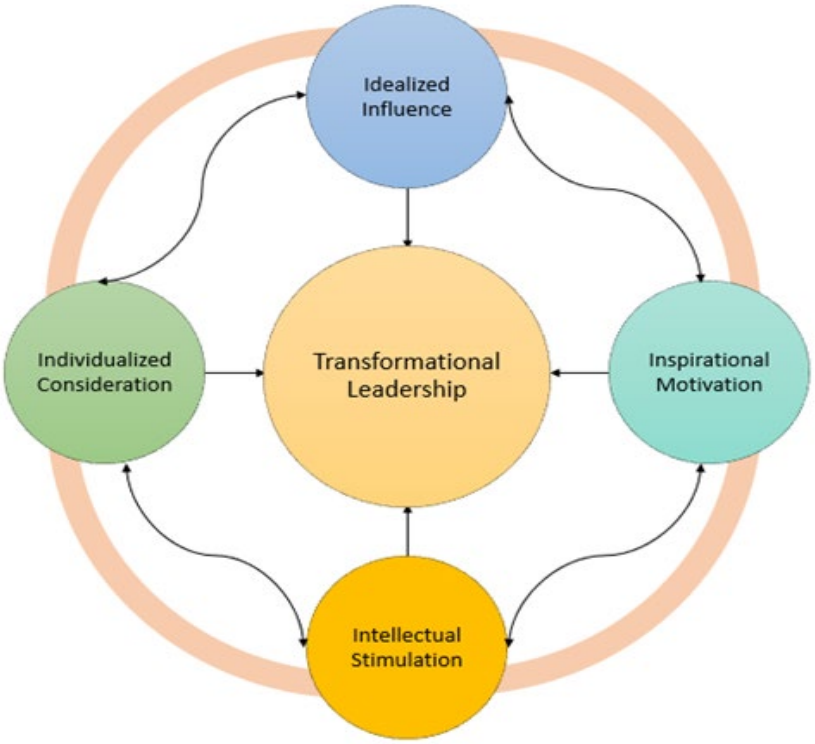
Regardless of the methodological approaches adopted, researchers must determine and select relevant theoretical frameworks to improve comprehension of the subject matter under investigation (Adom et al., 2018). I used transformational leadership theory to guide my analysis of the college-community partnerships for quality service learning in the community college case study. Successful partnerships for quality service learning require a transformational leadership strategy that can articulate the clear path an institution must follow to achieve its objectives.

2.8 THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Burns (1978) developed transformational leadership theory, which focuses on the strategic function of the leader in defining and leading organisational change. The leader serves as a change agent, establishing and expressing the vision to followers, mobilising resources and support, fostering shared learning, and driving cultural transformation via the combined efforts of stakeholders and followers (Ouko, 2020). Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a "relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Transformational leaders use their charm and exceptional intellect to instill confidence, dedication, teamwork, and inspiration in their followers (Howel et al. 2022; Al-Farhan, 2018). Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on staff motivation and participatory decision-making, is an effective tool for nurturing and developing the positive behaviors required to inspire innovation and enhance educational outcomes (Arokiasamy, Abdullah & Ismail, 2014; Mufeed, 2018; Ross & Gray, 2006). Shava and Heystek (2021) recommend that school leaders must set challenging but achievable performance goals that increase team commitment and self-confidence; offer opportunities for teammates to be innovative and creative in their training approaches in order to improve performance; and provide personalised support and guidance to address each individual's

development needs. Researchers found four critical components of transformational leadership that contribute to school development. Northouse (2014) relate to the transformational leadership model to consist of four (4) Is, that are pertinent to the success of a transformational leader as shown in figure 1.

Figure1: Transformational Leadership Model (Northouse, 2016)



Cejda and Leist (2013); Howell et al. (2022); Mora (2012) and Shava and Heystek (2021) explore the four components of transformational leadership in the following ways:

Idealised influence

This is demonstrated in the leader's charm, inclusive leadership technique, and ethical conduct, which favorably affect followers' perspectives and actions while also increasing their confidence and trust in his exemplary conduct, which they copy to better improve their own performance. The leader does this by adapting the college's culture to establish a pleasant work environment that values the efforts of everyone involved. Idealised influence at community colleges can be defined in terms of implicit and explicit visual cues. Explicit evidence includes

policy changes, organisational structure and operations, budgetary priorities, launching of new programmes, and the manner in which discussions transpire. Implicit markers of a shift in organisational culture and attitudes include collaboration among departments, increasing reliance on and participation with stakeholders at all levels, and a willingness to try innovative concepts.

Inspirational motivation

Inspirational motivation is the leader's capacity to rally, stimulate and unify people and groups through actions that boost their confidence, engagement, and productivity. The leader does this by communicating effectively, cooperative goal setting, incentives, brainstorming, and paying close attention to people's needs. The aspect of inspiring motivation from a transformational leader is associated with an act of morality, and it is founded on ethical behaviors that benefit the college and its constituents over time. This pertains to the leader's personal characteristics and skills. It encompasses the science of being more adept at listening than talking, as well as the ability to hold community and stakeholder discussions based on the principle of 'first among equals' rather than an authoritative decision-making method. The leader exemplifies the habit of serving over leading, which is critical for persuading the community to embrace the institutional vision and confidence in the leader.

Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is shown by the leader's capacity to motivate team members to partake in innovative thinking and creativity with the objective to produce new concepts and meaningful solutions to challenges that impede community success. To achieve this transition, leaders use a number of tactics, including as education and training, customised mentoring and coaching, guidance, life-long learning, performance assessments, and ongoing feedback to reward strong performance in their teams. These tactics are crucial in building of skills and capacities for partnership management and giving rapid responses to the needs of partners.

Individual consideration

This component examines how a transformational leader proactively recognises and meets the organisational, community and that of stakeholder needs. A consultative and supportive leadership style allows the leader to discover each employee's strengths and shortcomings and utilise coaching and mentorship to promote their growth and professional development. Meeting employees' social, emotional, and psychological needs has been shown to improve job satisfaction and staff retention and increase performance in institutions (Fisher & Crawford, 2020).

Considering the principles and constructs of the transformational leadership theory, community colleges engaging on quality service-learning partnerships as a responsive mechanism for communities they serve will transform from being unresponsive and unproductive colleges to successful life-long learning centres with a positive impact. Transformational leadership theory has been found to work well in educational institutions because the leader seeks to build the organisation's capacity to select its purpose and to support the development of changes to practices of teaching and learning (Cejda & Leist, 2013). Transformational leadership theory fits well with the purpose of this study because transformational leaders seek to motivate and inspire creating a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers to leaders and moral agents (Cejda & Leist, 2013). When leaders exhibit the four Is of transformational leadership theory, followers are more likely to want to accomplish tasks to help reach the mission and vision targets contributing to enhanced learner outcomes (Northouse, 2016). This can, therefore, be applied well in the context of the community colleges because when trust and capacity is built among stakeholders in a partnership then delegation of activities can be affected without fear of compromised quality.

The transformational leadership theory may be used by the leaders and managers of community partnerships in the CET college and CLCs as the model for creating successful and quality service-learning partnerships. The four components of transformational theory are critical to the creation and management and sustainability of community engagements that lead to quality and responsive community based experiential learning. Service learning is a transformational type of schooling whereby learners can incorporate experience within their class learning experience. The study seeks to understand how these critical components are applied as

framework that guide the leaders and managers to fruitful community engagements when creating college community service-learning experience for learners.

2.9 CONCLUSIONSUMMARY

Section A of this chapter has reviewed literature drafting from some national as well as international studies on the phenomenon being studied. The chapter has discussed the concept of 'community and community-based education' and 'community college concept'. Additional to that, the construct of 'partnerships and 'college community partnerships; was discussed. The chapter has also discussed the elements of the phenomenon and discussed how they contribute to the quality of community college education. The study was further able to identify the gap in literature on partnerships for quality service-learning in SA community colleges, which can be the other learning method the CET colleges can explore. The concept of service-learning approach as a training intervention to improve the quality and expedite responsiveness and performance in community colleges was discussed. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was discussed under section B of the chapter. In this section transformational leadership was discussed and how best transformational leaders in community college can contribute to drive positive change within the organisational structure and culture to enhance responsiveness to communities' learning needs through partnerships for quality service learning.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter delineates the design and methodology employed to conduct this investigation. The purpose is to explore the approaches used by the CET college in creating and managing community partnerships for quality service learning. The research methodology tries to define the paradigm and tactics utilised for data generation within the scope and objectives of the study. To that purpose, this chapter covers the research paradigm, study design, methodology and research site, and participant selection. Following that, I cover the data gathering process and the methodologies utilised to analyse the data obtained. I next discuss the trustworthiness and credibility in my research. Ethical issues that the study accepts are articulated near the end of the chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

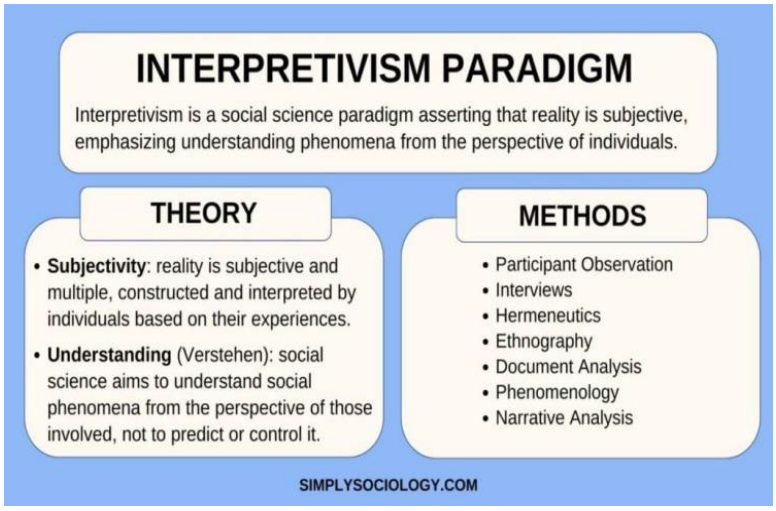
A research paradigm is defined as the orientation to theory and research (Neuman, 2006). I prefer the definition by Singh (2020) wherein a research paradigm is perceived as a mental framework of thoughts that is used to interpret the obtaining reality. This author further asserts that a paradigm refers to the researcher's philosophical orientation that decides ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods applied in research. All researchers make these paradigm choices consciously and unconsciously (Tuli, 2010). Paradigms differ as some support qualitative research while others are fit only for quantitative, and some are compatible with both qualitative and quantitative research (Singh, 2020). Creswell (2013) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010) differentiate between various research paradigms such as positivist, 54interpretive, transformative, and postmodernist that researchers can employ in viewing their world as they study different phenomena. A paradigm is, therefore, a general philosophical orientation within which scholars conduct their research (Msomi, 2015). Given that, the study

is based on the qualitative approach, it became necessary to adopt and apply the interpretivist paradigm as the guiding philosophy.

3.2.1 Interpretive Paradigm

The study employed the interpretative paradigm to conceptualise the methods used in this investigation. According to Banks (2018), the interpretative research paradigm assumes that reality is both multiple and relative. According to Ryan (2018), interpretivism posits that reality, as we know it, is organised inter-subjectively through experimental and socially established meanings and understandings, and that we cannot remove ourselves from what we know (p.42). The investigator and the target of study are inextricably intertwined, so who we are and how we see the world are important to our understanding of ourselves. This argument is backed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), who conclude that people build their subjective understanding via interactions with the world. As seen in Figure 3.1, Nickerson (2022) defines the goal of interpretive research as presenting a perspective on the status quo and dissecting it to get insight into how study participants make meaning of the events under consideration.

Figure 3.1*: Components of the interpretivist paradigm represented.*



Nickerson (2022)

According to Nieuwenhuis (2016), the interpretivist paradigm aids researchers in comprehending these experiences by allowing them to grasp the meanings and interpretations

that the actors assign to their actions, rather than what the researcher perceives as meaning. In analysing the methods used by the CET college to develop and maintain partnerships between the college and community stakeholders, I believe that only the participants have significance and their own truth about their cooperation. As a result, the study drew on the strengths of interpretivist epistemology, as this highlights individuals' real experiences. In this study, the meaning participants gave to their partnership was recorded and the assumption was that their meaning was influenced by the individual experiences as they were involved in the partnership for service learning.

3.3. RESEARCH DISIGN

The research design is a framework that specifies the techniques and processes for gathering and assessing the necessary information (Pandey & Pandey, 2015, p. 18). In this research study I chose to use case study design. The case study technique was used in the study to better understand the formation and administration of service-learning partnerships at a community education college. A case study is usually referred to as a methodical and thorough inquiry or exploration that depicts a specific situation while offering an up-close the real worldview and detailed account of the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007; Rule & John, 2015). A case study approach is a popular method among qualitative researchers and is frequently utilised in domains that include psychology, information systems administration, and education (Rashid et al. 2019; Starke, 2005; Merriam, 1998).

This study employs a case study approach due to the real-life phenomena of partnerships established and managed to enhance quality service learning. Case studies are naturally and strongly impacted by the social environment in which the phenomena happen, as well as the research's theoretical direction (Caluza, 2022). Case study research is useful for developing theories and expanding information about the issue under examination. This research examines partnerships for excellent service learning at a CET college. Case studies allow qualitative researchers to answer contextual questions like what, how, and why (Yin, 2015; Harrison, 2017). This is crucial to the case research issues, which primarily consist of why, what, and how questions that enable interviewees to characterise service-learning partnerships based on their experience and knowledge with the collaborations. Maree (2016) further highlights that

case study technique allows for detailed research into the specifics of each case, allowing for an understanding of the management and leadership abilities of service-learning partnerships at the selected CET institution. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for this case study. Project leaders, centre managers, students, and lecturers all participated. Through interviews, the case study presents a complete and clear overview of how the creation and management of service-learning partnerships manifest in practice and make an impact to the quality of learning in the centers of a selected CET institution. The generalisation of findings in case study design is impacted by both context and the constrained structure of the phenomena, in this example two CET college CLCs, one in an urban region of eThekwini Metro and one in a rural area of Umkhanyakude district.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Saunders and Lewis (2017) define research methodology as a systematic plan of action that guides your ideas and activities, facilitating the organized and timely execution of research to yield high-quality data and comprehensive reporting. The methodology used is determined by the paradigm that drives the research activity, especially views about the nature of reality and humankind (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be obtained (methodology) (Thuli, 2010). To address the study questions, the study employed a qualitative research technique. Scholars argue that the qualitative research technique helps researchers understand people and the cultural and social situations in which they live by employing in-depth, generally face-to-face encounters to collect data from individuals in their surroundings. (Mc Leod, 2017; Mohajan, 2018). Traditionally, a research methodology has been defined as a plan and processes for study that cover the phases from broad conceptions to detailed gathering of data, analysis, and interpretation methods (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative research technique employs a descriptive method to develop and comprehend the phenomena under investigation and is generally inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data obtained. (Cresswell, 2013; Mohajan, 2018).

This qualitative study aims to provide participants' lived experiences in developing and managing CET college partnerships for excellent service learning. Qualitative research methods are acclaimed for their capacity to reply to inquiries about the viewpoint of study

participants' personal experiences, meaning, and views. (Hammerberg et al., 2015). The methodology is regarded to have substantially influenced research in several domains such as psychology, management, information systems, and education (Richard & Trowler, 2018). The study employed qualitative research because it allowed the researcher to get in-depth knowledge on how partnerships for service learning are formed and managed to ensure excellence in CET learning. Participants were free to discuss any other difficulties or recommendations. As a result, it offered a high chance of gathering appropriate and reliable data. Participants in this study were CET college project directors, managers, and two community learning centers (CLCs) involved in the cooperation. Tuli (2010) discovered that qualitative researchers place their reliance in interviews with persons involved in the phenomena. Participants are believed to have a thorough understanding of their particular environment, as well as abilities and knowledge of how partnerships are formed and maintained to deliver high-quality results. The link between qualitative study and quality service-learning approach is that participants, in this case partners, are important in two ways: first, they understand how to create meaning for their own partnerships in terms of service-learning experience and quality measurement. This study aimed to extract the meanings that participants derived from their experiences.

3.5 STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND THE RESEARCH SITE

According to Yin (2009), exemplary instances are substantial, relevant to the study subject, and reflect a real-life situation. Furthermore, instances should give a comprehensive portrayal of the setting and consider several perspectives. The goal of this study was to investigate partnership managers' understanding, views, experiences, and practices, as well as those of CLC managers and educators, regarding service-learning partnership experiences at two CLCs in KZN. The case study technique was not only crucial and relevant to the project's research goals, but it also allowed for the exploration of issue sets in the real-life contexts of the impacted participants. Although a full portrayal of any environment is never totally feasible, according to Cresswell (2007), this multiple case study approach offers the opportunity to systemically analyse a large part of the community college context, while also enabling the comparison of different perspectives as presented by different participants.

It included two study locations, one rural and one urban areas. This research explored quality service learning in both rural and urban settings. The research sites had special features that made them "suitable for intended use," and they were intentionally chosen because they were part of the KZN CETC five pilot community learning centres that were selected in 2020 to lead and assimilate the exact CET model purpose in terms of the programme qualification mix (PQM) that is designed for community colleges in South Africa. The pilot centres in KZN CET were chosen due to their structural freedom or independence from DBE school systems. This means their operations were not dependent on the after hour operational times of DBE schools. These pilot centres could operate on a full basis, and they were more supported and resourced with refurbished building, learning equipment and an added separate budget than other CLCs. Participants and the research site in this study were selected because they were assumed to be rich in information, in other words they had continuously engaged in activities aimed at improving academic performance partnerships for experiential learning. For the issues related to confidentiality as well as sensitivity of the research, the two centres were given fictitious names which are“Uthingo” CLC and “Ekuseni” CLC.

Ekuseni Community Learning Centre

“Ekuseni” CLC is located KwaHlabisa in Enkanjini area under Umkhanyakude District. Umkhanaykude District is situated in the Northen parts of KZN and is surrounded by the Republic of Mozambique to the North, the Indian Ocean to the East, Uthungulu to the South, Zululand to the West and the Kingdom of Eswatini to the North-West. The area of Hlabisa is located in between the Hluhluwe and Mfolozi game reserves. There is high level of adult illiteracy in the district. More than 27% and 22% of the adult female and male population, respectively, have not received any form of schooling. These figures are significantly higher as compared to the provincial figures of 13% and 8% respectively. The proportion of the adult population in the district with tertiary education is less than half the comparative figure for the province, which is 2.5%. The report further states that 44% of households in this area earn no income and depend largely on social grants for a living, while unemployment remains relatively high at 22% (COGTA, 2021 a). Low educational levels and skills shortages highlights the need for CET college CLCs in the area to accelerate delivery of quality service learining, hence the need to form partnerships with community organisations to support with the necessary resources for experiential learning and improved learning experience. The centre was founded

in 1995 as a public adult learning centre to serve the surrounding communities of Emabundeni area, Enkanjini, KwaPhunyane with ABET education. When it started there was a dilapidated structure serving as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO), however, the owner of the structure donated the building to form a community learning centre for a CET college in KZN. The vision of the centre is to produce of great intergrity and service to its community, respectful, resilient, and innovative community members.

Uthingo Community Learning Centre

Uthingo CLC is situated at the urban township area of Lamontville in Durban under the eThekwini Metro in KZN. The Ethekwini Metropolitan is located in the coastal line and the Western side of the KZN province and includes a mix of urban and rural surroundings. The eThekwini metro includes Durban which is one of the most densely populated and economically active regions in SA. This metro is characterised by rapid ubanisation, a diverse population and varying levels of educational attainment, this allows for the exploration of the study objectives in a more dynamic, and culturally diverse environment. The centre was established in 1967, as one of the first full time night schools in KZN under the apartheid government, alongside two other full time night schools, one in Zululand District and the other in Pietermaritzburg. The centre has seen and experienced many changes in the policy formulation and adult education development system like the transitions from the apartheid system traditional night schools to public adult centres (PALC) post the enactment of the RSA Constitution Act 108, in 1996, which stipulated that Adult Basic Education is a basic human right.

Through these two districts chosen for this study, I can investigate the creation and administration of service-learning partnerships in an array of scenarios, providing knowledge about the CET college's centers, navigating the challenges of rural and urban environments, and how these factors influence the implementation, formation, and management of partnerships for quality service learning.

Purposive sampling, according to Christiansen and Betram (2019), refers to the researcher's deliberate selection of which persons, groups, or items to include in the sample. They went on to explain that this method is most utilised by interpretative paradigm researchers who conduct case studies. Because this study is both interpretative and uses a case study design, this became

the appropriate sampling approach to utilise when choosing respondents from the two CET college community learning centres. A sample size of 09 individuals, representing the entire number of eligible participants from both centres and college head office, was carefully chosen to meet the study's aims. The participants either formed the leadership and/or management structure of the CET college partnerships department, or centre managers and lectures of the CET college, as the research explored the creation and the management of partnerships for quality service learning to ensure that the in-depth results were achieved as an output to the research questions.

3.6 DATA GENERATION INSTRUMENT

Data collection is the act of gathering and evaluating data from all pertinent resource in a systematic manner to respond to research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). Barrett and Twycross (2018) argue that qualitative research necessitates comprehensive, rich, and nuanced data, which allows themes and conclusions to emerge via thorough analysis. Interviews, focus groups, document reviews, and observations are some of the strategies used to produce qualitative findings to try and answer research questions. As a way to investigate the techniques of developing partnerships for excellent service learning in a community college, interviews were employed to collect data in this study. The major goal was to collect extensive and descriptive data to determine how these relationships are formed, maintained, and led. This allowed both comparable and dissimilar perspectives to be recorded.

Interviews

Interviewing is the process of asking questions and receiving replies from research participants. Guba and Lincon (1994) believe that interviews are the easiest way to collect thorough and rich data on a specific issue. Interviews are a prominent data gathering approach in qualitative research, with two basic types: individual and group interviews. Individual interviews, according to Niewenhuis (2016), are the most prevalent data collecting approach in qualitative research and are often performed face-to-face between the researcher and the respondent. Individual interviews may be done in three ways to collect data: organised, semi-structured, and unstructured (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Semi-structured interviews will be done to collect data from my study's subjects. Semi-structured interviews follow a plan but allow

interviewers to ask less structured questions and explore themes (Ryan, Coughlan, & Cronin 2013). Semi-structured interviews are distinguished by open-ended questions that allow for more information and clarification (Nodada, 2018). According to Cohen et al. (2017) and Newman (2006), semi-structured interviews enable qualitative researchers to extract more descriptive data from a small number of participants and follow up on topics that require clarification or further information.

The interviews are taped, allowing the researcher to focus more on the interviewing and probing rather than listening and writing simultaneously (Stake, 2005). It is advised that interviews be kept brief to maintain the quality of replies (Patton, 2022). Semi-structured interviews for this study are expected to last 45 minutes, subject to how well the participants comprehend the questions and how deeply the researcher probes. The study proposes to conduct interviews with two CET college central office academic partnerships managers, two centre managers from Uthingo and Sekusile learning centers, two lecturers, and two students involved in the service-learning partnership experience. The schedule of questions will be given to my supervisor to confirm that it has the potential to provide responses to the research questions.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis plays an integral part in an investigation of study since the conclusions and recommendations depend on the results obtained from the collected data. The data in this study was interpreted and analysed utilising a thematic data analysis approach. As this study used an interpretative inductive technique, data was translated from audio recordings and shorthand inscriptions into a usable format for analysis. Thematic data analysis was chosen because it allows the researcher to synthesise all interview responses to identify any common themes and group them in a thematic manner, according to the goal to be reached. Thematic analysis is a popular tool in qualitative research for detecting and describing patterns or themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique is particularly appropriate for this study since it provides for a deep and nuanced understanding. of the approaches of the CET college in creating and managing the partnerships for quality service learning, by examining their perspectives and challenges within the context. Braun and Clarke (2006) present a six-phase strategy to guide a themed analysis.

The first phase is to engage oneself in the material gathered through interviews by studying transcriptions and taking first notes on probable themes (Cresswell, 2014). This step contributes to a better comprehension of the data and prepares it for more methodical examination. Once comfortable with the data, the next step is to methodically code important characteristics throughout the whole dataset. Codes are brief labels that indicate valuable data segments related to the study topics (Saldana, 2016). After coding, the scripts will be structured into prospective themes through placing relevant codes together under bigger patterns or topics. The method discovers common patterns as well as experiences amongst the individuals (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The recurring themes are going to be evaluated to confirm consistency and that they accurately capture the data. During this step, the themes are compared to the coded data and all the information to guarantee that they correctly represent the study's primary results (Cresswell, 20214). Following a review of the topics, each will be polished, properly defined, and given a succinct, descriptive title. The approach entails establishing the core of each topic and ensuring that it captures key data points (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique will offer a systematic but flexible framework that enhances the productive, and sophisticated description of data, and ascends above calculating terms or keywords in a script but distinguishes both implicit and explicit ideas within the data. for data analysis, enabling in-depth investigation of individual instances as well as the identification of wider trends among participants. The versatility of theme analysis facilitates data analysis for more credible recommendations. Lastly, the themes will be utilized to document the findings. This phase describes the themes in detail, reinforced by actual quotes from participants, to properly display the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The research's trustworthiness relates to the level of confidence in data interpretation and the procedures utilised to assure study quality, accuracy, and credibility (Harrison et al., 2017). To determine the quality of a research study, qualitative researchers employ five broad criteria. These include credibility, transferability, reliability, confirmability, and consistency (Merriam 1998; Cohen et al., 2007).

Credibility: relates to the extent to which the study reflects the true meanings, the internal reliability of the research's participants, or its "absolute value" (Kyngas et al., 2020). Findings

from studies are trustworthy once they can be objectively confirmed and verified by investigators as well as readers as being precise, consistent, and true (Pettty et al., 2012). To guarantee the credibility of my study, I will be returning the study outcomes to the primary participants to evaluate whether the findings represent their experiences, a process known as "members check" (Moon et al., 2016).

Transferability: refers to the degree whereby the findings of a certain study program may be confidently extended to different contexts (Yin, 2014). To employ the quality criterion in this research, I will present the external validity of the study via adaptation, beliefs, and the findings application in various contexts (Harrison, 2018). I also employ judgmental sampling to identify individuals who were reliably educated about the formation and maintenance of partnerships for service learning in community college settings, an exercise that is consistent with the transferability improvement criteria.

Confirmability: In qualitative studies, this refers to the rate at which the study offers an objective and unbiased evaluation and analysis of its outcomes (Petty et al., 2012). For the study to be accepted, the interpretation and analysis ought to incorporate the participants' experiences as reported as opposed to the researcher's preconceived perspective (Shenton, 2004). In this study, a clear relationship connecting the outcome and its conclusion shall be established by an audit review of the findings to ensure that the information recorded matches what the participants provided.

Dependability: refers to the reliability and uniformity of investigative findings, as well as the way research techniques are recorded, enabling others outside the study to track, audit, and appraise the method of research (Moon et al., 2016). The researcher specifies the actions done during the research process, as well as the records that will be preserved throughout the study (Rule & John, 2015). Dependability will be accomplished by maintaining a self-referential notebook. This journal will document how the methodology was articulated, thereby allowing the process to be auditable by other scholars.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Maree (2007) defines research ethics as the norms that govern proper research activity and the use of research findings. Ethical concerns provide principles of ethical conduct based on

notions about what is ethically terrible and contribute to public responsibility, resulting in pure support for research (Resnik, 2018). Bryman and Bell (2015) describe the principles of ethics that need to be encouraged in research, including obtaining full consent from participants prior to the study, guaranteeing free participation from participants, preserving participants' privacy, safety, and anonymity, and maintaining the dignity and respect for study participants. Various ethical considerations were explored and used in the present study.

I applied to the university's ethics committee for permission to conduct this study and get ethical clearance. Permission to conduct the study at KwaZulu-Natal Community College was requested from the college's principal. Permission to perform the study at the designated community learning centers Appendices provide sample letters addressed to the study's departments. The concept of informed consent requires researchers to respect participants' basic freedom to choose whether to engage in a research project (Bull & Lindegger, 2011).

The consent is thereby given by the participants when the researcher distributes the permission form, which describes their request for participation and the research's aims, the rights of participating voluntarily, and the participants sign the declaration of consent. To allay the participants' concerns, permission for conducting the study will be provided to them. In accordance with the principles of Nijhawan et al. (2013), participants were apprised of the right to participate voluntarily and assured that no harm would occur from their involvement in the study. Likewise, the participants' confidentiality would be secured by the application of pseudonyms. Participants must be assured that they will not be punished for discontinuing their involvement in order for them to feel comfortable. It is also important that participants understand that there will be no financial incentives for participating in the study.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the central topics on the methodology behind the study to address the research questions. The methodology applied was discussed and steps for sampling, data collection and issues of trustworthiness were clarified giving an identifiable direction of how the activities will unfold. Followed by the discussion of ethical considerations and how they were implemented in the study. The next chapter (Chapter Four) comprises a presentation and analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter interprets and discusses the findings obtained after conducting interviews pertaining to exploring the creation and management of college partnerships for quality service learning. Participants were drawn from the KZN CET College managers for partnerships and linkages unit, centre managers, and lecturers from the two case study community learning centres (CLCs) that formed part of case study. The study was guided by the three research questions namely:

1. How does the community college use the community partnership approach as a strategy for quality service learning?
2. In what ways does the selected community college engage with the local communities in developing its programs?
3. What skills are needed to better manage the quality service-learning partnerships at the college and to achieve better outcomes in terms of building and maintaining such partnerships?

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section A outlines the profiles of participants, allocation of codes and pseudonyms. Section B presents the study findings and discussions of the research questions. The collected data was subjected to theme analysis formed into main themes and related subthemes that emerged from the interviews. In collating the data, the study categorised the themes that emerged during the coding and thematic process and cross-referenced as mentioned in chapter 3. The three main themes that emerged from the data collation are; The creation of college partnerships for quality service learning, College community engagement for responsive programmes and the Improvement of service-learning partnerships. To uphold the participants' authenticity and anonymity, the findings have been

presented in narrative manner, supplemented by direct quotations from respondents addressed from the interviews and identified using participant codes. Literature is also used to interpret the obtained data and to give it a meaning and compare with other study findings. The final part of the chapter is the conclusion.

SECTION A

4.2. PROFILES AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Nieuwenhuis (2016) highlights the significance of describing the study participants as the first phase of processing data, to provide expansive, and relative understanding in a form of "voice of the insiders". This method accentuates the surroundings at hand, affording a deeper appreciation of their work experiences and ensuring that the study outcomes are based on the participants' unique, complex reality. For confidentiality purposes, the names of the participants were avoided, and they were described in pseudonyms and codes.

4.2.1 Profiles for the Managers of the College Partnerships and Linkages Unit

4.2.1.1 The Relations Development Manager was assigned the pseudonym "Mr Will". He is a fundraiser for the KZN CET College and is responsible for the sourcing of funds that are a third income stream for the college's operations and creating partnerships with external stakeholders. He again facilitates the creation of partnerships for service-learning and trainings on behalf of the colleges' learning sites around the province. Prior to that in his experience, he has served as a principal in a well performing TVET College in KZN for a period of fifteen years. In his tenure as a relations manager at the CET college from 2022, he has created more than forty training partnerships for community learning. The trainings include funded projects whereby community learning centres are funded to train communities on different accredited skills and non-formal learning skills programmes that are responsive to each community needs and tailored to increase employment opportunities among participants.

Mr Will has also achieved more than twenty-three accreditations for the college in programmes that were offered non-formally but have now been accredited for quality service learning. In addition, he has created partnerships for learnerships in community learning whereby students can learn in both classroom and do practical work with partnering institutions or campuses.

4.2.1.2 The College Project Manager was assigned the pseudonym of Mr "Andy". He works under the colleges 'partnership and linkages unit. Mr Andy has worked in this unit for four years. Prior to that he worked at the same college under the supply chain management unit as a senior administrator. As a manager for projects unit, his work entails developing projects implementation plans for the college's partnerships projects especially the learning and training projects. He leads and works collaboratively with the college team assigned to work on the learning partnerships, evaluate partnerships performance and ensure stakeholder and learners satisfaction.

4.2.2 Profiles of the Centre Manager Participants

4.2.2.1 Centre Manager for Uthingo CLC

The Centre Manager of Uthingo CLC was coded as CM1. Participant CM1 has occupied this position for more than 13 years. His experience in the CET College traces back prior to the migration of the ABET centres to the PSET system under the DHET in 2015. His centre is one of the pilot centres amongst the five pilot centres in KwaZulu-Natal CET College. The Uthhingo centre is situated in an urban area of Durban under the township of Lamontville. As a centre manager, some of responsibilities are to manage the centre activities to achieve the centre objectives including providing strategic leadership for the centre. In addition, CM1 is responsible for the development of staff development programmes and quality learning in the centre focused and external directed trainings.

4.2.2.2 The Centre Manager for Sekusile CLC.

The participant was given the code CM2. Participant CM2 has been the centre manager of the Sekusile CLC for a period of 15 years. The centre is situated in the deep rural areas of KwaHlabisa in uMkhanyakude District North of KwaZulu-Natal. The CLC is also a pilot centre amongst the five pilot centres in KZN CET College. Prior to being a centre manager, CM2 had been a full-time teacher in a position of a Head of Department (HoD) at a High School in Kwa Hlabisa area for a period of 11 years and has extensive experience in school management office. CM2 responsibilities in a centre include among other things playing an active role in recruiting of students in to learning in the centre, ensuring that all programmes offered are responsive to the needs of a community. Where necessary facilitate the creation of partnerships with external

agencies both locally and remotely. She in addition is responsible for ensuring effective teaching and learning in the centre for all programmes offered and ensuring proper reporting of all partnership offered trainings to the college management.

4.2.3 Profiles of lecturer participants from the case study centre – Uthingo CLC

4.2.3.1 Lecturer 1 was assigned the code L1. He is a male lecturer responsible for teaching GETC AET L4 programme in the centre and forms part of the student support committee for the centre, whereby he leads community engagements for the centre recruitment and partnerships and linkages for learning and articulation in the centre. L1 has been in the centre for a period of 10 years and prior to his experience with the CET College he has also worked in a high school as a teacher for 8 years under the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

4.2.3.2 Lecturer 2 has been assigned the code L2. She is an adult female lecturer in the centre and forms part of the College Academic Board. She has 16 years of experience in the centre and has been teaching a Wholesale and Retail subject under the GETC AET L4 programme.

4.2.3.3 Lecturer 3 has been given the code L3. She is a female adult lecturer at the centre and has been a CET College lecturer for eight years. She teaches New Venture Creation programme and End-User Computing in the centre.

4.2.4 Profiles of lecturer Participants from the case study centre - Sekusile CLC

4.2.4.1 Lecturer 1 has been given the code L4. She is an adult female, working as a lecturer at Sekusile CLC. She teaches a Seamstress (Sewing) skills programme in the centre. L4 has been in the centre for seven years.

4.2.4.2 The second lecturer participant from Sekusile CLC has been given the code L5. She is an adult female, working at Sekusile CLC and she is a member of the College's Academic Board. She teaches a GETC AETL4 programme Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Entrepreneurship programme in the centre.

The sample of the participants present a diversity of the population that have a direct bearing on the creation and managing of the service-learning partnerships in the CET college. The chosen participants display a direct alignment with the research goals and their in-depth experience to the education sector and that of CET is necessary to address the study's core questions.

In the section that follow, I present and analyse the data gathered during interviews with these participants.

SECTION B

4.3 THEMATIC ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter is organised thematically as follows:
The first theme is addressed below.

4.3.1 Creation of college partnerships for quality service learning

This theme captures some of the college's existing service-learning partnerships and how they are planned, created, and organised. It also captures the most effective approaches by centres and the college in creating quality leaning partnerships.
It captures the capabilities and the deficiencies the centre managers and the lectures have in creating partnerships as expressed by participants.

4.3.1.1 *The College's Existing Learning Partnerships*

This sub-theme gives a background of the already existing service-learning partnerships in the case study centres. All the interviewed participants indicated that the college and its centres have created different learning partnerships with community stakeholders such as retail chain stores, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) / Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), traditional leaders, sister government departments and other college created partnerships by SETAs and the National Skills Fund (NSF). In most cases these partnerships were discussed in terms of how they were planned, organised and their value in responsiveness to quality service leaning and delivery. The presentation is descriptive and discursive to allow an expansive

conversational interest, with verbatim responses from participants and each interview takes place from the workstation of each participant.

The centre managers identified the annual enrolment target as a major source of centres planning the recruitment drive and having the urgent need to create partnerships with community stakeholders. In this regard CM1 had this to say:
"The most effective approach we have used as a centre in developing learning partnerships in this community is by going straight to introduce yourself with the nearby community stakeholders and tell them about CET college offerings and ask for a partnership that responds to your community's needs, One of our most successful partnership is the one I created with Pick n Pay store whereby I went and asked for a manager to hire the learners who are taking Wholesale and Retail subject at AET L4 for experience in chain store environment. And some of them have been giving long term contracts now".

In further exploring the best approaches in the creation of the learning partnerships, I enquired into how centres align the need for their programmes and services to the potential community partners. This was to examine whether the centre firstly engages the partners before offering their centre programmes ascertain the required skill set. CM1, explained that in many cases, the programmes are offered based on the need by students at registration and to meet the enrolment targets.
"*We normally align our programmes with the available lecturers and what they can teach in the centre first and source partnerships at a later stage. However, my centre has made good kept relations with some partners especially in retail and has been working with them for more than three years now".*

The centre manager from Sekusile CLC had this to say considering the approach they use:
"We plan a recruitment drive as a centre after receiving our annual enrolment target and we go to community meetings, and community functions like war rooms, ward councillors' meetings and do centre blitz campaigns for visibility to explain about CET College and ask community members to come and learn in our centres. Two of our centre's major NGO partners in association with the University of South Africa (UNISA) approached us after hearing about the CLC and asked to partner for computer and digital learning programmes to assist the community's youth with digital skills. They are also assisting with the registering of

the students to the Department of Labour's data base for the unemployed to make them easily accessible for the employers" (CM2).

The findings above suggest that the foremost important subject in the centres is meeting the overall annual recruitment target. The need for creation of learning partnerships come after the students have enrolled. I argue that in the planning phase of service-learning partnerships, the college must initially include the stakeholders' perspective thus ensuring that programmes offered in the centre align to the targeted partner's needs. According to Myende (2011), a team responsible for developing proposals in school-based partnership should indicate targeted goals and actively involve all participants for their expert guidance. This suggests that the recruitment of partners for service learning in the community college should not come as an afterthought for the support of programmes already offered but programmes must be offered to respond to the needs of community partners. The findings from the interviews conducted suggest that the community centres only approach partners after they have decided what they would offer.

The literature has captured that s4 of the National Policy for CET section (4) states that community colleges must have tight partnerships with the communities at large, including local government, social welfare organisations, companies, and labour organisations, to match programmes with their needs. Mr Will had explained that he is responsible for developing relationships and source fundings for the college on behalf of centre funded programmes. However, proposals do not guarantee a partnership contract but sometimes a contract can be forged at a later stage when teaching and learning had already commenced in a centre.
Adding to the discussion about the creation of learning partnerships in the CET college, Mr Will said that:

"The college is driven by the annual performance targets and the mandate to expand access and improve quality programming offerings in creating learning partnerships that extend beyond the classroom to more professional experiential learning. As the college we have ensured that centres are accredited through QCTO to offer recognised and formal skills programmes as a strategic intervention to ensure quality in our programming. We apply through SETA proposals for funded variety of centre responsive programmes for which some also offer stipends for learners to earn whilst learning to support them as unemployed youth and adults. The college partnership's unit has created memorandum of agreements and service

*level agreement with many organisations for centres in response to quality service learning" (*Mr Will).

To give further clarity on his part as a relations consultant based at the college's central office Mr Willl shared that CET centres offer standard DHET adult academic literacy programmes and may make partnerships with interested community stakeholders based on their needs for such programmes. The SETA funded skills programmes and industry funded programmes are applied for by the college in its capacity to manage funded programmes.

"There are standard programmes that are offered in all CET CLCs like the adult literacy programmes and sister departments sometimes approach the college to partner so they can be offered to their staff personnel that require it. But the SETA funded skills programmes require proposal developments and applications, but the application acceptance is not guaranteed and may take effect at a later stage after the centre registrations have been concluded hence the planning is not consistent (Mr Will).

Sharing the similar sentiments to the statements made by Mr Will the college's project manager Mr Andy echoed that:

"The college is part of the KZN Premier's Human Resource Development (HRD)forum and through its engagements for skills development has forged partnerships with the sister Departments like the Health, and Public Works Department where the workers under general employment and Expanded Public Work Programme (EPWP) have been referred to the college to partake in adult literacy programmes and skills programmes like sewing and computer programmes to help eradicate illiteracy and offer lifelong learning skills for their employees. These partnerships are forged based on the need by the departments and as the college we place individuals in the centres within their communities for the ease of access" (Mr Andy).

The CET colleges are expected to create the learning partnerships with community stakeholders of interest but the how part is not clear in literature. The findings in interviews for the CET College service-learning partnerships suggest a lack of synergy in the planning of annual targets and forging of the partnerships between the community learning centres and the college partnerships and linkages unit. It suggests that the CLCs are creating their own partnerships on the side whilst the college partnership and business unit is also sourcing

partnerships on their behalf to meet the enrollment and the APP targets without shared communication.

4.3.1.2 *Capabilities and Deficiencies by Centre Managers and Lecturers in Creating and Managing Learning Partnerships.*

Case study centres participants overwhelmingly identified a lack of capacity in drafting formal proposals and Memorandums of Understandings or Service Level Agreements (MoUs) /SLAs and negotiating formal contractual terms especially where funding is involved. In most part centre managers have only created learning partnerships through mutual trust agreements using their idealised influence as community members and it usually never involve funding.
For instance, participants CM1 and CM2 stated that:
'As the centre manager I do not know how to draft both a funding proposal and MoU for any relationship that the centre enters with stakeholders. We mostly rely on gentleman's agreement" (CM1).

"We have not been capacitated as a centre to write MoUs or SLAs on behalf of the centre, it is the function that lies with the central office. It so happens that when written contracts are required, we must inform the office and it sometimes take forever for them to respond. We end up just partnering verbally and through trust" (CM 2).
Leadership training in negotiation and fund resourcing is key for any successful partnership where resources are being shared and key expectations on any contract are significant in ensuring proper monitoring added value in a partnership. Talents and attributes like exemplary leadership, communication, financial sourcing ability, and relationships based on mutual respect and trust constitute the paramount assets in developing any kind of partnership and without which such relations would collapse (Myende, 2014; Eloff and Ebersohn, 2001). Ongoing support for community colleges requires specific emphasis to improving leadership abilities among its managers as change agents and supporters of community college training efforts, especially cross-sector initiatives including service learning ((Mbatha, 2022; Maier et al., 2021; Zeelen et al., 2011).

When asked about the capacitaion of centre managers and lecturers to forge formal community partnerships independently by the college, Mr Will stated that:

"The CET college is fairly new in the environment of creating community partnerships and the college has recently started to train centre managers in leadership courses and project management. However, the progress is relatively slow when taking into consideration the number that must be trained in centres".

During the introduction and sharing of biographical information by the participants, Mr Andy said:

"I was appointed as a project manager four years ago when the college started the business unit for projects and college partnerships. This unit was started in support for the CET strategic mandate to form learning and infrastructural support partnerships and to create a third income stream for the college resources. This unit was not part of the CET departmental funded organogram, but the college must source qualified human capacity for its operations because there was no one qualified in the centres and the central office to run it".

These findings are an indication of why the KZN CET college has employed the services of a professional fundraiser and partnership consultant to lead the facilitation of all stakeholders' contractual terms for its centres. Nevertheless, this affirms that many college administrators and managers left the basic education AET system to join the new regime when community colleges were founded in South Africa without any assessments for technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skill sets, CET colleges are unable to carry out policy directives (Mbatha, 2022; Tawaiah & Quan-Baffour, 2021).

The case study centres seemed to be aware that learning partnerships require monitoring and reporting for sustenance and success. Wadji, (2017) asserts that maintaining a well-functioning support system, including clear staff administration, transparent processes, and monitored activities as one of the conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of partnership management. In this respect participants revealed that student community support structures have been developed in centers to ensure the management of the centre created partnerships. However, the monitoring of partnerships activities is mostly not documented as these partnerships are not formalised through any SLA or MoU. In this regards some participants stated that:

"*We have Student Community Support Services (SCSS) committees in the centre including the community linkages and support committee that deals with linking the students to relevant*

learning and work areas in the community for articulation. When we have referred our students with stakeholders, we also monitor their progress in that area by asking the partners' feedback on how the students are progressing (L2).

"The monitoring of partnership activities is mostly never done by lecturers as we have limited time of contact in the centre with students. Our contact time is three hours and that's what we are paid for, and we must teach at that time. This hinders the proper monitoring of our linkages support, but we rely on centre managers to monitor progress and students to tell us their progress when we see each other in the community" (L5).

Participants CM1 and CM2 also concurs with the fact that monitoring of activities for centre created service-learning partnerships is hard or never done formally but feedback may be received through maintaining relations with students especially the exited ones. Monitoring and impact evaluation remains the centre manager's personal choice in his capacity to follow through for his own effective centre management. The only time activities may be evaluated is when the partnering stakeholder gives feedback or requests the centre for more students to come and work for or train with them. The impact is also seen when more students come to enrol in the centre by seeing others in the community succeeding after being part of the programme. Participant CM1 shared the following:

"Some of my students have been taken by the nearby big franchise brand retail shop in the community and two of them have been promoted from temporary positions to permanency and the shop has been seeking for more students on wholesale and retail from my centre. This for me confirms the well working relationship the centre has facilitated with the shop" (CM1).

"When planning for the recruitment, we also allocate ourselves tasks with lecturers to use the student community linkages support and look for places of engagement for our students to assist them for experience and employability when learning with us. This also assist us in terms of meeting our expected enrolment target" (CM2).

This form of establishing partnerships by centres demonstrates good practice and is consistent with models of transformational leadership. Nieuwenhuis (2016) shares a model for transformational leadership and explains the principle of idealised influence where leaders use their charm in facilitating orgaisational change by creating trustworthy relations using communication skills, involvement with stakeholders, and a willingness to try innovative concepts. Howell et al. (2022); Mora (2012) and Shava and Heystek (2021) in their exploration

of the components for transformational leaders found that inspiration comprises the science of holding community and stakeholder discussions using the 'first among equals' principle rather than a dictatorial process for making decisions. The leader displays the habit of serving rather than leading, which is essential for inspiring the community to adopt the institutional vision and trust the leader. Holding planner meetings with the staff before pursuing the stakeholders exemplifies a good state of motivation and being considerate to the ideas of all involved in the centre before engaging external stakeholders. These are good traits of transformational leaders.

4.3.2 College Community Engagement for Responsive Programmes

This theme explores how the college, and the community learning centres forge stakeholder engagements for community responsive programmes. It also captures the supportive elements required for successful engagements and programme delivery.

4.3.2.1 *Creation of Stakeholder Engagements for Community Responsive Programmes*

Community engagement has emerged as a top priority at higher institutions of learning to collaborate and facilitate the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources for both institutions and communities (Jadhav & Suhalka, 2016). This supports the task given to higher education institutions (HEIs) by the national government to address community challenges in a way that will contribute to societal transformation (DHET, 2015a). Programme offerings in CET must allow for communities to express their educational needs and thus respond by creating modularised training that link to the desired outcomes (Wolunter et al; 2015). What has emerged from the generated data is that community learning centres offer programmes available to them based on the lecturer capacity or specialisation. Regarding this L5 and L6 from Sekusile CLC said:

"The centre offers GETC AET L4 only as formal stream because there are no lecturers qualified to offer second chance matric or senior certificate programme in the centre. Although the centre has skills like furniture making, animal and plant production, confectionery baking, and End User Computing programme, people also want to do matric programme but we can't offer it to them" (L5).

In our discussion with participant L5, I further delved into the details of what makes it hard for the centre to offer second chance matric if it is required by the community. She shared that

some of the lecturers are unqualified as they hold a less than a minimal of an NQF6 which is a diploma level but are working as lecturers.

"Not all of us are qualified in the centre to teach as lecturers, some of us were hired as lecturers with a minimum of matric hence cannot teach especially the Maths and Science subjects from matric" (L5).

This was also corroborated by a lecturer from Uthingo CLC who said:

"We plan our programme offering in a centre based on what we can teach, and we recruit students to come and learn from our pre-set programme. Even with the matric programme we offer only those subjects that we can teach not all matric subjects" (L6).

This revelation that the centres have underqualified and unqualified lecturers confirms the importance of and the need for strong community collaborations to pull in the support of stakeholders with qualified and competent people for quality learning. To support the CET mandate for community responsive programming centre managers, have in some instances approached the community stakeholders to partner with them in their programme and skills delivery with the sharing of resources. In his study Myende (2014), concluded that the objectives of community education policies are distributive in nature and stakeholders from within and outside a school community should collaborate to oversee the responsive workings of its educational facilities. Adding to the above, participants revealed that they were aware that for the partnerships to succeed they needed support through joint relations among college managers, centre managers and between CLCs and community stakeholders. Describing the support that the College partnerships' unit provided, Mr Andy reported as follows:

"The college encourages community engagements by centres and college management itself, especially in rural communities where there are traditional leaders, local businesses and students with disabilities and churches because that is where the need for skills is required. Community engagements encourages cooperative governance to the shared facilities and the need to protect the school property."

Illustrating his view Mr Andy said:

Often, the college partnership unit has had to engage with Amakhosi endawo (traditional chiefs) by bringing ceremonial gifts to them as a cultural sign of respect and to make relations with them by requesting the space in land and to share a common ground in respect of learning needs. For instance, in the pilot centre of Sekusile in KwaHlabisa, the college engaged with

the Chief of the area in seeking for permission to occupy the space in what was a dilapidated and neglected centre, and the centre now offers accredited skills programmes and has been funded by SETAs that have supported it with refurbished classrooms and computer laboratory facilities and sewing rooms. It is also a centre that support students with disabilities where they learn hard skills that support their livelihood".

Sharing the same view made by Mr Andy, Mr Will said:

The information gathered from the engagements assist the college when approaching the SETAs for programme funding in that we ask for relevant form of interventions. The college partnership unit makes consultations for funding on behalf of the centres and spreads the funds accordingly as per the college operational plan, the centres can't source funding directly as they do not have bank accounts. Stakeholder funds are managed by the college finance" (Mr Will).

Overall, the preceding data set confirms that the college community engagements are paramount in receiving support from various role players. The key learnings from the findings are that the college has more power and capacity to engage the stakeholders on behalf of the centres managers because the capacity to source funding and draw up contracts on behalf of the centres lies only with the college managers and is not cascaded to centre managers. Northouse (2016), found that partnerships require capacity engagements to rally, stimulate and unify people and groups through actions that boost their confidence, and productivity. Most critically these findings reveal that if the college would strengthen the capacity of centre managers to fully engage with stakeholders and be trained for financial and contract management, it would be easy for them to create partnerships that improves the quality of learning and offer responsive programmes to their communities.

4.3.2.2 *Supportive Resources Required for Successful Engagements.*

In the context of successful college- community engagements the supportive resources refer to the learner teacher support material that is required to execute the mandate for the creation of partnerships for quality service learning. The analysis of data reveals that participants involved in the implementation of the college-community partnerships in the centres require support in several ways. The support required facilitates the achievement of the goals and objectives of the stakeholders' partnerships for quality learning. The kind of support that the college at the

central office level provides for the centres varies by each center's needs, informed by the centre budget and the capacity at which each centre operates. For example, the support that the pilot centres should get is different in that they should be treated with priority since they are piloting what the ideal CET community learning centres should look like and operate hence their budget is a little more than what the other centres in the province receive. The participants revealed that pilot centres are supposed to embody the true reflection and operations of the CET CLC. Sharing her point CM2 said:

You need to be consistent; I see that in other quotations you do not include quotation marks *"Sekusile CLC is one of the centres that were identified in KZN to form part of the radical piloting of CET sector operations because during the transition from DBE sector to DHET, this centre already had its independent campus structure and offered skills programmes like sewing, and computer programmes for the community. The centre has been fully equipped with a functional computer Lab and sewing machines using its' pilot budget but getting consumables for the sewing programme is a challenge".*

In further elaborating on the pilot centre operations CM1 said:

As a pilot centre we are given a mammoth task to operate at higher level than other CLCs in terms of CET programmes offering and professional delivery. Even our results are expected to show continuous progress and responsiveness to the communities we serve. But the college takes long to respond to our centre needs and required resources to implement because our centre budget lies with them.

From the data analysis on the supportive elements required for successful engagements, there emerged the three sub-themes of adequate consultation between the college and stakeholders, communication resources and learner teacher support material (LTSM).

4.3.2.3 *Adequate Consultation Among Stakeholders*

This subtheme looks at how consultations are made within the rules of engagements for successful delivery of centre programmes, especially the stakeholder engagements who are invested in partnering with the community learning centres. Consultations are part of managing partnerships as they ensure a flow of communication between involved stakeholders. Badgett, (2016) and Kisker and Carducci, (2003) underline the importance of consultation by stating that learning institutions nowadays are expected to work in highly complex social

environments with diverse stakeholder needs and expectations. Only learning institutional leaders who possess transformational leadership qualities invest in consulting each other within the learning institution and other role players for their learning initiatives to succeed. To this effect, Taylor and Lepper, (2019) argues that these institutional leaders model the desired values that seek to positively affect and change the learning community culture where leaders and their community consult each other to develop shared sense of purpose. Consultation is therefore necessary to ensure that the learning institutions and the lead team share the same common vision towards community learning initiatives. Participants highlighted the need to eliminate the threat of lack of consultation by the college managers with the centre managers beforehand, as highlighted by participant CM1 from Uthingo CLC who pointed out that:

"Some learning partnerships are entered into by the college are done without consultation with us at the centre as the stakeholders on the ground, but happen elsewhere, at another level perhaps with the SETAs or other sister government departments and the centre gets informed about the decision without the consultation process" (CM1).

Participant CM1 further explained with an example, how this consultative process between the college and the centres should be undertaken when it comes to the implementable service learning by stating the following:

"When the college applies for a learning partnership for the centre, they must first consult with the managers and lecturers of the centre and develop a guideline for the project plan to ensure that its implementable by the time of action. The problem is that we are only told that the college has engaged with the stakeholder and the centre must recruit and implement without even asking if we have adequate resources to implement and when the project fails the centre gets the blame" (CM1).

Participant Mr Andy also echoed the same sentiments around consultation, contending that the College must fully engage with the centre before and during entering in any partnership on their behalf. He stated the following in this regard:

"Sometimes other funded programme partnerships are extended to the college unexpectedly by the SETAs and the college can't miss the opportunities as it wants to grow, and they have to immediately identify the centre that can drive the expected outcomes of the learning programme by partnering stakeholder" (Mr Andy).

Mr Will reported that when applying for funded programmes and partnering with any stakeholder for any learning programme, the partnership unit looks first at the strategic plan and the annual performance plan by the college and partner for programmes that are based on the expected deliverable outcomes for the college. He stated that:

"The strategic outcomes for the college include increasing access to CET opportunities and that means introducing the communities to all CET approved programming, however, I agree that the college must always engage with all stakeholders involved before implementing to analyse the feasibility and evaluate and increase the capacity for the smooth implementation if need be because learning partnerships often fail without proper consultations and understanding of expected outcomes " (Mr Will).

The Sekusile CLC participants also highlighted the need to eliminate the threat of lack of guided operational consultation to the service-learning partnership, and to underscore this point, L4 had this to say:

"*Consultation is a delicate process that needs to be professionally taken care of all the time, it ensures that we come together, we study the pros and cons of the learning partnership and take care of all what needs to be done, learn and improve"* (L4).

Whilst the data allude that college-community learning partnerships led by the college itself and not CLCs were implemented without adequate consultation, however, role players recognise the benefits of consultation in the initiated partnerships. From the views above, participants believed that role players must always be taken on board through consultation and understanding the targets that the partnership should aim at. This confirms the findings by Fisher and Crawford, (2020) that transformational leaders must influence stakeholder engagement in a positive way. I believe that when lecturers, centre managers and the community are consulted they become more engaged as they own up to the aims and objectives that must be achieved by the partnership. What this means is that in a community college where the managers adopt a transformational leadership style, centres are likely to be inspired as they emulate their leader's practices and collaborate to help the college, centre and the partners achieve the strategic goals. With transformational leadership, community colleges are strategically positioned to deal effectively with service-learning partnership interventions (Ouko, 2020).

4.3.2.4 *Communication Resources*

This subtheme looks at how effective communication has been viewed by the participants as the important component for successful partnerships between centres and community stakeholders and thus deem it as one of the most required resources. Communication is both a technical skill and behavioral characteristic, it suggests the disposition of how leaders communicate a shared direction, coherent information and coordinated activities. Myende, (2014), Eloff and Ebersohn, (2001), and Kretzman and McKnight, (1993) emphasise the importance of timely and open communication as a behavioral reflection of transformational leadership. Ineffective communication damages trust and partnership morale (Myende, 2014). Communication plan ensures that the community receives timely and relevant information. Clear, transparent, and engaging communication builds trust, helps drive participation and foster relationships.

Communication in management signals accountability and capability to lead the people and stakeholders around, this is important for college-community partnerships because information must flow through everyone involved and align with the goals of the partnership. Communication challenges were frequently cited particularly around the limited access to lack of resources like data and network connectivity, lack of communication gadgets like cellphones and computers. Participants accounts of limited and lack of support around communication tools by the college whereas lecturers are expected to do fieldwork in a form of recruitment and community engagements. Participant L1 and CM1 said:

"It is very hard to execute the duties pertaining to community engagements especially recruitment because the college expects us to connect with communities but does not provide communication tools like data and phones. We use our own money to buy airtime and data to communicate outside office for the work of the centre" (L1).

"The college has provided only one cellphone gadget and one centre laptop and one centre email for the entire centre and it resides with the centre manager. Even though we have centre Wi-fi connection, the community engagements activities require us to sometimes go where the community is but there are no tools of communication especially with the lecturers" (CM1).

Howel et al. (2022); and Al-Farhan, (2018) have demonstrated that communication in leadership must encompass clarity and consistency to align institutional directionality. These perspectives show that communication is pertinent for coordination and community engagements. Hence the need for centre managers who are responsible for leading the community engagements to receive support in a form of communication tools. Equally what participant L1 says here finds expression in lecturers forced to implement duties of community engagements designed to foster learning partnerships using their own money as not motivational to lecturers. The absence of communication resources affects the flow of timeous, and clear communication practices between the CET college centres and the service-learning partnering stakeholders and it is misaligned to transformational leadership as it demotivates all stakeholders involved in the partnership.

4.3.2.5 *Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) Resources*

Prioritisation of resource allocation decisions is critical in ensuring scarce financial and equipment resources are efficiently deployed and used to meet the needs for quality learning. This is particularly important as CET pilot centres targeted for service-learning interventions are located in social contexts that are not only under-resourced but also prone to relatively high levels of poverty, unemployment, inequality and underdevelopment. The LTSM stands out as a critical element for quality programme delivery and communication engagements. The lack of LTSM appeared to be another resource constrain for the centres that negatively impacts the quality of learning. The evidential struggle to procure or allocate teaching and learning resources by the college was echoed by the centre manager from Sekusile CLC who mentioned that:

"We do not receive textbooks, and stationery for all students on time if we get it at all. The centre also struggles with the shortage of printing paper to make copies for the students, we rely on asking donations and sometimes buy the material using our own money so we could keep the students in the centre" (CM2).

These sentiments were shared by a lecturer in Uthingo CLC who also said:

"We sometimes have to donate money as lecturers in a centre to print pamphlets for our centre recruitment drive to use in community engagements so that our work looks professional" (L3).

Participant (CM1) explained that for the progress of programme delivery, students must sometimes be engaged to participate by donating money to fund their own learning material especially for the skills programmes like sewing and buy seedlings for plant production programme and selling the products to get profit and by more material.

"It is better if the programme is SETA funded or the partnering stakeholder buys their own learning material for the progress of teaching and learning" (CM1).

The CET policy clearly states that CET Colleges are to provide the communities especially the NEETs with free education and in terms of literacy, and second chance programmes and skills or vocational education that must lead to communities' employability and economic independence. This the CET colleges will achieve by using the allocated DHET funding norms and sought the stakeholder funding through creating partnerships with the SETAs, and sister governmental departments and private stakeholders (Dhet, 2015a).

Mr Will concurred with these participants (CM1 and CM2), as he explained how the shortage of LTSM negatively affects teaching and learning especially for the funded projects under the partnerships unit where deliverables must be timeous as per the implementation plan. He said:

"The process of LTSM procurement is centralised at the college's central office and due to the lack of capacity in college staffing for SCM and finance department, the resourcing of LTSM is mostly delayed even for the SETA funded projects which therefore delays delivery and causes strained relations with the partners" (Mr Will).

The above assertion by participant (Mr Will), has serious implications for CLC and community confidence in the quality programme delivery in that it highlights the need for the centre managers to be empowered on how to build and maintain high confidence in community engagements that are necessary to deliver quality programmes and outcomes of the service-learning partnership with limited resources.

The above data taken together reveals that centre managers and lecturers at the CLCs were motivated in several ways. It appears that participants know how to foster the stakeholder engagements with limited resources and motivate students to actively participate in their own learning experience though contributing to resourcing it themselves. Where community engagements are motivated by quality and hard work, they become motivational and inspire partners to become actively participate in activities as their morale and trust is enhanced when they see their lives change through the learning they've received (Caluza, 2022). The key

learning from the data is that stakeholders in the partnership need to have a strategy of raising funds to resource, support and manage the learning partnership intervention.

4.3.2.6 *Training and Development in Creating and Managing Learning Partnerships.*

This section presents findings related to centre managers and lecturers' motivations to pursue professional development opportunities relating to the area of partnerships management. These motivations were expressed during interviews and reflect a collective aspiration to address personal and systemic challenges through capacity building. The OECD, (2019) defines capacity development as "approaches, strategies and methodologies which seek to improve performance at different social levels". For purposes of this study, I look at capacity development as referring to trainings, workshops and professional development of the key role-players involved in the implementation of the college partnerships for service-learning at centre level. Myende, 20214; and Eloff and Ebersohn, (2001) believe that talents and qualities such as leadership, communication skills, the capacity to obtain money, and trusting and respectful relationships are valuable advantages. Many studies have concluded that continued support for community colleges need specific attention to developing leadership skills among its leaders as change agents and champions for community college training initiatives (Mbatha, 2022; Maier et al., (2021).

Participants expressed a consistent desire to improve their skills often citing feelings of pressure for their leadership responsibilities in creating and managing partnerships. Many reported that they had assumed managerial roles without prior experience of formal preparation.

'*We were told to create partnerships with stakeholders in the communities for responsive programming training on community engagements, planning and relations management. We are learning on the job every time something new pops up" (L1).*

"If we want to run centre partnerships professionally, we need professional managerial skills" (L4*).*

There was also a sense of fear among centre managers who feel that lack of certain knowledge on creation of partnerships might negatively impact the credibility of their centres or college.

"It is embarrassing when people ask something related to partnerships and management and one can't answer or refers it to the college management. It lowers your confidence during engagements" (CM2*).*

Centre managers stated that consistent development training and workshops on creating professional partnerships proposals, funding proposals and project implementation plans would improve morale and encourage collaborations across centres and communities.
"As centre managers we require project management and leadership training to be able to manage partnership projects effectively and learn about project monitoring and reporting" (CM2).

Land (2017) argued that adult education leadership must exist beyond the classroom and into the community, as was often seen with the commitment of managers in mobilising communities and networks. There is evidence in some of the strengths noted - while centre managers and lecturers appeared to struggle with the technical competencies, they mostly demonstrated strengths in relational and community focuses as they are still able to forge working partneships with their communities.
"Right now, we are just doing as we see fit for our centres and using our connections to sometimes create working relations so there is no consistency in the way we do things" (CM1).

These responses indicate a strong intrinsic and extrinsic need among centre managers and lecturers to engage in training opportunities driven by a mixture of professional and institutional factors.

The views of these professionals exhibit the strength of inspirational motivation which is one of the principles that community college leaders need to apply to inspire those around them, and to raise their confidence in ways that foster a culture of high performance and achievement in service learning. Cejda and Leist (2013); Howell et al. (2022); Mora (2012) and Shava and Heystek (2021), all concur that inspirational motivation is the leader's capacity to rally, stimulate and unify people and groups through actions that boost their confidence, engagement, and productivity. The leader does this by communicating effectively, cooperative goal setting,

incentives, brainstorming, and paying close attention to people's needs. Hence the need for proper capacity building amongst lecturers in centres.

Lecturers also expressed that creation and management of school community partnerships requires leaders to be motivated and to motivate the stakeholders involved in the exercise. They reiterated that for the community to gain trust on their programmes they themselves must be fully developed in their field.

The findings in totality show a displacement of lecturers' capacity and competence in managing service-learning partnerships as is required through their lived experience by the college. In as much as the community-engagements and existing learning partnerships were evidence of some capacity to create and manage learning partnerships , the deficits along the project management, creation of funding proposals, MoUs, financial management and report writing domains were indicative of capacity training that did not include the areas identified in the acceptable profile of competencies required in the positional expectation of managing college-community service- learning partnerships. Mbatha (2022), argues that while the CET policy documents the expectations of change in the CET Colleges' programming and opportunities, there is however, no clear and tangible development pathways for CET lecturers and centre managers in closing the gaps that limit their overall performance and efficiency. The current circumstances were eloquently communicated in the conditions that contribute to effectively managed community-college partnerships that recruitment of managers based on merit, demonstration of knowledge and awareness of service responsibilities as critical conditions that must be addressed to build an atmosphere favourable to effect relationship management (Kolter, 2001; Northouse, 2019; Wadji, 2017). The college partnership unit management need to take a multifaceted approach in transforming the community learning centres into independent, proficient, and capable centres to engage, partner, and manage community-centre partnerships.

4.3.3 Improvement of Service-Learning Partnerships

This theme discusses the participants' responses on what can be done to enhance the service-learning partnerships in the CET college. Two themes emerged from the data gathered in interviews: The need to show greater commitment and attention in driving service-learning

partnerships, and formalisation of partnership relations between the college, CLCs and the community partners.

4.3.3.1 *Commitment in Driving Service-Learning Partnerships*

Commitment is broadly defined as the willingness and ability of stakeholders to provide both moral and material support to ensure success of the project. Commitment involves demonstrated willingness and attachment of stakeholders to provide attention and time to support the strategic goals of the project (Maier et al., 2021). The commitment of all the team-players is vital for the implementation and success of the quality service-learning in the college. Service-learning is an attempt to promote community development and consequently the centre managers, lecturers and college partnership unit managers are central to its success, hence their full commitment is required by the programme. Discussing the ways of improvement to service-learning partnerships centre managers had this to say:

"*Community engagements are fast becoming a central need to our CET programming, because we engage communities through blitz campaigns, recruitment drives and for the programmes offered in a learning centre. We need full recognition by the college for the efforts that we put, considering the hours that we are paid for without recognising the time we take to engage communities with an intention to respond to their learning needs" (CM1).*

"The college management lacks the general attention to the outcomes of service-learning partnerships that the centres create on its own, hence cannot see the impact of the commitment of our own lecturers. The college only puts critical attention to learning partnership created by them as a partnership and linkages unit" (CM2). collaborative

The obvious deduction from the above assertions from centre managers of Uthingo and Sekusile CLCs are that the college cannot expect the service-learning partnership to flourish if they are not willing to dedicate considerable attention to assist building relationships with community partners. In affirmation of the statement CM1 said:
"It is not enough for community partners to relate only to the students and centre lecturers; the college actors need to show their commitment and speak to community stakeholders so that they can understand the criticality of resourcing the projects created by centres"CM1.

Mr Will declared the situation at the College as follows:
"I have already mentioned the issue of lack of capacity in the college staff hence my appointment as the fundraiser consultant for the creation of college partnerships. The college does not have enough staff personnel to attend to all community engagement created by centre managers at centre level. However, capacitating lecturers and centre managers is one of the unit's objectives and already there are some staff members that have been enrolled in different programmes like project management and leadership programmes to ensure they are capacitated to deal independently with centre partnerships" Mr Will.

The above data excerpts reveal that the lack of attention to centre created partnerships hinders their optimal performance and gives a sign of weak management processes. Transformational leaders must exhibit a component of individual consideration which includes a consultative and supportive style of leading ensuring that all employees' strengths and weaknesses are determined for coaching and mentorship to promote professional development (Fischer & Crawford, 2020). Participants further contends that this lack of centre efforts attention by the college managers makes it hard for lecturers to gain interest in community engagements.
"Lecturers need motivation and support for their efforts without which, it becomes hard to them to community stakeholders" (CM1).

These revelations are confirmed by Mbatha (2022), who argue that there need to be expedient change management strategy implement to grow, capacitate, and support the changes that are enforced by the policies of community colleges institutions as opposed to the old AET policy framework. As Land and Archison (2017) lobbies for the support of community colleges as the community economic development strategy and the mechanism to address adult illiteracy and eradication of poverty in communities. The centre managers call for the college management involvement in centre created community partnerships for service-learning initiatives. Whilst the managers from the college's partnerships and linkages unit acknowledged the responsibility they have towards capacitating, being visible and being more hands on towards assisting centres in community engagements, the college may be at risk of stakeholders losing trust on its capacity to handle and manage partnerships and quality training programmes for communities.

Furthermore, the notion that some lecturers lacked commitment in the case study CLCs suggests gaps in staff motivation efforts. It challenges the college management to strengthen its approach to lecturer development strategies to address low morale and to address the colleges target outcome of increasing opportunities and access in the community college space. These challenges can be addressed through the application of the four pillars of transformational leadership by all college leaders. The first principle is idealised influence where the manager becomes a role model to his followers. The second principle is inspirational motivation which raises the commitment of followers to a shared vision. The third principle is intellectual stimulation which encourages to participate in professional development and capacity trainings to imp innovational practices for better community engagement management. Intellectual stimulation will assist the college to instil the culture of critical thinking, energise and lead the centre teams to internalise the vision and mission of learning partnerships (Caluza, 2022). The fourth principle is individual consideration where CET college managers pays special attention to the needs of each team member in the centres including support, guidance, monitoring, and coaching. As noted by CM1:

"Motivation and capacity are needed to elevate lecturers' commitment to service-learning partnership goals" (CM1).

4.3.3.2 *Formalised College-Community Service-Learning Partnerships*

By nature, quality service-learning partnerships demonstrate reciprocity between the learning institutions and the community because the service activities are designed to meet the learning objectives of the offered programme and the identified community service needs. Planning, orientation, training, and evaluation are key aspects of a successful service-learning programme (Khosa et al. 2014). When asking the role players about what must be considered to enhance the college-community service-learning partnerships, the participants indicated that community engagements need to be contractually formalised to work better. Participant L1 from Uthingo CLC mentioned that as a Wholesale and Retail programme teacher he has placed most students in big retail shops for service-learning but cannot properly account for them as there is no formal terms of supervision, evaluation or formal contract that forces accountability from both parties:

"I have engaged and consulted big chain stores to place students as a means for then to practice while training and am receiving great feedback from the stores but there are no formal

relations that binds our relationship. This therefore makes it hard for the centre to supervise the work, evaluate and get formal feedback so we can understand the strength and weakness of our curricular training" (L1).

Service-learning involves the process of knowledge conversion whereby the learned information to practice by imitating, guidance, and observation (Pacho, 2015). Consequently, service-learning should include the process of reflection and evaluation. This means that managers in the involved institutions should have the access and responsibility to supervise the quality of the training they have endowed the learners to assess the impact. Participants expressed the sense of concern on the fact that centre-community engagements are not formally documented because of the lack of training in the drafting of memorandum of agreements (MoAs). Centre managers had this to say:
"Only the college management has the power to draft and sign the MoAs with stakeholders on our behalf as centre managers with our community stakeholders. This locks us in terms of entering fruitful partnerships with our community stakeholders because we are not empowered to represent even our centres in our own communities" (CM1).

According to Northouse, (2016) transformational leaders know how to mobilise stakeholders and form coalitions necessary to implement quality service-learning partnerships programmes. Centres managers are placed to be responsible for identifying and engaging stakeholders that can partner with the community learning centres. However, data collected from interviews revealed the opposite. Participant Mr Andy pointed out that there was a difference between what needs to be done and what was being done in CET community learning centres. He says: *"Centre managers ought to be given a programme that is a guide on how to work with stakeholders, but it is not happening. CET colleges were not equipped to build community engagements or partnerships hence, the establishment of the partnerships and linkages meant to deal precisely with matters of partnerships"* (Andy).
To add participant Will declared his view as follows: *"The colleges' centre managers have not been equipped and have no capacity to draft or enter into contracts with stakeholders nor the power of attorney to bind the college in any contractual terms with external parties, that remains the competency of the college management in central office"* (Will).

Participant CM2 from Sekusile CLC contended that the centres' lack of capacity to formalise their community engagements limits and undermines the centre's powers to have meaningful engagements with their community stakeholders and weakens their voice in mobilising, motivating and inspiring internal as well as external agreements to form partnerships for quality service learning in centres.

"We are very keen to entering into engagements with potential partners but, we cannot formalise our partnerships without the college management which deters our power to work effectively as they are always busy and can't always come to assist us on time" (CM2).

The key findings from this data is that the college has not prepared the centre managers and lecturers on forming partnerships. The college projects unit operates independently in how they create and manage the service-learning partnerships on behalf of the community learning centres. The partnerships unit is fully equipped with the specialists in the creation and management of formalised contracts, whilst the centres lack in the capacitation for partnership creation, management of funds and support for their formed contracts. This transversal structure of working exhibits inconsistencies in the coordination of centre managers to rely on the external stakeholders due to lack of centre quality learning improvement support by the college partnerships unit. Scholars such as Wolhunter, et al. (2017) and Wyner (2019), have raised several issues around the personal and professional qualities of the CET sector organisational leadership qualities and how they have facilitated the exemplary organisational performance, which has proven to be lagging in comparison to other PSET institutional counterparts. These include the underqualification of lecturers and centre managers in teaching and management experience. The study finds that despite the knowledge of and responsibility by the college management and relationship development manager that centre managers need capacitation in partnerships development, this intervention is not happening. This is inconsistent with the theory of transformational leadership which prescribes proper guidance whilst motivating and inspiring all partners concerned in making plans to form partnerships for service- learning with external stakeholders. Clear guidance demonstrates strength in communication and inspires partners to understand their roles and responsibilities in a partnership.

Researchers such as Mbatha (2022), Caluza (2022), and Ouko (2020) conducted studies that indicated beneficial effects on the four aspects of Burns' (1978) transformational leadership

theory. In her study based on two CET colleges including KZN CET, Mbatha (2022) further concluded that CET colleges have failed to demonstrate positive organistaional elements on 'leadership, decision making, structure, people, work process and system and culture'. The evidence from this study interviews suggest that creating a transformational leadership organisational culture and cultivating core transformational leaders within this case study CET is still to be taught to all levels of the college.

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has presented the data gathered from the interview responses to the three research questions posed in this study. The data presentation was arranged thematically, using the key themes and sub-themes that emerged during the thematic data analysis process. The responses of the participants regarding the study's primary aims, research questions, and data were presented in this chapter. The chapter also discussed the key findings of the study from the views of the interview participants. The key statements made by the participants were widely quoted in the discussion of the findings. In summary, the data sets derived from the participants suggest that the creation of service-learning partnerships in the CET college is not configured into a formalised clear structure. It reveals that although there are forged relations with different stakeholders for service learning there is, however, a lack of synergy in the management of such partnerships. The following chapter summarises the study findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study's pursuit was to explore the approaches of community colleges in creating and managing community partnerships for quality service learning. The chapter presents a summary of the study, learnings from the study findings and conclusions regarding the main findings of the study, I t also presents recommendations based on the conclusions drawn from the findings, as well as suggestions for areas for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study is comprised of five chapters.

The first Chapter presented the research study topic and contextualised the study by presenting the orientation and background. The background highlighted through literature that the CET Act 16 of 2016, has given the CET colleges a legal standing in SA to establish a programme qualification mix and a training system that seeks to provide learning approaches that address the demands of the nation, labour market and the population in the communities they service. The context of the problem in this study is that the community colleges still find it difficult to dictate a set of measurable and meaningful results around which to focus their material and material resources and their production models in the context of public and private stakeholders (Wyner, 2019). The National Policy on CET states that CET colleges must make close corporations with local communities, including local governments, civil society organisations,

and employers and workers for the alignment of programmes with their needs. However, there is lack of clarity on the approaches that these colleges can use to create and lead functional as a strategy to attain measurable outcomes. The chapter identifies three areas of significance of the study namely, that it contributes to the understanding of creation of learning partnerships and its application to the process of college improvement and of skills development. The study may contribute to the knowledge of place-based partnerships approach leadership and practice that can be employed in creation of college-community learning partnerships. Thirdly, the study was significant in that it would reveal the challenges, the strengthening factors and those that may hinder the implementation of college-community created partnerships by the case study college. The chapter further indicated that the study was delimited to two community learning centres that were used as case study. However, the study employed the participation of the CET college partnership managers from whom the practices and approaches of partnerships creation was broadly clarified and were applicable to all centres of the college. The key concepts of the study were defined namely, partnerships, college-community partnerships, service-learning and management and leadership.

Chapter two of this study was comprised of two sections focusing on a critical review of studies conducted around community-colleges learning partnerships, it gave a theoretical explanation of the theories of transformational leadership and partnerships for service-learning as an approach to improve the quality of learning and training the in sector of community colleges in SA. The first section focussed on the review of literature wherein I presented and discussed concepts of community colleges which has been unanimously missioned to be responsive of local community educational needs they serve (Shannon & Smith, 2006). The mission for which includes responsiveness call for the creation of college-community partnerships and use of models that are conducive to success of community skills development. I discussed the centrality of college-community partnerships in facilitating the success of community development and responding directly to the community needs whilst decentralising and democratising education system to be “fit for purpose” (Myende, 2013). I further discussed the discourses around the negative and positive perspectives the literature has found around the functioning of community colleges around SA. Whilst discussing the college-community partnership and their centrality in developing communities, college management capacities, CET capabilities and community-based service learning. The study attempted to answer the research questions of the current study by reviewing the already existing body of knowledge

on the transformational leadership theory by Burns' (1978), on the second section of the chapter. This theory worked to provide a theoretical lens to analyse the research findings.

Chapter three outlined in detail the methodology employed in this study. I presented and justified the research design methodology that I adopted for this qualitative case study. In this chapter the plan that was used for the collection and analysis of data were explained; the sampling method, data collecting methods and techniques were also discussed. I adopted an interpretivist paradigm to understand from their perspectives, the ways in which the college managers, centres managers and lectures created and managed the service-learning partnerships for quality learning in a community college. For my primary data generation method, I used the face-to-face semi-structured interviews. During the engagement phase, I built confidence with participants by stating the study's aim and objectives upfront. Ethical standards that model research behaviour, comprising ethics clearance and consent by participants were maintained.

Chapter four outlined the profiles of participants, and through considerations of ethical behaviour and privacy, allocated of codes and pseudonyms for the participants. Study findings and discussions of the research questions were also discussed in this chapter. The detailed questions underpinning the study are as follows:

1. How does the community college use the community partnership approach as a strategy for quality service learning?

2. In what ways does the selected community college engage with the local communities in developing its programmes?

3. What skills are needed to better manage the quality service-learning partnerships at the college and to achieve better outcomes in terms of building and maintaining such partnerships?

In chapter four, I went over the results of data analysis once more. Three overarching themes that arose from the data were used to present the findings, precisely: Creation of college partnerships for quality service learning, college community engagements for responsive programmes and improvement of service-learning partnerships. Section 4.3 of Chapter Four of this study presents the detailed findings, while Chapter Five summarises the findings.

5.3 LEARNINGS FROM THE FINDINGS

The following section summarises and the findings and draws conclusions on the study based on the primary findings and will be referenced according to the extent to which they have responded to the aforementioned questions.

5.3.1 Community College Using the Community Partnership Approach as a Strategy for Quality – Service Learning.

The key learning was that the service-learning partnership were planned differently between the centres and the college management which showed a lack of an integrated strategy and plan for creation of partnerships between centres and the college partnership unit. In this study it was learned that the evidence in the approach presents a clash in the implementation of the independent plans by the college and the centres. As a result, the centres concentrate more on their own created partnerships and the college monitors and concentrates on the implementation of their created partnerships. This approach goes against the principles of transformational leadership theory which advocates for best practices of communication and common planning. The efficiency in the creation, coordination and approach to quality service learning can only be achieved through the coherent, structural strategy that respond to the same objectives between the college and its community learning centres. The service- learning partnerships provide opportunities for learning communities to share benefits and respond to communities' economic needs through shared goals and experiential learning. The empowerment of lecturers in the field of professional and formal partnership creation with community stakeholders is critical in ensuring that the partnerships contribute to professional

development of lecturers and centre managers for sustainable centre community partnership initiatives. This will again ensure that the college has a buy- in in the activities of the centre created partnerships and stimulate reciprocity between the college and the CLCs.

Decision making in the college-community partnerships was primarily driven by transversed working relations by the college project managers and community learning centre managers rather than the parallel approach which embodies aligned strategic approach. Participating in this study gave the case study centres a forum to express their opinions about their conditions and provide suitable possible solutions. I have again learned from the findings that despite limited resources the centres generally associate themselves with good quality partnerships with their communities and as such they want to be supported and capacitated both academically and professionally.

5.3.1.1 Conclusions 5.3.2.1 below has the same title, why?

Based on these findings I have learned that the exercise of creating college-community learning partnerships should be a joint responsibility of the college academic and partnership unit, the community learning centre managers, and lecturers as well as the community members and different structures of communities being served by the centres. The partnership unit need to develop an operational strategy that fosters an atmosphere of sharing support, training, and open access to information between them and centre managers and lecturers in community engagement and creation of service-learning partnerships for quality learning. This will cultivate a shared understanding on the annual performance plan and frameworks the college partnership unit has for learning centres with all stakeholders entrusted with the implementation of learning partnerships including the managers and lecturers in centres, and it promotes inclusivity. I further established that the partnership unit structure is not supportive of the centre created community learning partnerships. There is a need to address this weak disposition to ensure a holistic realisation of the CET policy mandate to create partnerships with community partners for funding, responsive programmes and the growth and sustainability of the community learning centres. Mbatha (2022), argues that weak support by the CET leaders in the area of marketing and partnership of this college is the omission of "impact of social change" as a measure of success for the CET college model.

5.3.2 College Engagements with Local Communities in Creating its Programmes.

The learnings from the study findings are that centres used a one-on-one stakeholder engagements approach to create quality service-learning partnerships within their communities. This approach, however, would be impinged by lack of effective communication resources, learner teacher support materials (LTSM), and incapacity to forge formal contracts caused by lack of training. Ineffective communication threatens the coordination, and full success of the partnerships. Inadequate communication impacts negatively on goal setting, understanding and execution of tasks. For example, the evidence suggests that the college does not communicate their centre strategic partnership plans with the concerned centres which may include sourcing of funded external centre partnerships. The college partnership unit plans and communicate with external stakeholders and can source funding on behalf of the centres to support only their created funded projects. The centre created partnerships are not supported by the college whereas they are community based and centres can only engage partners for non-formal partnerships that are not bound to tangible outputs. This lack of support reflects badly on the centres within the communities they serve as it leaves knowledge gaps and clarity on partnership contracts especially the mobilisation of resources capacity. It has again been found that community learning centres and lecturers are not supported with communication tools for more ease of engagements, which results in lecturers using their own money to do the centre and college work. This attribute to go above and beyond the challenges of lack of resources and volunteer to personally make contributions demonstrate a character of selflessness and motivation to achieve a successful end goal for their communities and is synonymous to element of idealised influence. In the case-study centres the evidence demonstrate a lack of communication and coordination between the college and the centres. Transformational leadership theory advocates for a more inclusive and engaging forms of communication for which this challenge can be addressed. This approach will ensure that all project deliverables are jointly implemented, monitored and where there is lack of resources, the college office, centres, and stakeholders are timeously aware.

5.3.2.1 Conclusions

The centralisation of formal community engagements by the college to a few individuals is unworkable as it hampers on the progress and the realisation of the CET policy mandate to

have centres placed within the communities for the creation of a more inclusive and responsive community-based learning through partnerships. To address the observed communication challenge in the community-college partnership engagements, the college must adopt a more inclusive and engaging forms of communication. This includes the partnership unit of the college empowering the centre managers with communication especially writing skills and delegating the power to form the formal partnerships including the funded partnerships to centre managers. The centre managers and lecturers are pivotal in playing an intermediary and oversite management role between the college, community external and internal stakeholder and may largely contribute to the well-functioning of administrative tasks if well supported by the college. The college must provide the centre lecturers tasked especially with community engagement and who are the planners and coordinators and implementers of community-centre learning partnerships with enough and relevant LTSM resources like the digitised communication systems. Rationally, this means procuring information and communication technologies (ICT) tools such as cellular phones, computer gadgets that are supported with data and airtime to enable instantaneous interactions and sharing of vital information.

5.3.3 Improvement of Service-Learning Partnerships

The findings indicate that there is no developed clear implementable programme of empowering the centre managers and the lecturers on drafting and understanding the process formalising centre-community partnerships for service-learning. The key learning from the findings is that there is no broad understanding by the centre managers and lecturers on how to formally construct, implement, monitor, and record the centre created partnerships. This is again aggravated by the fact that some lecturers in the centres are underqualified to be lecturers as they do not hold a minimum of NQF L6 qualification and have not been trained to teach, facilitate nor manage community learning centres. Therefore, there is no full understanding on the management roles and tangible expectations of partnerships. Managing community partnerships requires a technical, human, and cognitive skill set entailing bargaining and interpersonal influence (Mestry, 2017). Institutional learning community partnerships thrive in reciprocity where the learning institution provides the learning insights and a demonstrated capacity in offering the relevant programmes whilst the community provide insights in the place-based assets to utilise in the process of service learning. Myende, (214) argues that school-community partnerships are only evaluated on the success of academic improvement

and addressing other societal issues within the communities whereas the factors of partnership management, resource allocation, partnership interpersonal skills and communication are regarded as secondary to the success of partnership. This differentiated understanding of the factor is crucial to address. The evidence from the findings again suggest that the centre managers lack capacity nor the training in financial management to be able to manage public funds in centres, this is the function given only to the college central office. The general expectation in the sphere of the institutions of higher learning is that they are well versed in their specific offerings. This is intensified by the legal mandate from the CET Act and the Policy on CET to create partnerships with local and community stakeholders for responsive education. This creates an impression to the communities and the public that the skill and the resources for implementation are accessible. Formal partnerships require a demonstrated understanding of the contractual terms, conditions and clearly defined and crafted implementation with deliverables and timelines (Rhodes, 2022).

5.3.3.1 Conclusions???

Distribution of power with different stakeholders such as lecturers, centre managers, community stakeholders and the college management is crucial if college-community partnerships are to flourish. Leadership role in community learning centres particularly for centre managers must be accentuated for the success of centre partnerships. A strong leadership and management influence is needed if transformation, democracy, and responsive community development through long life learning is to succeed and be effective. The college ought to start implementing training initiatives that will ensure competence of lecturers through relevant qualifications for the sector and encourage and enable lecturers to actively engage in centre decision-making. To uphold the dignity and the mandate of the institution the case study CET college must devise a strategy to decentralise the LTSM funding allocations to the centres and empower centre managers with financial management training for accountability. This will guarantee that centre managers support the activities of the partnerships established by the institution, foster accountability, and enhance their competence with respect to service-learning partnerships. In this case, the CLCs will benefit from authentic sponsorship and formation of partnerships that are binding and enhance the capacity of the centres and community improvement. Myende, (2014); and Eloff and Ebersohn, (2001) draws the attention of the need for reflection in management of service-learning partnerships with the strategic plan of the

centre-community partnership results. Properly formalised partnerships record the steps and the mission and objectives that can always be revisited to show the impact on the training process and the overall management of the partnership. There is still a need to improve the college-centre approach of acquiring and managing the college learning partnerships. Therefore, the college project unit must devise a strategy to forming relationships between them and the centres and the communities in which they serve instead of operating as an independent component.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's recommendations are presented in the following section. These recommendations are based on the conclusions drawn from the findings and they include recommendations for practice, funding model, and research.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Practice

Given the conclusions that centre managers in the case study community learning centres lack capacity and skill to forge and manage centre-community formal partnerships. It is recommended that a training intervention programmes in a form of workshops, short business and leadership courses, mentorships and seminars must be implemented on the application, creation, and management of formal and funded service-learning partnerships for all centre managers. While the college partnership unit is in control is the head of the partnership's creation and management for the college centres, the unit should extend the management role to the centre managers in their capacity as leaders in the community education and are directly involve with the community stakeholders. The capacity programmes must be all-inclusive and informed by contextual circumstances of the target communities and different kind of stakeholders, including the wholesale retail sector, inter-governmental departments and enterprises, construction and private industries that have an influence in communities. The holistic collective effort in community learning centre training intervention must encompass all stakeholders in all levels of engagements such as planning, administration, coordination, and process of partnership management. It is hoped that should all centre improvement interventions include all participants and implementors, then the quality of service- learning

and community engagements will be enhanced. The rounded approach in college-community and learning centres engagements will ensure support into college created partnership programmes and clarity and commitment to their roles and responsibility and improve accountability. The application of a holistic system serves as a model shift from transversal order of working to a more parallel system between the college and community learning centres for quality responsive service-learning partnerships. In a collective system the CET college and the communities will understand themselves as corresponding stakeholders in the college-community partnership instead of isolated units. This approach has a potential to restore and improve the attitude of individualism and reinforce the purpose of quality responsive learning. In addition to helping enhance collaborations, the approach will play a major role in efforts to leverage the abilities and expertise of community participants.

5.4.2 Funding System for Community Learning Centres

The study notably found that the case study centres lacked LTSM resources to effortlessly do community engagements and reach all potential partners for initiating responsive programmes that have identified as a need within their communities. This is because procurement processes are centralised to the one college head office for the whole province which hampers on the targeted timelines for a service-learning project thereby affects the quality of learning in centres. Therefore, the current and centralised funding model for the CET college has been found to be unworkable. It is thus recommended that the CET college needs to review its standard practice for CLC funding norms in respect of centre sourced funding. CLCs must be empowered and allowed to enter contracts with financial gains and centre managers be trained on financial management and reporting. This will enable the CLCs to cover the costs for community engagements exercise, required LTSM the centre urgently needs and allow the centre managers to be creative with the monies they receive for fast responsive solutions that enhances quality learning. Through this recommendation the centre managers will not wait longer periods for college procurement processes to buy their centre-community partnerships pressing support resources. As a result, centre managers will have more authority to use the funds to address issues that are relevant to the context of centre operations.

5.4.3 Recommendations for CET College Learning Partnerships Management

This study intended to contribute to the understanding of creating and management of service -learning partnerships using the transformational leadership theory and its relevance to the college-community skills development. The broad picture that emerged from this study was that the creation of community-college learning partnerships in a case study CET college and its' community learning centres is not systemically integrated and thus lacks coordination and proper functionality. The National Policy on CET makes provision for the creation of partnerships in CET colleges but places no key regulatory approaches to follow in this exercise. This study makes a recommendation for the college to adopt a theory of change management in the perspective of partnership creation and administration. Although the study acknowledges the contribution of transformational leadership in promoting a collaborative approach to developing and managing college-community service-learning partnerships, its inadequacy is that it is heavily reliant on the idealised influence and motivational status of the leader as a catalyst of change in contrast to change being a shared responsibility. By distinction the theory for organisational change is centred on creating and communicating a clear vision and providing relevant training (Mbatha, 2022). Thus, to support transformation and quality improvement in the creation and management of service-learning partnerships at this college, this study recommends the concept of change management. The theory of change management is appropriate and applicable, especially when considering the pressure that is subsequently placed on the community colleges to partner and offer relevant responsive education and training, particularly for the managers who are positioned to drive these goals and expectations. The consequence is that organisational change is linked to leadership as it embraces change and reinforcement of change as and when necessary (Mbatha, 2022). Lester (2020) offered specific steps to pursue in addition to four evidence-based strategies for managing change in community colleges. Developing an intentional transformation strategy with a set of goals and tasks is part of this. openness about the involvement of all relevant parties in decision-making, guaranteeing responsibility for the plan's declared objectives, and incorporating the college's mission and values into every project. These values complemented with the elements of transformational leadership theory are fundamental in approaching and bringing together all relevant actors in a college-community engagement to leverage an array of expertise, talents, and resources for quality service-learning in a constructive method for challenges to build consensus and lasting solutions. Primarily, the study has emphasised the importance of interconnectedness amongst the leaders of both the college, and the community, which is the brandmark of community education and responsiveness. The study reveals that the case study

CET college is embodied with divisions, lack of confidence and lack of resources which leads to unsatisfactory learning outcomes. Emphasising change from transversal management to collectivism, would instil a culture of effectiveness and improvement in the creation and management of learning partnerships. A notable strength in change management is that it fosters a collaborative approach to college-community service-learning initiatives rather than conservative approaches that are sometimes distant and disconnected from the actors.

5.4.4 Recommendations for Research

I recommend that a further study be conducted to explore the perspectives of more participants and more learning centres of the CET college on the creation and management of learning partnerships in communities. The study methodology should be quantitative or mixed method to allow for larger population data generation and analysis. Such research ought to be able to extract the opinions of other CLCs, centre managers, lecturers, students, and partnering of stakeholders that my study was able to include. The views of a large-scale sample I believe will provide a broader insight and gather more possible solutions that will enhance the relations of the college, communities, and the community partners for better community responsive learning initiatives. It should be interesting to get the voices of the students who are enrolled in the college service-learning initiatives and the partnering stakeholders who are mentoring them for balanced views. While the task of creating and managing service- learning partnerships within the community college learning centres is not unique, rather the results can be related in other centres beyond the framework of the case study centres. If more community learning centres could be explored using the same lens, I believe the findings will be demonstrated as similar with this study.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

[redacted]

Marianhill Park

Pinetown

3610

To: The Prospective Participant

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

My name is Nomalanga Ntokozo Nsele. Currently, I am a master's degree student in the Education Leadership, Management and Policy Discipline at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. The title of my study is "Exploring the Approaches of a Community Education and Training College in Creating and Managing Community Partnerships for Quality Service Learning".

The study will be focus on the already existing initiatives the CET college has in the province. I therefore hereby request your participation in this study. You were identified to participate in this study because you directly participated in the initiative of partnerships in the college. Participation in this study entails a one-on-one interviews session with me I plan the session to last for not more than thirty minutes.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. You shall be free to withdraw your participation at any time should you so wish, and there shall be no negative consequences on you for doing so. With your permission, the interview will be recorded.

Should you agree to participate in the study you will be guaranteed all your rights as a participant. These include the following:

• The right to pull out from the study at any point should you feel uncomfortable or for any other reason,

• To remain anonymous in the final product of the study,

• Not to participate in the study without any prejudice.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, or if you are concerned about any aspect of the study or the researcher then you may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

You are at liberty again to contact my supervisor, Professor Vitalis Chikoko, who can be contacted on (tel) 0312602639… or at (email) chikokov@ukzn.ac.za at the school of Education at UKZN.

[redacted]

Thanking you in advance

Yours faithfully

_____

Nomalanga N. Nsele

If you are willing to participate in the study, please sign the declaration below:

APPENDIX B: DECLARATION FORM

I ……. hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose, and procedure for the study: Exploring the Approaches of a Community Education and Training College in Creating and Managing Community Partnerships for Quality Service Learning conducted by Nomalanga Nsele.

I have also received, read, and understood the written information about the study. I understood everything that was explained to me, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I know that my participation is voluntary and understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I have been assured that my real name will not be revealed during and after the study. I will be given a false name.

I was informed that interviews will be recorded using a recording devise. The interview will be audio recorded using a relevant device. Please tick in the boxes below to indicate whether you agree to the audio recording of the interview.

I hereby provide consent to audio record the interview:

YES

NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: COLLEGE PARTNERSHIPS MANAGERS

Section A

Biographical information of the participant

1.Title: Ms/Mr, Dr, Professor: ----------

2. What is your occupation: ----------

3. What does your work entail in the CET College: ----------

4. How long have you been in this current position: ----------

5. What is your place of work: ----------

Section B

1. **CREATION OF COLLEGE COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS**

1.1 What type of service-learning partnership has this College created with the communities to assist the centres' quality of learning (SETA, Work Intergrated Learning, Learnerships, Community Programmes).

1.2 How are the main activities of a service-learning partnership planned and implemented? (Creation of Service Level Agreements, Memorandum of Understanding, Project Implementation Plans, Communication).

1.3 Describe how the CET College and partnering stakeholders are identified to be part of service-learning partnership?

1.4 How does the college ensure effective management and leadership of college created learning partnerships? (Ways of sustainability, Engagements, Cost effectiveness)

1.5 As the college relations leader how do you view the initiatives of service learning, has it been able to achieve the expected outcomes for the college's performance targets? (What are those outcomes and highlights of such initiatives?).

2. **COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMES**

2.1 How do you forge community and stakeholder collaborations to ensure the centres administer community responsive programmes (Source Funding Support, Engagements with possible stakeholders etc).

2.2 How has the college supported the community learning centres in terms of skills development to ensure successful engagements and partnerships with the communities. (Training of centre managers and lecturers).

2.3 What can you say about the methods used by community learning centres to engage with communities for collaborative efforts? (Alignment to the methods used by the college at the management level).

3. **SKILLS REQUIRED FOR CREATION OF QUALITY SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS**

3.1 What specific skills do you feel is required by the CET college partnerships managers to better manage college community partnerships?

3.2 In what ways do these skills gaps impact the functionality or quality of the service-learning partnerships in a college you manage?

3.4 As the principal management of all college community learning partnerships, how has the college developed itself and those working under the partnership's unit to effectively create and manage quality community learning partnerships? (Training interventions by the college)

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CENTRE MANAGERS

Section A

Biographical information of the participant

1.Title: Ms/Mr, Dr, Professor: ----------

2. What is your occupation: ----------

3. What does your work entail in the CET College: ----------

4. How long have you been in this current position: ----------

5. What is your place of work: ----------

Section B

1. **CREATION OF COLLEGE COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING**

1.1What type of service-learning partnership has this centre created with the community

(SETA, Work Intergrated Learning, Learnerships, Community Programmes).

1.2 What approaches or strategies have you seen to be most effective in developing service learning.

partnerships with community stakeholders (Proposals, Profitability, Charity, Politics etc.).

1.3 As the centre manager how do you view the initiatives of service learning, has it been able to achieve the expected outcomes for the centre's performance targets?

1.4 What do you perceive as possible threats for the success of such initiatives and how might these be avoided? (Lack of resources, Lack of training,)

1.5 In what ways do these gaps impact the functionality or quality of the service learning in a centre you manage?

2. **COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMES**

2.1 How do you organise community engagements to ensure the centre creates community college partnerships. (Steps leading to the community engagements).

2.2 From your experience, what are the critical supportive elements for a successful community engagement when initiating quality community responsive programmes. (Funding, Similar interests, Sharing of resources).

2.3 Can you share any experiences or observation about methods used in the college community collaborative efforts (Share the key issues that need consideration when collaborating for quality service learning)

3. SKILLS REQUIRED FOR CREATION OF QUALITY SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 What are the key competencies you find essential for managing and leading a CET service-learning partnership? (Communication skills, Capacity to source funding, Idealised Influence).

3.2 How do you rate your own level of proficiency in each of the core competencies you've identified as essential?

3.3 What areas of development would you require to heighten your level of proficiency in the areas you've identified as essential?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: LECTURERS

Section A

Biographical information of the participant

1.Title: Ms/Mr, Dr, Professor: ----------

2. What is your occupation: ----------

3. What does your work entail in the CET College: ----------

4. How long have you been in this current position: ----------

5. What is your place of work: ----------

Section B

1. CREATION OF COLLEGE COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

1.1 As a lecturer, what role do you play in the creation of learning partnerships at your centre (Are you part of consultations, planning and initiation).

1.2 How has the college prepared or trained you into creating successful service-learning partnerships with communities.

1.3 How does the service-learning experience from your centre enhance your professional skills? (Competency, mentorship, and flexibility of service learning)

2. COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMES

2.1 What programme/s are you teaching in the centre?

2.2 How does the programme/s fully respond with the community learning needs?

2.3 How has the college assisted you in aligning your programmes curricular with community-based services? (Provision of relevant LTSM, Facilitation methods training etc).

3. SKILLS REQUIRED FOR CREATION OF QUALITY SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

3.1 What skills development and resources do you think should be added to support the service-learning experience for the lecturers in the centre?

3.2 In what ways is your involvement with the CET college service-learning programme challenging? (Lack of college or community resources, Misunderstandings of the needs partners or learners needs, Lack of proper training).

3.3 What positive aspects of your facilitation skills may be due to service-learning experience?