



Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College: Narratives of five Campus Management Team members

By

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DECLARATION

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Signed: 
Dr Nokukhanya Ndlovu

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To God, my Creator. Great is Thy faithfulness, Oh Lord my Father! There is no shadow of turning with Thee. All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in education is inherently complex, and this complexity is heightened for leaders operating in rural contexts. Modern educational institutions demand the juggling of multiple responsibilities alongside high levels of accountability. This challenge is particularly pronounced in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, where campus management teams (CMTs) are tasked with navigating the intricate demands of managing and leading campuses. Often, these teams operate with limited leadership experience and formal training. These challenges are further compounded when CMT members are responsible for leading TVET colleges situated in rural areas, where resource constraints and unique community dynamics add additional layers of complexity to their roles. This study explored CMT members' lived experiences of leading teaching and learning in a rural TVET context through the theoretical lens of Hallinger's Leadership for Learning model. It aimed to understand how CMT members lead in this setting, how they enact leadership, and the factors that enable or constrain them. The study also examined the influence of rurality on their leadership practices. Five CMT members from a rural TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal were selected purposively. Using narrative inquiry, which leverages storytelling to capture the complexity of human experience, collage inquiry was used for data generation to enrich the understanding of their lived realities. The thematic analysis revealed seventeen themes, highlighting the complex and multifaceted nature of leadership among CMT members in rural TVET contexts. The findings show that CMT members employ a blend of managerial and leadership approaches, including planning, communication, teamwork, and collaboration, to lead teaching and learning effectively. Despite these efforts, CMT members face significant challenges, many of which are systemic and beyond their immediate control. However, the study also identified enabling factors, such as the personal fulfilment derived from witnessing the positive outcomes of their efforts. Furthermore, the rural context plays a pivotal role in shaping leadership practices. CMT members navigate various contextual challenges, such as limited resources, by leveraging their contextual literacy – a deep understanding of their unique environment. This contextual literacy enhances their awareness and informs their leadership strategies, enabling them to adapt and respond effectively to the complexities of leading a rural campus.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMT	Campus Management Team
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
POA	Portfolio of Assessments
PCAM	Public Colleges Administrative Measures
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PPN	Post Provisioning Norms
R191	REPORT 191
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SMT	Senior Management Team
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background of the study

In South Africa, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector falls under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET was established in 2009 to oversee and manage the restructuring of the post-school education and training sector (DHET, 2013). This restructuring involved the merger of various entities, including the Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, which were subsequently, renamed TVET Colleges (DHET, 2013). The merging of FET colleges was one way to ensure coordination, consistency, and quality within this sector (DHET, 2009).

The TVET college sector is of paramount significance in South Africa. The sector's mandate is to advance vocational education and training (DHET, 2020) with an aim to inspire more students to pursue post-secondary education and training options in the TVET sector and to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge for the workforce (DHET, 2013). TVET thus play a vital role in supporting economic growth and development by addressing the skills gap in the job market (Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2021).

Although TVET colleges fall under the DHET ministry, there is still a lack of policy regarding TVET leadership at the campus level (DHET, 2022). At the campus level, the responsibility of leading teaching and learning is assigned to the Campus Management Team (CMT). In the absence of a clear policy framework citing the roles and responsibilities of this structure, CMT members lean on the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), which outline the leadership functions of the school management team (DBE, 2016). In recent years strides have however, been made towards a draft policy on Public Colleges Administrative Measures (PCAM) (DHET, 2022). However, this is still pending adoption but it remains a significant policy document, as it is the only one that explicitly outlines the minimum requirements, roles, responsibilities, and workload for CMT members.

While the lack of a clear policy directive persists, the CMT remains the core leadership structure at the campus level. CMT is part of the college middle management level. This management structure comprises multiple stakeholders, including the campus manager, heads of departments

(HODs) and senior lecturers for programmes offered. The minimum requirements for promotion to this structure are three to five years of teaching experience and familiarity with management systems, according to the draft PCAM (DHET, 2022). It is worth noting that prior leadership qualifications and experience are not a requirement for CMT members.

The roles and responsibilities of the CMT are usually department-based, ranging from administrative, extracurricular, and co-curricular tasks, along with overseeing relevant staff and students, and the day-to-day operations of the campus (DHET, 2022). Additionally, CMT members are responsible for ensuring quality teaching and learning and creating a supportive environment for it to thrive (Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016). Consequently, the CMT is accountable for student success on their campus. This is not surprising because leaders are held accountable and responsible for student results (Daniëls et al., 2019) and there is a vast amount of scholarship (Bush, 2020; Day et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020) that suggests that leadership impacts on student outcomes. According to Daniëls et al. (2019), effective leaders can improve student outcomes through effective leadership practices.

According to Badenhorst and Radile (2018), a properly functioning post-school vocational education system is vital to address social issues, such as inequality and poverty; however, in South Africa, this system is faced with many complexities. While these are vast, Badenhorst and Radile (2018) have found that two of the most pressing matters are poor performance and poor leadership. This poor performance is not consistent with the intention of the South African government to make TVET colleges leading institutions of choice (Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2021). Furthermore, poor academic performance is often linked to the students' environment, particularly in rural areas marked by numerous social challenges (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Consequently, TVET leaders face scrutiny and criticism because of poor student performance (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018).

While the issue of poor student performance is rife across all colleges in the sector, in rural TVET colleges this challenge is compounded. Leithwood et al. (2020) assert that context influences leadership. According to Hallinger (2018), certain contextual factors may improve or depress student outcomes. In rural contexts, it has been found that some contextual factors negatively impact teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2018). These include limited access to resources, isolation, and socioeconomic disparities (Molestane, 2012). These contextual factors present unique challenges for educational leaders, making the task of leading in rural contexts more

complex (Moletsane, 2012). Given the intersection of leadership and context, this study explored the lived experiences of CMT members in leading teaching and learning in a TVET campus located in a rural context.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In South Africa, a developing country grappling with high unemployment rates and escalating inflation, education is seen as a beacon of hope amidst social and economic challenges (Buthelezi, 2018). TVET colleges are at the forefront, positioned to alleviate unemployment and poverty by equipping students with practical skills for the workforce (DHET, 2013). According to Gallie et al. (2018), they should be providing students with real-world knowledge and skills that apply to the workplace. Currently, most TVET colleges struggle with student performance, often falling below expectations (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Khanyangale & Sibanda, 2021). Issues such as low student enrolment and high dropout rates are prevalent across many TVET colleges nationwide (Gaffoor & Bijl, 2019; Robertson & Frick, 2018). In rural TVET colleges, challenges are worsened by the rural context, which includes limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and limited opportunities (Trahar et al., 2020). These conditions amplify the existing difficulties faced by TVET colleges nationwide, making it harder to provide quality education and to prepare graduates for employment (Gaffoor & Bijl, 2019). TVET college leadership should ensure that it maintains a high-performance standard and that the quality of teaching and learning is maintained (Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016). While this is their mandate, there are currently no sector-specific policy guidelines for CMT members who are charged with leading teaching and learning at the campus level. Therefore, they function without a proper framework. However, it has been noted that amongst other things, these challenges are often attributed to poor leadership and inadequate management structures (Sithole et al., 2019; Zulu & Mutereki, 2019). Relating to leadership in the sector, it has been cited that TVET colleges are currently unable to provide effective education and training to students, partly because of a lack of quality leadership (Robertson & Frick, 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to unearth the lived experiences of the CMT members leading teaching and learning in rural TVET campuses.

1.3 Key Research Puzzles

In narrative inquiry, research questions are referred to as research puzzles (Clandinin, 2013). According to Clandinin (2013), the questions in this methodology revolve around a specific curiosity or puzzle that delves into nuanced and intricate aspects of human experience. The term puzzle aptly captures the multifaceted and complex landscape of human experiences explored in this study. The following puzzles guided my study:

Main Research Puzzle:

What are the experiences of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning in a rural TVET campus?

Sub-research Puzzles:

1.4.1 How do the CMT members lead teaching and learning in a rural TVET college campus?

1.4.2 What factors enable or constrain the leadership of CMT members in leading teaching and learning at a rural TVET college campus?

1.4.3 How does the context of rurality influence the leadership of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning?

1.4 Justifications for the study

Following a narrative inquiry methodology, the rationale is called the justification and it encompasses personal, practical, and theoretical justifications for conducting this study (Clandinin et al., 2015). Firstly, by personal justification, I mean that I am looking at my interest, personal connection to or experience with the study (Clandinin et al., 2015). Here I show how I have been motivated to look into the chosen issue, by my personal history or background.

Secondly, justification for practical use according to Clandinin et al. (2015) speaks to the real-world applications of the study. It talks about how the study might apply to problems or circumstances in the real world and how relevant it is. Moreover, these scholars posit that the application of study findings to enhance procedures, regulations, or initiatives in a particular setting, like education, may be the practical basis for narrative inquiry.

Lastly, the theoretical justification helps to direct the research (Clandinin et al., 2015). It describes how the research expands upon or adds to pre-existing theories, conceptions, or understandings in a specific discipline (Clandinin et al., 2015). The theoretical rationale for narrative inquiry may focus on how the research advances our understanding of storytelling, or knowledge construction (Clandinin et al., 2015). Below are the justifications for this study.

1.4.1 Personal justification

Growing up in a rural area, I intimately understand the challenges that rural schools face. I saw first-hand the struggles with limited funding, the challenges of accessing quality education, and the persistent shortage of teachers. It was disheartening to watch peers, brimming with potential, held back by their backgrounds and social circumstances, unable to realise their dreams due to a lack of opportunities or support. As I matured and embarked on my teaching journey at a rural TVET college, my curiosity deepened. I began to wonder how the same contextual challenges I had experienced and observed in my childhood influenced and affected CMT members and how these challenges shaped their leadership and their approach to guiding teaching and learning in such environments. This personal background fuelled my interest in understanding the intricacies of leadership within rural educational settings.

1.4.2 Practical justifications

I am a member of the CMT in a rural TVET campus. We have a relatively large campus with approximately 70 staff members across various instructional programmes, serving an annual enrolment of 1,200 to 1,800 students. Over the past nine years, having served seven years as senior lecturer and two years as an HOD, each CMT member has supervised an average of 27 lecturing staff across five programmes, each with over 700 students. In this role, I grapple with challenges like understaffing, unqualified lecturers, tight deadlines, poor attendance from both staff and students and limited infrastructure and technology, all of which impact the quality of education. This workload hampers our ability to monitor classes, attendance, and performance effectively, allowing some individuals to evade accountability.

The rural setting amplifies difficulties in student engagement and retention because of socioeconomic disparities and unique cultural factors (Nzembe, 2018). Additionally, our CMT structure faces shortcomings, including a lack of senior lecturers and HODs as per Post Provision

Norms (PPN), leading to management inefficiencies. Consequently, we often find ourselves managing tasks for compliance rather than focusing on improving teaching and learning outcomes. This approach has caused dissatisfaction among students and staff alike. Discussions with CMT members from my college and sister colleges confirm these shared concerns. These experiences, and more, have fuelled my curiosity to understand the experiences of other CMT members leading rural campuses.

1.4.3 Theoretical justifications

While there are studies on leadership and management in TVET colleges, such as those by Robertson & Frick (2018) and Mestry (2016), most research has primarily concentrated on topics like student retention, attrition, and poor performance (Khanyangale & Sibanda, 2021; Nzembe, 2018; Zulu & Mutereki, 2019). Studies specifically on CMT members tend to focus on campus managers and their leadership roles and development (Balkrishen, 2019; Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016). Basi (2021) looked at CMT's successful leadership in a rural context while Dlamini (2021) looked at management efficiency where context was not a factor. Even fewer studies have used self-reflexive methodologies. Sithole (2019) focused on the context of a pandemic. This research is timely, given the high prevalence of TVET colleges in such contexts. This study presents an opportunity to contribute to the scarce body of knowledge and illuminate the intersectional experiences of CMTs leading campuses in a rural context.

1.5 Clarification of key concepts

There are two main concepts in this study that require conceptualisation which are leadership and rurality. Below I provide definitions of these key concepts.

1.5.1 Leadership

Leadership is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that has been defined and interpreted in various ways across different contexts. Northouse (2012) defines leadership as the act of guiding others toward shared objectives, while Amanchukwu et al. (2015) view it as the process of influencing a group to achieve a common goal. Similarly, Bush (2007) emphasises that leadership involves influencing people through clear values and beliefs to drive an organisation toward its vision. In essence, leadership encompasses the ability to inspire, influence, and guide individuals and groups

toward achieving shared goals, with an emphasis on aligning actions with overarching values and objectives.

1.5.2 Rurality

Rurality is a complex and multifaceted concept that is challenging to define due to the diverse and dynamic nature of rural contexts globally (Leibowitz, 2017). For this study, rurality is understood within the South African context, where it is influenced by factors such as population size, density, and geographic isolation (Ndofirepi & Masinire, 2020). In South Africa, rural areas are typically characterised by limited access to basic services, including electricity, clean water, and sanitation (Statistics South Africa, 2016). These areas also face significant challenges, such as social exclusion, inadequate service delivery, and slower economic growth (Hlalele, 2014; Ndofirepi & Masinire, 2020). These conditions contribute to persistent inequalities, impacting the lives and opportunities of a substantial portion of the South African population. This conceptualisation acknowledges rurality as not merely a geographic descriptor but a socio-economic condition that shapes the lived experiences of individuals and communities. It provides a critical lens for understanding the unique challenges faced by leaders operating in these contexts, particularly within the education sector.

1.6 The structure of the study

This study comprises six chapters structured in the following manner:

Chapter One presents the introduction, outlining the background, justification objectives, and research puzzles that guided the study.

Chapter Two presents a literature review focused on leading teaching and learning in a rural TVET campus. The review commences with an overview of the complexities of the TVET sector in South Africa, and then it addresses challenges and practices associated with leading teaching and learning. Additionally, it examines how a rural context impacts CMT members' leadership enactment.

Chapter Three lays the groundwork for the study's phenomenon by introducing a relevant theoretical lens, offering a theoretical foundation.

Chapter Four is dedicated to detailing the research design and methodology employed in this study. The chosen research paradigm and methodological approach are justified in line with the literature. This chapter also outlines the data analysis process and ethical considerations, and it acknowledges the study's limitations.

Chapter Five undertakes data analysis and discussions through a collage method, presenting data thematically with seventeen identified themes. The discussion is linked to the literature and theoretical lens reviewed in Chapters Two and Three.

Finally, Chapter Six offers the summary, conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the study overview by discussing the study's background, the problem statement, and the research puzzles that guide this research. Additionally, it provided the justifications for the study on three levels: personal, professional, and theoretical. It came to a close with the structure of the dissertation, highlighting the key chapters. This section presents the literature review.

In this chapter, I first present a discussion highlighting an overview of the complexities of the TVET sector in South Africa. Secondly, I delve into the core practises of TVET leaders in leading teaching and learning. Following this, the chapter discusses the challenges of CMT members in leading teaching and learning in rural TVET campuses, it details the discussion and then elucidates the crossroads of leadership and the context of rurality. The chapter is brought to a close with a conclusion.

2.2 An overview of the complexities of the TVET sector in South Africa

Like most countries, the TVET sector in South Africa is important for its key role in helping the country with job creation and alleviating poverty (Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2021). To attain that, the sector has prioritised the provision of quality education to South Africans and training them for work (DHET, 2013). As a result, the sector is proliferating, attracting more and more young people nationwide. The sector currently consists of 50 TVET colleges with over 400,000 student enrolments (Zulu & Mutereko, 2020). Still, it plans to increase the number of enrolments even further as part of the National Development Plan (DHET, 2013). In working towards this goal, the South African government has prioritised this sector and increased its spending by billions of rand (Zulu & Mutereko, 2020).

Despite these efforts, the TVET sector is struggling with several issues that hinder it from achieving its goals. Research shows that the TVET sector is haunted by issues of poor management, unsupportive systems and processes on campuses, low enrolment, low pass rates and completion rates, high dropout rates, high absenteeism, issues of certification, a shortage of good lecturers, underqualified lecturing staff, lack of resources and poor facilities, all of which are

crippling its performance, and making it difficult for young people in South Africa to get jobs (Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2021; Robertson & Frick, 2018; Viljoen, 2020). These issues remain major concerns in the TVET sector, and their impact on teaching and learning is worrisome (Robertson & Frick, 2018).

Additionally, stakeholders' perceptions of TVET education often cast a negative shadow on the sector. They view TVET colleges as institutions for students who have dropped out of high school or failed to gain admission to universities (Malela & Gomba, 2016). These negative perceptions stem from various factors, including misunderstandings about the National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV) programmes by employers, a lack of workplace experience among graduates, and the overall poor image of TVET colleges (Malale & Gomba, 2016). As a result, stakeholders and students alike see TVET colleges as second-choice or second-best institutions (Mabueta, 2011), often referred to as "a road to nowhere" for those unable to access university education (Seamus & Papier, 2011, p. 15). This perception is reinforced by the low employment rate of TVET graduates compared to university graduates and the delays in issuing course certificates (Malale & Gomba, 2016).

According to Delubom et al. (2020), issues such as unsupportive systems and processes on campuses, high dropout rates, high absenteeism, a shortage of good lecturers, underqualified lecturing staff, lack of resources and poor facilities impact teaching and learning and how college management performs their duties. Mvimbe (2019) asserts that the CMT may wish to implement new projects, use different tools to monitor teaching and learning or create an environment that supports teaching and learning, but may not be able to do so as the issues of resources, infrastructure and lecturer capacity constrain them. Similarly, Balkrishen (2019) states that there are certain activities that CMT members cannot perform or expect from both lecturers and students because they know those activities require specific resources and infrastructure which they do not have. This means that teaching and learning is being conducted in environments that do not fully support it, which is a significant risk to students' success.

Viljoen (2020) adds that numerous TVET colleges' inadequate environments were identified as detrimental to the standard of instruction and training provided. The downsides of this are that the lecturers have become less confident in their teaching and lesson delivery, and at the same time, students are not fully trained and equipped with skills for the workplace and, therefore, cannot

compete with students from other institutions for work placement and employment (Tlapana & Myeki, 2020). As a result, prospective students hesitate to enrol at TVET colleges because they fear they may not get employed after completing their studies (Tlapana & Myeki, 2020).

Locally, the status quo regarding the TVET sector is bleak. This is not consistent with the aims of the South African government to make TVETs institutions of choice (Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2021) and poses a risk to the sustainability of the sector. The following section discusses the core practises of CMT in a TVET college context.

2.3 Focusing on the instructional core: practises of TVET leaders in leading teaching and learning

This section explains in detail the leadership practices that shape the quality of teaching and learning and student achievement (Leithwood et al. 2020). This section includes the CMT's leadership role in using management functions such as planning and monitoring, creating a conducive teaching and learning environment and professional development of staff.

Successful leadership is often attributed to common practices that have been identified as key to achieving positive outcomes (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). However, it is important to recognise that there is no universal approach to leadership, as each leader's experience is shaped by their unique context (Day et al., 2020). Leaders encounter various challenges that require different responses, highlighting the need for adaptable leadership approaches (Day et al., 2020). Hallinger et al. (2020) emphasise that employing various practices can yield positive results in educational institutions, provided they are implemented under the right conditions.

This study focuses on the leadership practices of CMT members in leading teaching and learning in TVET colleges. Leading teaching and learning in these institutions is particularly challenging because of the myriad of issues facing the TVET sector, which are most acutely felt at the college level (Raban & Mayisela, 2022). Despite these challenges, CMT members are tasked with leading teaching and learning effectively. Therefore, understanding their specific leadership practices is crucial for this study. However, the literature reveals a gap in research focusing on the actual leadership practices. Most literature tends to discuss leadership styles (Badernhorst & Radile, 2018; Mvimbe, 2019) rather than practices, presenting a challenge for this study. To address this

gap, this study draws from a range of higher education studies, both locally and internationally, to inform its analysis of leadership practices in TVET colleges.

2.3.1 Planning

Planning is one of the most crucial functions in management. According to Anderson (2017), planning is a vital management function that involves setting objectives and determining the best course of action to achieve them. Kareska (2017) states that planning involves the systematic organisation of tasks, specifying who, what, and when to carry out different activities. Before managers undertake any task, it must first be meticulously planned, as their roles involve numerous responsibilities. Proper planning ensures that organisational goals are attainable and efficiently met (Kareska, 2017). In the context of TVET college campuses, planning involves developing comprehensive strategies for all aspects of teaching and learning.

As part of their core responsibilities, CMT members focus on the instructional core and utilise various approaches to lead effectively. In a local study by Basi (2021) focusing on the leadership practices of a thriving campus in a deprived rural context in KwaZulu-Natal, it was found that the CMT invested significant time and effort in proper planning and setting up systems. They planned for teaching and learning by creating viable class attendance timetables that cater to the diverse needs of students, allocating duties and workloads to lecturers and support staff, and ensuring that teaching resources and learner support materials were readily available (Basi, 2021).

Planning activities also encompass student placements, which is particularly significant in rural TVET colleges where some students register without adequate career guidance (Basi, 2021). CMT members in these campuses plan for student placement by carefully selecting, placing, and enrolling students into the most appropriate programmes (Basi, 2021). Hallinger (2018) and Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) emphasise the importance of the effective planning and administration of student placement and enrolment, arguing that proper student placement creates an environment conducive to academic achievement and fosters quality teaching and learning.

2.3.2 Monitoring

Monitoring also emerges as one of the ways CMT lead teaching and learning. Monitoring is about regularly assessing the performance of individuals and ensuring that teaching and learning activities meet quality standards (Murphy, 2019). Bush et al. (2019) state that monitoring is

multifaceted and can involve classroom observations, witnessing teachers in practice, and providing feedback. In Dlamini's (2021) study focusing on three senior lecturers in a KZN TVET college, the senior lecturers use classroom visits and observations to monitor practices. In Sithole's (2021) study during the pandemic, the CMT checked whether lecturers were maintaining their files and lesson plans, and staff attendance by managing absenteeism and sick leave. They also supervised the signing of attendance registers.

Additionally, CMT members monitor Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) by ensuring assessments meet the required standards (Viljoen, 2020). They verify the credibility of marking and moderation processes and accurately capture student marks. These activities help to maintain a high standard of quality teaching and learning. Similarly, Dlamini (2021) demonstrates that the CMT monitors and evaluates lecturers' performance by reviewing their Portfolio of Assessments (POA) files and utilising the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) to uphold teaching and learning standards.

Three local qualitative studies by Balkrishen (2019), Basi (2021), and Raban and Mayisela (2022) reveal that CMT members use instructional leadership to monitor teaching and learning, to achieve high student performance. They achieve this by being visible on campus, engaging with students and lecturers, and providing feedback on class visits. While monitoring is fundamental to their responsibilities, it presents challenges such as heavy workloads and limited time (Dlamini, 2021; Sithole, 2021).

Another leadership practice emerging from the literature on CMT is allowing staff to work without supervision. Research by Dlamini (2021), Basi (2021), Mvimbe (2019), and Nkai (2021) shows that some CMT members grant staff autonomy to work independently, which can have both positive and negative outcomes. According to Amanchukwu et al. (2015), this freedom can boost creativity, productivity, and job satisfaction. However, it can also lead to incomplete work and additional challenges if staff lack the necessary skills or time management abilities.

This practice of allowing staff to work without supervision is effective when leaders are dealing with well-experienced staff, provided they monitor them and give regular feedback (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Studies on CMT leadership have reported different outcomes with this approach. For instance, Basi (2021) reveals that CMT members who allowed staff to work independently without supervision achieved positive results. Conversely, Mvimbe (2019) and Nkai (2021) report that the

lack of supervision led to a chaotic environment, characterised by late submissions from lecturers, staff absenteeism, minimal work completed, and low productivity due to the absence of follow-up and direction from leaders.

These contrasting reports suggest that the same leadership practices can yield different outcomes depending on the context. This resonates with Hallinger et al.'s (2020) argument that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership. Leaders must understand and respond to the specific context in which they operate.

Additionally, Leithwood et al. (2020), in their recent and influential publication, *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*, argue that effective leadership is not about specific practices but about how leaders apply them, being responsive to their contexts rather than dictatorial. They suggest that effective leaders adapt their leadership style to the current situation while incorporating basic leadership practices, achieving and sustaining the desired results by being sensitive to context. This adaptability to context is crucial in promoting a positive learning environment and achieving overall success in teaching and learning.

2.3.3 Creating a conducive teaching and learning environment

One of the ways the CMT leads teaching and learning is by ensuring that the college site fosters a conducive teaching and learning environment that promotes quality teaching (Robertson & Frick, 2018). According to Balkrishen & Mestry (2016), since the CMT plays a vital role in student achievement, it is responsible for creating a learning culture that promotes academic excellence, an inviting, positive and supportive learning environment, and a conducive working environment for both students and staff. To achieve this, the CMT builds healthy relationships with students and lecturers, supporting them in both academic and social aspects, which in turn enhances performance (Dlamini 2021). Other studies (Basi, 2021; Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016), show that the CMT creates this type of environment by offering students support services like career guidance and extracurricular activities, to help them develop holistically. CMT members foster an environment that promotes students' overall achievement and well-being by attending to their personal and academic needs (Daniëls et al., 2019). Creating a conducive teaching and learning environment is important because student outcomes improve when teaching and learning occur in such favourable settings (Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016).

2.3.4 Professional development

In the context of leading teaching and learning, CMT members play a crucial role in facilitating the professional development of staff. Professional development is an ongoing process that aims to enhance the capabilities of educators through various educational and training opportunities (Avalos, 2010). This ensures that lecturers remain up to date with the latest teaching methods, technologies, and curriculum changes, ultimately improving the quality of education for students (Luft & Hewson, 2014).

Dlamini (2021) found that CMTs collaborate with groups of lecturers in both formal and informal settings to address educational issues. This collaboration involves regular meetings and workshops where lecturers can share experiences, discuss challenges, and develop new strategies for teaching and learning. Additionally, peer observations and mentoring programs were implemented, allowing experienced lecturers to support less experienced ones, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Dlamini, 2021).

One way that CMTs support lecturers is by helping them identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practices (Dlamini, 2021). This intervention addresses challenges and obstacles hindering lecturers from performing their duties effectively (Dlamini, 2021). By supporting lecturers in their professional development, CMTs aim to improve the standard of teaching and learning, ensuring that lecturers have the necessary abilities and information to perform their roles effectively (Luft & Hewson, 2014).

CMT members also strive to create a more conducive learning environment by recognising areas for growth and offering focused support to both lecturers and students (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). This approach promotes a positive learning environment and strengthens team relationships, contributing to improved student performance (Bardernhorst & Radile, 2018; Nkai, 2021).

The literature suggests that adopting shared leadership practices can further enhance professional development and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders, who are open and supportive, and involve stakeholders in decision-making, encourage staff professional development (Basi, 2021; Mvimbe, 2019; Nkai, 2021). When staff are engaged in decision-making processes and have the opportunity to contribute ideas, they are more likely to learn from

each other, perform better, and share best practices, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

2.4 Challenges of CMT members in leading teaching and learning in rural TVET campuses

Leaders in rural TVET colleges have varied experiences that shape their responses to different situations (Mack, 2010). This section delves into the experiences of CMT members in leading teaching and learning on rural campuses.

The TVET sector faces significant leadership issues. Research highlights various challenges that TVET leaders in South Africa encounter, making it difficult to fulfil their leadership roles (Balkrishen & Mestry, 2016; Basi, 2021; Mvimbe, 2019; Robertson & Frick, 2018). Common challenges include insufficient teaching and learning resources, a lack of professional development, excessive workloads, competing responsibilities, and a lack of support. Below, I discuss these challenges and their impact on leadership enactment.

2.4.1 Insufficient teaching and learning resources and infrastructure

Rural TVET colleges face significant challenges of insufficient resources and infrastructure for effective teaching and learning. Basi (2021), Dlamini (2021), and Sithole (2021) highlight the lack of adequate infrastructure, including small and overcrowded classrooms, insufficient office buildings, unreliable electricity, inadequate internet access, substandard library facilities, and under-equipped practical workshops and computer laboratories. These shortages result in insufficient contact hours and limited practical work exposure for students (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). The scarcity of resources and infrastructure profoundly impacts the quality of education and student outcomes in these institutions (Barrett et al., 2019).

Papier (2017) found that TVET colleges' Report 191 (R191) and NCV programmes consist of two components: a smaller theory component and a larger practical component. The theory can be taught in classrooms using basic resources like textbooks and workbooks. It provides a good foundation but does not prepare students for the workplace. The practical component, essential for workplace readiness, requires specialised materials, equipment, and specific venues such as computer labs, electrical workshops, kitchens and restaurants that meet industrial standards. However, most campuses lack these facilities (Papier, 2017). Studies in KwaZulu-Natal by Basi

(2021) and Dlamini (2021) reveal that many campuses have old, poorly maintained facilities unsuitable for practical lessons and assessments. This results in students gaining limited knowledge, performing poorly in national exams (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018), and ultimately being less employable (Akoobhai, 2023).

The lack of resources for teaching and learning has broader implications. Nzembe (2017) noted that the shortage of resources leads to frustration among students and staff, which can affect student morale (Buthelezi, 2018). In some cases, these frustrations result in student strikes that disrupt teaching and learning, leading to the loss of instructional time. Instructional time, described as an “opportunity to learn,” is critical, and its loss is time lost for learning opportunities (Abadzi, 2009). This is especially detrimental to students who need additional support to meet academic demands. The diverse student population in TVET colleges who are at different life stages have varying aptitudes and academic needs (Robertson & Frick, 2018). While these challenges are common in all TVET colleges, they are more pronounced in rural areas, further hindering student outcomes (Delubom et al., 2020) and making leadership and management in such contexts more challenging. Hallinger (2018) argues that educational leaders must protect instructional time. Murphy (2019) suggests that this practice can increase student achievement. Leithwood & Sun, (2018) highlight the significant contribution of teaching and learning time to student outcomes. Thus, protecting instructional time emerges as a critical strategy to enhance student outcomes.

Additionally, the lack of resources for teaching and learning also affects the perception and image of TVET colleges (Nzembe, 2017). Tlapana and Myeki (2020) report that prospective and current students have lost faith in these institutions’ ability to provide an education conducive to their success. Moreover, a *Research Report on Employer Perceptions of TVET college graduates and curriculum First Phase* by DHET (2023) found that local and international employers lack confidence in TVET education because of the insufficient practical exposure for students. Such sentiments lead to a negative perception and tarnished reputation for TVET colleges (Robertson & Frick, 2018). This perception, coupled with constant criticism of TVETs for their poor performance, suggests a damaged reputation, making them a last resort for students rejected by universities (Tlapana & Myeki, 2020). Consequently, the lack of resources not only impacts teaching and learning but also influences how TVET colleges are perceived, potentially hindering CMTs from reaching their enrolment targets.

Overall, a lack of resources and infrastructure impacts learning (Barrett et al., 2019). Barrett et al. (2019) found that investment in good-quality infrastructure is linked to increased student morale and outcomes. They argue that the learning environment must motivate students to learn and excel. Leaders must create better spaces for learning. Similarly, Leithwood and Sun (2018) argue that the learning environment needs to be inviting and encouraging so that students can fully participate in teaching and learning activities. While these impacts are significant, Basi (2021) and Dlamini (2021), state that CMTs, at their level, have limited capacity to respond to and address issues around resources and infrastructure. Despite this, the aforementioned researchers found that CMTs do not dwell on these issues but instead focus on getting the job done.

2.4.2 The lack of professional development

In addition to insufficient resources and infrastructure, leaders in TVET colleges have limited opportunities for professional development. Studies conducted by Balkrishen and Mestry (2016), Mvimbe (2019), Nkai (2021), Wolstencroft, and Lloyd (2019) reveal that CMT members do not have leadership training before assuming their roles. These studies also show that once appointed, CMT members are rarely inducted and professional development opportunities are scarce. Mvimbe (2019) and Nkai (2021) state that due to a lack of professional development, some TVET leaders use unsuitable leadership practices. Some may also rely only on their own experience. This is not surprising because our experiences are a resource base through which we filter and interpret information, problems, opportunities, and situations (Hallinger, 2018). While this may be useful, it may sometimes be inadequate. As part of their duties, CMTs are expected to develop timetables, induct new lecturers, and conduct subject development workshops (Basi, 2021). Given their roles and responsibilities, the lack of professional development may disable CMTs from leading effectively (Wolstencroft & Lloyd, 2019).

Robertson and Frick (2018) posit that the importance of leadership development in the TVET sector has been recognised globally. They add that those leading teaching and learning in TVET colleges must gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of it to make the appropriate decisions and drive colleges in the right direction, to become the public's first choice in higher education. Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) argue that continual professional development is important for TVET leaders and lecturers if TVET colleges are to have the necessary expertise and

abilities to lead effective teaching and learning. Overall, this suggests that TVET leaders must be capacitated with ongoing professional development to effectively lead teaching and learning.

2.4.3 Excessive workload and competing responsibilities

Despite being allocated eight hours of work like most jobs, TVET leaders face the challenge of not completing their daily duties (Balkrishen, 2019). These duties and responsibilities include placing and registering students, monitoring teaching and learning, supervising staff, engaging stakeholders, providing instructional leadership, setting budgets, handling administrative tasks, developing employees, and creating departmental visions (Delubom et al., 2020; Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). Additionally, CMT members often take on extra responsibilities daily (Basset, 2016).

Operational issues significantly impact CMT workloads. Potgieter et al. (2011) note that increasing demands in higher education have shifted college managers from academic to operational roles, burdening them with administrative duties instead of focusing on teaching and learning. Hashim et al. (2010) assert that while academic leaders influence departmental quality, they spend most of their time on administrative tasks, leaving little time for academic leadership.

The shift of focus from the instructional core is problematic. Robertson and Frick (2018) contend that when leaders of teaching and learning are overly burdened with administrative and operational responsibilities they end up neglecting the core activities of their departments. The success of each institution of higher learning is said to be judged by the success of its departments (Potgieter et al., 2011). When CMT members neglect their departments, it may lead to their failure.

In the same vein, Robertson and Frick (2018) highlight that the CMT has to balance several roles, which can be very time-consuming. Basset (2016) further emphasises that the sheer volume of compliance tasks is so immense that it consumes all of their time. Similarly, Dlamini (2021) found that senior lecturers struggle to lead teaching and learning because of heavy workloads. These CMT members acknowledge that to achieve high performance, teaching and learning needs full support (Dlamini, 2021). Mvimbe (2019) suggests that non-instructional activities strain the already overburdened CMTs and do not contribute to effective teaching and learning or increased student achievement. Consequently, CMT members may be unable to effectively discharge their instructional leadership duties.

These studies (Dlamini, 2021, and Mvimbe, 2019) suggest that CMT members have excessive workloads, which results in competing demands. Consequently, they shift the focus from core functions to “unimportant but urgent tasks” (Covey, 2020). This shift causes them to neglect the core functions of leading teaching and learning, such as monitoring student and staff attendance, monitoring teaching and learning and giving feedback. Ultimately, a neglect of the instructional core may be detrimental to teaching and learning outcomes. Robertson and Frick (2018) further note that this gap is reflected in the student results and lecturer performance.

2.4.4 Lack of support

The lack of support is another pertinent issue facing CMT members. According to Balkrishen (2019), some CMT members are not supported by the central office in dealing with college issues. The central office includes all senior college managers and support unit managers, such as those in human resources, supply chain and finance. The lack of support results in isolation, non-compliance and an inability to make crucial decisions at the campus level (Balkrishen, 2019). Basset (2016) adds that when middle managers do not receive support from senior managers, they cannot lead effectively.

A study conducted by Singh (2015) found that campus managers are not receiving sufficient support from senior managers regarding staff development. This lack of support is marked by inadequate planning, direction, and commitment to staff development, ultimately hindering efforts to enhance throughput and certification rates. Similarly, Balkrishen (2019) found that the lack of support and visibility from the regional office on campuses, especially during challenging times such as student unrest, causes CMTs to feel isolated in their operations.

Furthermore, the support from senior management in acquiring teaching and learning consumables and staff recruitment is insufficient, which directly impacts the quality of teaching and learning (Balkrishen, 2019). This inadequate support hampers the CMT in their role of leading teaching and learning, as they struggle to ensure that their campuses have the necessary resources and qualified personnel. The cumulative effect of these constraints is a compromised learning environment that negatively affects student outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the TVET campuses.

2.5 Leading teaching and learning in a rural context

Context plays a vital role in exercising TVET leadership, particularly in rural settings (Robertson & Frick, 2018). Context refers to the conditions that define the circumstances of an event, place, or situation, making them fully understandable (Hallinger, 2018). Scholars in educational leadership acknowledge that context affects leadership effectiveness (Day et al., 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). While the influence of educational leadership on student outcomes has been widely researched (Bush, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020), the role and impact of rural context on the leadership of teaching and learning, particularly in rural TVET colleges, remains underexplored.

Various scholars (Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2019; Leithwood et al., 2020) suggest that many factors shape successful leadership and context constitutes a critical one. In rural TVET colleges, leaders must navigate challenges such as limited access to professional development, inadequate infrastructure, and difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff. Therefore, understanding the rural context is essential for comprehending how leaders enact leadership. Daniëls et al. (2019) argue that leaders may have preconceived practices they wish to implement to improve student outcomes, but understanding the contextual factors of their rural environment can help them achieve better results.

Furthermore, understanding and embracing the rural context helps leaders respond to the specific needs of their setting rather than using a universal approach that may not work in their particular environment (Hallinger, 2018). This suggests that leadership in rural TVET colleges is indeed influenced by context, and there is no single or uniform way to respond to rural challenges except by understanding and embracing each setting uniquely. Given that CMTs are ultimately in charge of campuses where teaching and learning occur, the impact of rurality on TVET colleges and its effect on leadership practices must be examined.

The multifaceted roles of CMT members in TVET colleges are well-documented (Basset, 2016; DHET, 2022). However, the absence of standardised policies defining CMT duties, as highlighted by the PCAM, leads to significant variations in responsibilities between TVET colleges. This lack of consistency not only results in ambiguity and potential role overlap but could also contribute to an overwhelming workload for some CMT members. Without clear guidelines, CMT members may find themselves juggling numerous tasks with uncertain priorities, potentially impacting their effectiveness in leading teaching and learning initiatives.

Moreover, the lack of policy can hinder the professional development and career progression of CMT members, as there is no standardised framework for evaluating their performance and contributions to the institution (Basset, 2016).

This then implies that rural TVET college leaders must consider various contextual factors, such as socio-economic conditions, systematic conditions, cultural norms, and available resources to effectively lead teaching and learning. The unique challenges of rurality as mentioned earlier necessitate a tailored approach to leadership that is sensitive to the rural setting. This approach can help CMT members foster a supportive and effective learning environment, ultimately improving student outcomes.

2.6 The impact of rurality on TVET

The rural context presents numerous challenges for the work of educational leaders, including CMTs. CMT members face daily challenges to their leadership because of their rural environment (Basi, 2021). CMTs have various leadership issues in the South African context of TVET colleges, and several ways have been implemented to address these challenges. This section includes discussions and experiences taken from local and international literature to comprehend the impact of rurality on TVETs. Due to the paucity of literature on rural TVET colleges, this section has drawn from the literature on school education and other institutions of higher education.

Contexts are differentiated. Hallinger (2018) asserts that all contexts matter because they shape leadership enactment. This study focuses on rurality. Rural contexts are often viewed from a deficit lens. This lens advances the idea that such contexts are places of lack, marginalisation, poverty, diseases, and low student performance (Dube, 2020; Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Hlalele, 2014). Findings from studies conducted by Basi (2021), Delubom et al. (2020), and Dlamini (2021) in the South African context reveal that there are resource constraints in these rural contexts that hinder the delivery of effective teaching and learning. These studies reveal that the prevalent resource constraints in these areas are poor network connectivity and a lack of infrastructure and facilities.

Gardiner (2008) revealed that rurality negatively impacts schooling in South Africa, with conditions largely unchanged since 1994. Rural areas remain difficult to access, schools lack adequate infrastructure, and students underperform compared to their urban counterparts (Moral

et al., 2018). Many rural schools still lack basic amenities like electricity, clean water, libraries, laboratories, and computers, despite infrastructure improvements since 1994 (Gardiner, 2008). Similarly, TVET colleges face resource shortages, poor infrastructure, and overcrowded classrooms, which hinder effective leadership and student performance (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). These challenges complicate the provision of quality education and may negatively impact student outcomes.

Most TVET students in rural areas come from low-income families and rely on funding like the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (Viljoen, 2020). Despite this support, they often face financial challenges for meals, transport, and accommodation, impacting their success and retention rates (Nzembe, 2019). These financial burdens can lead to higher dropout rates and lower completion rates (Nzembe, 2019). Singh and Shawa (2021) found that while NSFAS contributes to mass enrolment, some students enrol primarily for financial gain, resulting in decreased commitment to studies and higher failure and dropout rates.

Furthermore, rural TVET colleges themselves often face a lack of funding from national sources. Lutaaya et al. (2023) found that insufficient funding is one of the major obstacles in rural TVET colleges, leading to challenges in providing resources, which limits the quality of education and support services available. Reduan et al. (2023) posit that these financial constraints hinder the effectiveness of TVET leaders in providing a conducive learning environment, ultimately affecting student success.

Studies by (Dube, 2020; Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Klar & Brewer, 2014) report that among significant rural conditions that impact TVET is the shortage of qualified lecturers in TVET colleges. Most lecturers in rural areas are underqualified or inexperienced (Reduan et al, 2023). Lecturers are an essential asset to any educational institution (Nzembe, 2017). For quality teaching and learning to take place, institutions need qualified and fully equipped lecturers (Green, 2023). The disadvantage of having unqualified lecturers is that the quality of teaching and learning is compromised.

According to Klar and Brewer (2014), the remote location of rural institutions cannot attract and retain high-quality educators. As a result, they end up with incompetent educators who are not passionate about teaching and do not care about learners, which reflects poorly on learners' performance and behaviour (Green, 2023). Similarly, in rural TVET colleges, Reduan et al (2023)

found that the distinct obstacle that rural TVET colleges encounter is the challenge of attracting and retaining skilled lecturers. This study reports that unless TVET institutions give top priority to creating procedures and policies that foster professional development these issues will not be solved.

While these challenges of attracting and retaining high-quality educators are prevalent in such contexts, this single narrative perpetuates the idea that there is no other story about such contexts. However, Molestane (2012) advances another story about rural contexts. She presents a different perspective, an optimistic view. This view portrays rurality as a place of knowledgeable, resourceful, and competent people with different experiences that have helped them shape this place and whose lives have been shaped by it. This optimistic view about rurality is supported by Cavanagh et al. (2013), who argue that rurality has value and asset and that those who live and work in those places, must be aware of it so that they can use it and do well in such challenging places. This study adopts a view of rurality that extends beyond the deficit paradigm, focusing on its complexities and potential.

The optimistic view shows that educational leaders can succeed despite challenging contexts and do more than survive. This view is supported by the findings of Basi (2021), showing that TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal can thrive even in a deprived rural context. The study found that the CMT in a deprived rural TVET campus with limited resources managed to succeed by investing in planning and setting direction, selecting and placing students into programmes, and actively monitoring teaching and learning to ensure quality. These efforts have enabled the college to thrive despite its difficulties. Furthermore, this optimistic view is further supported by findings from a study conducted by Moral et al. (2018) in Spain, which shows that educational leaders succeed in schools in disadvantaged contexts from a leadership-for-learning perspective. Basi's study also reveals that educational leaders in disadvantaged contexts go beyond the call of duty to improve students' results.

Additionally, studies on TVET colleges report that students in these institutions are known for poor performance; therefore, there is already a low expectation for academic progress (Badernhorst & Radiles, 2018; Zulu & Mutereki, 2019). However, leaders in rural TVETs may adopt leadership practices to change this narrative, as seen in the study done by Basi. These studies report that the leadership practices used by such leaders are those of the leadership for learning theory, a

theoretical framework that emphasises improving student performance through effective leadership practices.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter offered a comprehensive literature review by exploring both local and global perspectives. Drawing on existing knowledge and insights from other researchers, the chapter began with an overview of the complexities within the TVET sector in the South African context. The literature showed that while CMTs use many effective leadership practices, they encounter numerous challenges that hinder their leadership enactment. Additionally, the literature emphasises the significant influence of the context in which leadership is exercised on the leaders and their leadership decisions and how they navigate that.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL LENS: LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the local and international literature on educational leadership, the challenges of CMT members and leading in a rural context. This chapter discusses the theoretical lens of this study. The leadership for learning model underpins this study. The theoretical lens is essential for a research study because it guides the entire study, offering insights from experts on the research questions, the problem being examined, and potential solutions, including how to interpret the data (Kivunja, 2018). In the next section, I will discuss the leadership for learning, the framework that serves as the blueprint for this study.

3.2 Leadership for Learning Model

This study is informed by the leadership for learning model developed by Hallinger (2011). Leadership for learning is an extension of the instructional leadership theory established by Hallinger and his colleagues (Hallinger et al., 2010). Instructional leadership is generally about educational leaders fostering the constant provision of quality teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2018). Leadership for learning is about leadership in educational settings that entails a wide range of actions targeted at enhancing student outcomes by establishing and maintaining supportive environments for teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2011). This goes beyond simply providing direct instruction guidance (Hallinger, 2011).

Leadership for learning refers to strategies educational leaders use to achieve significant educational goals, the focus being student learning (Hallinger, 2011). The leadership for learning model is relevant for examining CMT members' leadership experiences in a rural TVET college because the model gives a full lens through which we can understand the link between leadership practices and student outcomes in a rural setting. This section outlines the model's key assumptions and discusses its relevance to this study. It focuses on the important assumptions presented in the model, which include beliefs and values, knowledge and experience, vision and goals, academic structures and processes, people capacity, student outcomes and the context for leadership. Additionally, it examines how these assumptions connect with societal culture, institutional

systems, staff and community characteristics, and school organisation (Hallinger, 2011). Below I will present a figure of the model and further engage on it.

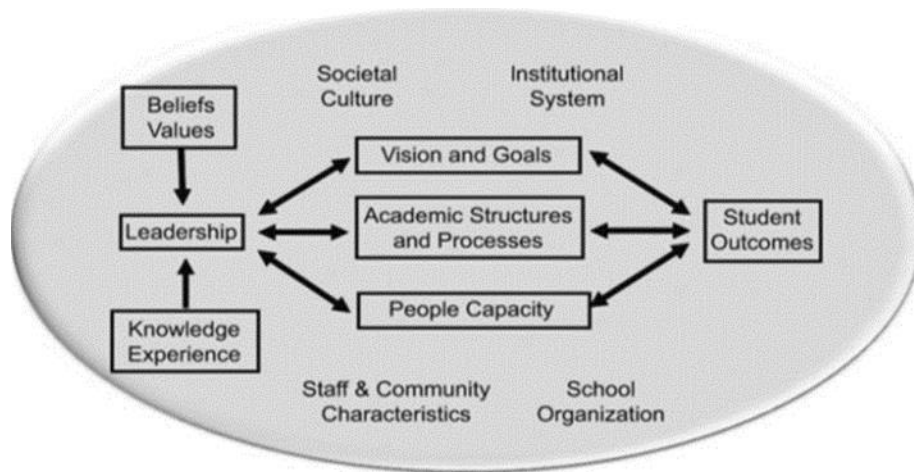


Figure 1. A synthesised model of leadership for learning

Hallinger’s model comprises several assumptions that are believed to impact both leadership and student outcomes. The first assumption I will discuss is the relationship between leadership and its context.

3.2.1 Leadership in context

The leadership for learning model emphasises that leadership is carried out within the contexts of an organisation and its environment (Hallinger, 2011). These broader contexts form an open system incorporating the community, the institutional system, and social culture. Societal culture refers to the shared values, principles, norms, and practices that define a community or society (Hallinger, 2011). It encompasses the collective behaviours, traditions, and social expectations that influence how individuals interact within a group (Hallinger, 2011). This suggests that leadership does not operate in isolation; it takes place within a specific context. According to the model, leaders must react to these conditions effectively (Hallinger, 2011).

For leadership to be effective, leaders must recognise that while the context may pose challenges, it also offers opportunities. Therefore, leaders need to identify these opportunities and respond accordingly to contextual factors that could affect the organisation and student outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). This model helps provide an in-depth understanding of these factors and how

CMT members respond to them. In the context of TVET colleges, particularly in rural areas, this model is crucial. It highlights the importance of contextually responsive leadership, enabling CMT members to tailor their strategies to the unique challenges and opportunities presented by their specific environments. This approach can lead to improved student outcomes and more effective management of the teaching and learning processes. Additionally, Figure 1's double-headed arrows mean that school leadership both shapes and is shaped by these conditions at the school level (Hallinger, 2011). Moreover, this model sees leadership as mainly about helping students grow and do well in their learning, but it also acknowledges that there might be other issues leaders focus on too, not just this (Hallinger, 2011).

3.2.2 Beliefs and values

In this model, beliefs and values are foundational to effective leadership (Hallinger, 2011). These core principles shape leaders' decisions and behaviours, and influence how they view and perform their roles and responsibilities (Hallinger, 2011). For CMT members in a rural TVET college, their beliefs and values are critical in guiding their practices in leading teaching and learning. Being human, leaders bring personal and professional beliefs and values to their roles, shaped by factors such as societal culture and the institutional system (Hallinger, 2011). These beliefs and values create a structure for their leadership practices, and they are continually influenced and refined through their leadership experiences (Hallinger, 2011). The model highlights the mutual connection between leadership, values, and beliefs, illustrating how leadership practices are informed by a leader's beliefs and values, which are, in turn, shaped and enhanced over time by their experiences (Hallinger, 2011). The leadership for learning model is particularly relevant for understanding the lived experiences of CMT members because their leadership practices are deeply linked to their personal beliefs and values. These beliefs and values not only guide decision-making but are also shaped by the context in which leadership is enacted (Hallinger, 2011).

3.2.3 Knowledge and experience

Effective leadership requires both knowledge and experience. This model highlights the knowledge and experience that leaders bring to their positions (Hallinger, 2011). To meet the opportunities and address the challenges of their setting, like any other leadership role, CMT members in a rural TVET college rely heavily on their expert knowledge and experience. The

arrow shows how knowledge, experience, and leadership practices connect. This means that the leaders' experience and knowledge base influence how they exercise leadership.

3.2.4 Societal culture

As previously explained, societal culture represents the broader external context within which leadership operates. These factors include societal values and community needs and expectations (Hallinger, 2011). They shape the environment in which leadership takes place and influence the resources and support available to leaders (Hallinger, 2011). This means that leaders must navigate and respond to societal influences while also potentially shaping these broader contexts through their leadership actions (Hallinger, 2011).

3.2.5 Institutional systems

Institutional systems refer to the organisational structure, policies, rules, and regulations. According to Hallinger (2011), these affect how leadership is enacted. For example, how leaders arrive at decisions, and how they engage with students and staff. The institutional system shapes the environment in which the institution functions, influencing everything from attitudes towards authority and education to methods of communication (Hallinger, 2011). Understanding the institutional system is essential for CMT members as it helps them customise their strategies to align with the context of their institution. This serves to increase the effectiveness of their leadership practices and improve student outcomes.

3.2.6 Staff and community characteristics and school organisation

The internal environment of the organisation is comprised of the staff and school organisation. This covers the organisational structure and culture of the institution in addition to the skills, attitudes, and demographics of the staff and students (Hallinger, 2011). These elements have a direct impact on how leadership is enacted, and how student outcomes are met (Hallinger, 2011). Effective leadership requires understanding and responding to the specific characteristics and needs of the school community, while the outcomes and feedback from this community shape ongoing leadership practices (Hallinger, 2011). In my study, this will be used to examine how CMT members at a rural TVET college understand and respond to the unique characteristics and needs of their TVET community, and how they shape and refine their leadership practices to improve student outcomes.

3.2.7 Vision and goals

One of the most important parts of leadership is having a clear vision and goals. Vision and goals entail establishing the institution's goals and direction and coordinating them with more general educational objectives and community needs (Hallinger, 2011). The model establishes a clear connection between student outcomes, academic structures and procedures, and vision and goals (Hallinger, 2011). The double-headed arrows mean that vision and goals influence student outcomes and student outcomes are influenced by vision and goals. In my study, understanding how CMT members in rural TVET colleges set and communicate a clear vision and goals is crucial. This aspect of leadership directly influences how academic structures and processes are designed and implemented, which in turn affects student outcomes.

3.2.8 Academic structures and processes

Systems and procedures are what organise and implement educational activities. These consist of administrative procedures, teaching strategies, curriculum design, and assessment techniques. The model emphasises how these procedures and structures allow leadership to have an indirect impact on student achievement (Hallinger, 2011). The double-headed arrows indicate that academic structures and processes influence student outcomes, and student outcomes, in turn, influence academic structures and processes. Examining the academic structures and processes in a rural TVET college is central to my study. According to the model, these mechanisms, including curriculum design and assessment practices, are influenced by leadership decisions and can significantly impact student outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). Therefore, looking into these structures and processes helps to understand how leadership practices contribute to the educational outcomes of students in a rural TVET college.

3.2.9 People capacity

People capacity describes how staff are developed and empowered (Hallinger, 2011). People capacity places a strong emphasis on resource allocation, professional growth, and capacity building (Hallinger, 2011). Staff are better prepared to assist student learning and bring change when there is effective leadership in this area (Hallinger, 2011). Leaders need to concentrate on developing their staff members' capacities for change to occur (Hallinger, 2011). The model prompts leaders to consider how best to empower individuals to develop the school's capacity to

positively impact student learning (Hallinger, 2011). Should it be staff development, curricular alignment, resource allocation, or instructional observations? (Hallinger, 2011). According to the model, leaders who assist and engage in staff members' professional development have the biggest impact on the learning outcomes of their students.

The development and empowerment of lecturers in a rural TVET college are critical aspects of effective leadership. By focusing on capacitating those they lead, CMT members can enhance the teaching and learning environment, ultimately improving student outcomes. This study examines leadership practices in a rural TVET college. The model will demonstrate how these practices impact professional development and resource allocation for staff, and how these factors, in turn, influence student outcomes.

3.2.10 Student outcomes

The most important indicator of educational success is student outcomes, which encompass academic achievement, and personal development (Hallinger, 2011). The model underscores how leadership influences student outcomes indirectly through its impact on vision and goals, academic structures and processes, and people capacity (Hallinger, 2011). The double-headed arrows indicate that student outcomes both influence and are influenced by the leader's vision and goals, the organisation's academic structures and processes and people capacity (Hallinger, 2011). Simply put, the results of student learning and development inform leadership practices, prompting adjustments and improvements to better meet educational objectives (Hallinger, 2011). In my study, the model will help to analyse the leadership practices of CMT members in rural settings. Examining how leadership impacts vision, academic structures, and people capacity, will also help understand its indirect influence on student outcomes and explore how feedback from student outcomes informs leadership practices, leading to adjustments that enhance educational objectives in the context of rural TVET colleges.

3.3 The appropriateness of the model

Hallinger's Leadership for Learning model (2011) provided a robust and interconnected framework for understanding leadership practices, particularly in complex contexts such as rural TVET colleges. This model was well-suited for the study because it emphasised the dynamic

interplay between leadership practices and their broader organisational and socio-cultural environments. In rural TVET colleges, where resource constraints, systemic inequities, and unique community dynamics significantly influenced leadership, this contextual focus was invaluable.

A central tenet of the model was that leadership was deeply embedded in its context. It acknowledged that societal culture, institutional systems, and the characteristics of the school community shaped leadership practices. Societal culture encompassed the shared values, norms, and expectations of the community, while institutional systems referred to the policies, rules, and organisational structures that influenced how leadership was enacted. These factors were particularly pertinent in rural settings, where leaders had to navigate the complexities of geographic isolation, limited resources, and systemic challenges. The model highlighted how leaders needed to respond to these contextual factors by adapting their strategies to leverage opportunities and mitigate challenges, making it especially relevant for understanding the lived experiences of CMT members in rural TVET colleges.

The model also emphasised the importance of beliefs and values as the foundation of effective leadership. Leaders brought their personal and professional beliefs to their roles, which shaped their decisions, behaviours, and interactions. These beliefs, in turn, were influenced by their experiences and the contexts in which they led. For CMT members in rural TVET colleges, these values guided their practices in leading teaching and learning amidst the unique challenges of rurality. This reflective and adaptive aspect of leadership aligned with the model's focus on how leadership practices evolved over time in response to contextual and experiential factors.

Leadership, according to the model, was also informed by a leader's knowledge and experience. These elements influenced how leaders approached decision-making, problem-solving, and strategy implementation. For CMT members, their professional expertise and lived experiences were critical in navigating the complexities of rural leadership. The model provided a lens through which to explore how their knowledge and experiences shaped their leadership practices and contributed to addressing the specific challenges of their environment.

Moreover, the model underscored the critical role of vision and goals in effective leadership. It highlighted how setting a clear institutional direction and aligning goals with broader educational objectives and community needs were fundamental to achieving student success. In the rural TVET context, CMT members had to establish and communicate a shared vision that responded to both institutional challenges and community aspirations. This alignment was vital for fostering a cohesive and focused approach to teaching and learning.

Academic structures and processes, such as curriculum design, assessment strategies, and teaching practices, were another focal point of the model. These mechanisms were seen as pathways through which leadership indirectly influenced student outcomes. For rural TVET colleges, where resources were often limited, the effective organisation and implementation of these processes were critical to enhancing educational outcomes. The model's emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between leadership decisions, academic processes, and student success provided a framework for examining how CMT members navigated these dynamics.

The development of people capacity was another key element of the model. It highlighted the importance of resource allocation, professional development, and capacity building in empowering staff to support student learning and drive institutional change. In rural TVET colleges, where professional development opportunities were often scarce, the ability of CMT members to foster staff growth and enhance their capabilities was essential for improving teaching and learning outcomes.

Ultimately, the model positioned student outcomes as the central indicator of educational success. It underscored how leadership practices indirectly impacted student outcomes through their influence on vision, academic structures, and people capacity. The feedback loops within the model illustrated how student outcomes informed leadership practices, prompting adjustments and improvements to better meet educational objectives. This dynamic interaction was particularly relevant for exploring how CMT members in rural TVET colleges refined their leadership approaches to address the unique needs of their contexts and enhance student success.

By integrating these interconnected elements, Hallinger's Leadership for Learning model offered a comprehensive framework for examining the leadership practices of CMT members in rural TVET colleges. It enabled a nuanced understanding of how leadership responded to and influenced contextual factors, organisational dynamics, and educational outcomes, making it a valuable tool for the study.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed Hallinger's Leadership for Learning model, highlighting the contextual nature of leadership within organisational and environmental settings. Key aspects include the importance of leaders' beliefs, values, knowledge, and experience, and the necessity of clear vision and goals. The role of academic structures and processes in shaping student outcomes was emphasised, along with the significance of developing staff capacity. The chapter also noted how leadership indirectly influences student outcomes and how these outcomes inform and refine leadership practices, providing a lens to analyse CMT members' leadership in a rural TVET college and its impact on student learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a discussion of leadership for learning, the model framing this study. This chapter will present the research design and methodology. According to Kazdin (2021), the research design is the overall structure and plan of the research methods and processes a researcher selects for a study. On the other hand, the research methodology outlines how the research is conducted, using the plan to guarantee reliable results that address the research puzzles (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010).

In this section, I will describe the overall research design firstly, by discussing the research paradigm underpinning this study. Secondly, I will present the research approach for the study. Thirdly, I will present a comprehensive discussion on narrative inquiry, which is the methodology adopted in this study. Fourthly, I will detail my approach to the selection of participants. Following this, I will discuss the data generation methods I used to generate data to respond to the research puzzles. The following section will detail the trustworthiness issues observed in this study. After this, ethical considerations will be presented. The last part of the chapter will offer the conclusion.

4.2 Interpretive research paradigm

The selection of a research paradigm is crucial as it provides a guiding lens for the study. According to Cohen et al. (2017), the paradigm represents a particular worldview or perspective concerning the subject under exploration. This study is underpinned by the interpretive paradigm which centres around comprehending the subjective realm of human experiences, focusing on understanding human behaviour and experience (Mack, 2010). It aims to understand the social phenomenon within its specific context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). According to Cohen et al. (2017), the interpretive paradigm focuses on understanding individuals' subjective experiences and meanings in their social contexts. It uses qualitative methods to explore participants' perspectives deeply. This paradigm was appropriate for this study as it allowed me to capture the lived experiences of CMT members in leading teaching and learning in a rural TVET college.

The interpretive paradigm is based on the ontological assumption that multiple subjective realities exist (Mack, 2010; Scotland, 2012). This means there are as many realities and perspectives as there are individuals experiencing a phenomenon (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This paradigm is well suited for this study because it allows access to diverse, comprehensive views from different CMT members. It helps uncover how these members make sense of their situations, providing insights into the phenomenon from their perspectives (Yilmaz, 2013).

Additionally, the paradigm acknowledges that these multiple realities are context-bound, varying across different contexts and times (Merriam, 2009). Experience is therefore a contextual phenomenon, shaped by and shaping the contexts in which individuals lead (Merriam, 2009). This makes the paradigm appropriate for this study, as it aims to explore how the context of rurality influences CMT members' leadership and how they, in turn, are influenced by this context in their roles.

Interpretivist researchers assert that knowledge is a subjective creation shaped by cultural and historical contexts (Cohen et al., 2011; Scotland, 2012). In this study, I embraced the subjective experiences of CMT members, recognising that their leadership practices are products of their past, present, and anticipated futures. Scotland (2012) emphasises that knowledge is not an objective entity awaiting discovery but a product of human construction. Thus, I adopted an approach where knowledge is co-created with participants, making me an active part of the research process rather than a detached observer. Accordingly, interpretivists acknowledge and embrace personal ideologies rather than dismiss them (Scotland, 2012). Overall, the interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this study because it provides a lens to deeply understand the varied and context-specific experiences of CMT members, allows for the co-construction of knowledge, and it highlights the importance of the rural context in shaping leadership practices.

4.3 Qualitative research approach

Research may adopt a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approach. This study adopted the qualitative research approach. According to Yilmaz (2013), the qualitative approach is an in-depth description of the phenomenon from the perspectives of the people involved. Various scholars (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Mack, 2010) assert that the qualitative

research approach aligns well with the interpretive paradigm, as it offers insights and meaning by capturing the views and experiences of participants. Its focus on a smaller, in-depth sample allows for a richer understanding of the phenomenon. This approach was appropriate for this study because experience is multi-faceted and requires an in-depth exploration. Through this approach, I gained insights and understanding of each participant's leadership experiences, unveiled the nuances and uncovered what it is like for them to lead teaching and learning on a rural campus.

Qualitative research also emphasises social situatedness (Cohen et al., 2017). In this regard, Yilmaz (2013) suggests that when using this approach, it is acknowledged that the context influences people's experiences. Consequently, this approach was appropriate as it enabled me to understand how the context shapes the leadership of the CMT and how they shape the context in which they lead. Additionally, qualitative research indicates that studies should be conducted in authentic, real-world settings to capture diverse realities and generate rich, contextual data (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research is conducted within the campuses where CMT members fulfil their daily responsibilities and where diverse realities are constructed around their leadership experiences in teaching and learning. The data was generated from these multiple realities within the same contextual setting.

The qualitative approach also offered me the advantage of posing broad research questions, facilitating a comprehensive exploration and understanding of the context (Creswell, 2014). In line with this approach, I formulated broad research puzzles guided by the aim of comprehending not only the lived experiences of CMT members but also how their leadership is enacted in the context of rurality, hence unveiling the contextual situatedness of experience.

According to Brynard et al. (2014), qualitative studies generate descriptive data primarily consisting of the participants' own written or spoken words. This served me well in this study, as I was able to solicit thick, rich descriptions to uncover the multifaceted experiences of the CMTs. Creswell (2014) further emphasises that qualitative research is based on subjective, interpretative data. Hence, the qualitative approach aligned well with this study, as it aimed to interpret participants' actual experiences through spoken words representing their subjective realities as raw data and enabling the expression of their thoughts on the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014).

4.4 Narrative inquiry methodology

In this study, I used narrative inquiry as the methodology. Narrative inquiry is a research methodology used to understand and explore people's experiences (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2019). These scholars assert that this methodology's primary goal is to understand people's experiences fully. Additionally, Clandinin et al. (2007), add that this methodology is also a perspective on the phenomenon of people's experiences and a methodology for narratively examining the experience, enabling a close examination of people's experiences and interactions over time. Therefore, this methodology aligns with the interpretive paradigm, making it suitable for my study. It enables a deep exploration of how the context of rurality influences the leadership practices of CMT members in a rural TVET college.

This methodology has gained prominence in educational research, focusing on individual and human activity (Mertova & Webster, 2019). Smit (2017) has used this methodology in his exploration of rural school leadership in South Africa. Bonzet (2017) has adopted this methodology in exploring the experiences of women in leadership positions in Western Cape TVET colleges. Mdabe (2021) has also used narrative inquiry in a study looking at females' leadership experiences from three secondary school principals in two districts of KwaZulu-Natal. Sithole (2021) used narrative inquiry to understand the lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college.

Narrative inquiry is appropriate for my study because it relies on stories to capture and understand the experiences of CMT members. This methodology enabled me to gather detailed accounts of how they lead teaching and learning in a rural TVET college. By focusing on their stories, I could explore the nuanced ways rurality shapes their leadership practices and how they, in turn, influence their educational context.

According to Creswell (2009), lived experiences are best mediated through stories. Similarly, Barkhuizen et al. (2014), argue that experiences are shared through stories and that at the centre of the narrative inquiry are people's stories and experiences in their practice and perspectives on the phenomenon. Additionally, most of the time, the stories individuals share about their experiences are how we learn about them (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). This means there is much meaning-making

about the participants' understanding of the phenomenon as these stories are being told and co-constructed (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Thus, there is no better way to understand a story about a phenomenon than hearing it from somebody with first-hand experience (Creswell, 2009). According to Clandinin et al. (2007), stories provide a rich, detailed account of participants' lived realities, offering insights that might be overlooked through other methods. By focusing on their stories, I could gain a deeper, more authentic understanding of how CMT members experience and interpret their leadership roles in a rural TVET college context.

Narrative inquiry focuses on telling and re-telling stories from generated data. It involves an account of these stories, considering the context and setting, and requires collaboration between the researcher and participants (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2019). This study focuses on each CMT member's storytelling about their lived experience, from the time they started as CMT members leading teaching and learning in a rural campus, and how they make meaning of that.

For this study, participants are referred to as co-researchers, emphasising their active role in generating research data. In this study, participants are referred to as co-researchers to emphasise their active role in the data generation process. Narrative inquiry positions participants as co-creators of knowledge, allowing them to shape the research through their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). Their role as co-researchers was realised through collaboration in interpreting their narratives and reflecting on their experiences. This ongoing dialogue and feedback allowed them to influence the research direction aligning with the interpretive paradigm's emphasis on shared meaning-making (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007).

Traditionally, researchers are central figures, and participants are passive sources of information (Given, 2008). This view limits the value of participants' knowledge and experiences (Given, 2008). In contrast, narrative inquiry sees participants as co-creators of knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). By sharing their stories, participants significantly contribute to the study, with their authority over their narratives acknowledged. This collaborative, interpretive process elevates their voices and aligns with the study's paradigm, making the concept of co-researcher particularly suitable (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). Moreover, this collaboration aligns with the epistemological assumptions of the adopted paradigm.

Clandinin and Connelly (2007) identify three common places as the dimensions of narrative inquiry. They are referred to as the metaphoric inquiry space (Clandinin et al., 2007). They are temporality, sociality and place (Clandinin et al., 2007). These are based on the idea that experience consists of social interactions performed through time in various contexts and settings (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The three common places are used to guide this study and were helpful during the generation of field text (Clandinin et al., 2007).

According to Clandinin et al. (2007), temporality is about understanding that people, places and events are temporal transitions, and they have a past, present and future. In other words, temporality looks at the transition of co-researchers and events from past to present and how these shape their anticipated future. Moreover, Clandinin (2006) suggests that past experiences influence people's behaviour, judgment, thought and decision-making in the present and future. Consequently, this study attended to CMT members' past, present and anticipated future experiences in leading teaching and learning and how these events have shaped and continue to shape their lives and leadership practices.

Sociality is about feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). When looking at sociality, these scholars posit that sociality is made up of two sub-dimensions, namely, personal and social conditions. In essence, the dimension of sociality deals with one's interactions with the environment and the unique personal history produced from such interactions (Clandinin, 2006; 2013). While exploring these dimensions of narrative inquiry, I attended to the personal and social factors simultaneously and did not treat them as separate factors (Clandinin et al., 2007).

The personal conditions refer to feelings, hopes, desires and moral dispositions, which are essential to consider when the co-researchers share their experiences (Clandinin, 2006; 2013). Guided by this, I paid attention to the feelings, emotions, hopes, and desires of the co-researchers as they shared their stories throughout the process. By considering these, I gained a holistic understanding of how their emotions and personal histories shaped their leadership practices, providing richer insights into their roles of leading teaching and learning. For that reason, during data generation, as each co-researcher narrated their story using the collage, I was cognisant of their personal

condition and the vital role it plays in how they interpreted their experiences, and equally considerate of their feelings as they revisited their past (Clandinin et al., 2007).

On the other hand, the social condition focuses on the co-researchers' experiences and events as they occur in the cultural, social and institutional setting and how these impact the co-researchers' understanding of the phenomenon (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Sharing the same view, Clandinin et al. (2007) assert that the social condition looks at the place where the co-researchers' experiences are unfolding. Therefore, in this dimension, I considered that the co-researchers' cultural, social and institutional setting significantly impacts their experiences as CMT members leading within socially constructed leadership roles (Clandinin et al., 2007). This further allowed me to understand how and why CMT members choose to do things the way they do as they lead in a rural TVET college.

Finally, the last dimension is place. This dimension looks at the physical place or location of the events, where co-researchers experience, and are impacted by the phenomenon (Clandinin et al., 2007). This dimension emphasises contextual embeddedness, highlighting that events occur in particular places and spaces, influencing how and why they happen (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The physical location of the campuses impacts how CMT members understand and perform their leadership roles because people are inherently connected to their environment. In the same way, the co-researchers are connected and influenced by settings where the leadership of teaching and learning activities occurs rather than being isolated objects (Clandinin & Connelly, 2007). Narrative inquirers, therefore, need to understand the influence of place in the inquiry and approach it with understanding. For this study, the issue of place was important because the study looked at leadership within the context of rurality. This dimension gave me room to uncover how the context of rurality shapes the CMTs' leadership and how they in turn are shaped by the context in which they lead.

The benefit of adopting narrative inquiry in this study is that it digs deeply into the understanding of people's experiences (Mertova & Webster, 2019). Narrative inquiry is relevant for this study because it explores complex issues of human-centeredness within the unique environments where leadership is enacted (Clandinin et al., 2007). The phenomenon explored in this study is complex

and intricate. Its complexity is rooted in experience, and people's experiences of the same event are subjective (Merriam, 2009). As such, this methodology served well because, unlike other traditional approaches, which may look at some aspects of the phenomenon, it can address the complex issues of the phenomenon studied (Clandinin et al., 2007).

4.5 Selection of participants (Co-Researchers)

This study employed purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of a participant based on their unique characteristics (Campbell et al., 2020). This sampling approach allows the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria (Cohen et al., 2017). It ensures the inclusion of information-rich individuals who possess knowledge and experience relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Klenke, 2008). This criterion ensures that co-researchers have substantial knowledge and insights to contribute to the study (Cohen et al., 2017). In this study, co-researchers who were selected are those who lead rural TVET colleges. They were purposively selected as they have first-hand experience in leading a rural TVET college. An additional criterion is that those who are selected must have three or more years of experience in this leadership position. According to Campbell et al. (2020), the three or more years of experience requirement is essential for obtaining comprehensive and relevant information from knowledgeable individuals and ensuring that the findings accurately represent the population. Thus, selecting participants from this specific group provided me with participants who were information-rich as they had sufficient experience in leading a rural TVET college.

The second sampling technique that was used was convenience sampling. According to Etikan et al. (2016), convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which participants of the target population meet specific practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a particular time, cost-effectiveness or willingness to participate, and are included in the study. I thus selected CMT members within my geographical proximity as they would be easier to access. The three rural TVET campuses are in the UThukela District province of KwaZulu-Natal - where I reside, so accessing them was also cost-effective. Five CMT members were selected for the study, consisting of one campus manager and four senior lecturers. Initially, the intention was to include one campus manager and one senior lecturer from each campus. However, due to the unavailability of some CMT members, the final selection included

one campus manager and one senior lecturer from the first campus, one senior lecturer from the second campus, and two senior lecturers from the third campus. This study's research methodology also supports the selection of this number of participants. According to Butina (2015), there is no rule of sample size for a narrative inquiry. The researcher decides on the sample based on the information they are seeking to obtain. However, the sample size must be sufficient to represent the participants' views and perspectives and an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Ames et al., 2019). Therefore, I set my sample size at a minimum of five, which is sufficient to generate an amount of data that will be manageable and appropriate for a thorough analysis of data that will give valid, reliable and accurate results (Ames et al., 2019).

4.5.1 Profiling of the participants and campuses

Data for this study was generated from five CMT members who were involved in the research. These members, representing the three campuses of TVET College, are detailed in the table below along with their respective campuses. Pseudonyms were employed to identify participants and their corresponding campuses and the college to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The college is given the name Duma TVET College which is situated in a small town under the UThukela district. Subsequently, the detailed profiles of the participants are provided:

Table 1 Participant's profile

Name of the campus	Participant	Gender	Age	Position	Qualification	Experience as a CMT member
Siyazama campus	Ms Zenzele	Female	31	Senior lecturer	National Professional Diploma in Education	10 years
Siyazama Campus	Ms Zamile	Female	47	Senior lecturer	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	15 years
Siyakhula campus	Mrs Becky	Female	60	Senior lecturer	Bachelor of Education Honours in Educational Management	15 years
Siyakhula campus	Mrs Karen	Female	55	Campus manager	Higher Diploma in Education	15 years

Siyakha campus	Mr DD	Male	45	Senior lecturer	Post Graduate Certificate in Education	15 years
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Table 2 Campus profile

Campus	Years established	Type	Programmes offered	Student enrolment	Number of lecturers
Siyazama	16 years	Rural	NCV and R191	1900 approximately	75
Siyakha	14 years	Rural	NCV and R191	1200 approximately	40
Siyakhula	25 years	Rural	NCV and R191	1500 approximately	65

4.5.1.1 Siyazama Campus: How rurality manifests?

The Siyazama Campus is located in UThukela District Municipality. The UThukela District Municipality is predominately rural and is characterised by poor socio-economic indicators such as a low revenue base, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to services, and a weak economic foundation.

Siyazama is the largest campus, serving around 1,900 students with about 75 lecturers. It is situated directly across from a taxi rank and surrounded by residential neighbourhoods. In front of the campus are primarily township houses, while the back features clay houses, including many Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses. There are cattle crossing the road and wandering around outside the campus. In this typical rural township, many young and older men can be seen sitting idle outside the taxi rank and supermarkets throughout the day. The area faces significant socioeconomic challenges, including high unemployment rates and numerous child-headed households, with most residents relying on social grants for survival. Water supply is unreliable, often unavailable for days, and network connectivity is poor, reflecting the typical struggles of a rural setting. Despite the police station located next to the campus, safety remains a concern, prompting students to walk to and from campus in groups for protection.

4.5.1.2 Siyakhula Campus: How rurality manifests?

Siyakhula Campus, located in the UThukela District Municipality, shares many characteristics with Siyazama Campus. It is the second-largest campus, accommodating approximately 1,700 students and employing about 65 lecturers. The campus is housed in a double-storey building, reminiscent of a “Model C High School,” originally built in 1880. The fence is new, and the buildings appear to have been recently repainted.

Situated along one of the busiest roads in a rural town, the campus is surrounded by daily activities. A large number of pedestrians move to and from the nearby taxi rank, public hospital, schools, and workplaces about 3 km away from the campus. School children pass by, hurrying to catch their transport, while workers mostly retail staff walk past on their way to and from their jobs. Young people frequently stop by the campus in search of employment opportunities. Some engage in small-scale vending, selling items to staff and students, while others stand idly by, asking for food or money. These activities reflect the area's high levels of poverty and unemployment.

The campus lacks essential facilities such as a library, media centre, and cafeteria. While some students bring lunchboxes, others go without meals the whole day due to financial constraints. Classroom spaces are limited, with the largest accommodating about 45 students and smaller ones holding 20-25. This shortage of space forces students to sit in cramped groups in seating areas, under shelters, or on the stairs, creating noise and congestion. Some students opt to work in groups outside, cramped in their seats, further highlighting the campus's spatial challenges.

Despite the initial appearance of being well-maintained, there is significant loitering near the classrooms. The campus is equipped with two water tanks for emergencies. There is no on-campus accommodation, which forces students to seek private housing. Nearby private accommodations are expensive, and affordable options are located far away, leading students to walk to campus through unsafe routes known for muggings.

4.5.1.3 Siyakha Campus: How rurality manifests?

Siyakha Campus is also in UThukela District Municipality. It is next to the industrial area of a rural town and is the smallest, serving around 1,200 students with about 40 lecturers. The campus is situated in a quiet rural town, surrounded by steep hills and agricultural land. In an area

characterised by minimal economic activity and underdevelopment, the campus serves as a vital lifeline for education. The roads leading to the campus are typical of rural KwaZulu-Natal: bumpy and in need of caution when navigating, reflecting the broader infrastructure challenges in the region. The campus itself is surrounded by abandoned and deteriorating former industrial buildings. The environment appears lifeless and uninviting, with little to suggest that a learning institution exists nearby.

The campus comprises park homes, a few small classrooms, and a small office building. The classrooms are cramped and in need of renovation, making them unsuitable for effective teaching and learning. The network connectivity is poor. There is no library, insufficient computer labs, and no sports field. The campus lacks the infrastructure necessary to accommodate all students simultaneously. As a result, NCV classes are held in the morning, while R191 classes take place in the afternoon. This scheduling leads to low attendance for NCV classes due to limited transport options in the morning. Afternoon classes unofficially end at 4 pm instead of 6 pm, as many students leave early to catch transport or walk home before it is dark, especially during winter. Students come from surrounding rural communities and often travel long distances, frequently on foot or relying on inconsistent public transportation. Since there is no on-campus accommodation, students must seek private housing. Unfortunately, nearby private accommodation is costly, and affordable options are far from the campus. Consequently, students often walk in groups for safety through quicker but unsafe routes.

4.6 Data generation method: Collage inquiry

Appropriate data generation methods are critical to the success of a research study in obtaining rich and relevant data (Creswell, 2009). The chosen data generation method is crucial because it allows the researcher to gather information needed for the study. For this study, I chose collage as a data generation method to enable me to answer my research puzzles. According to Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010), a collage is a form of visual art-based inquiry that helps understand a phenomenon. Similarly, Mayaba and Wood (2015) state that a collage is a visual strategy for generating data and is commonly used in qualitative research. Roberts and Woods (2018) add that this visual mode of inquiry is employed to construct data to comprehend a phenomenon. Collage was appropriate for this study because it facilitated the expression of complex experiences and

perspectives in a visual format, allowing CMT members to convey their leadership experiences in a more detailed and expressive way (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This method enabled a deeper exploration of how the rural context influences their leadership practices, capturing insights that might not have emerged through traditional verbal methods alone (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010).

According to Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) the word collage, which describes a style of art, comes from the French verb *coller*, which also means to stick, and describes a process of cutting and gluing on various objects to a flat surface. The various images on the collage represent multiple realities and a non-linear way of making meaning of the phenomenon (Culshaw, 2019). The collage could then represent the multiple realities of CMT members and provide an unusual way to make meaning of their experiences. It also fosters spoken and unspoken language representations to convey participants' real-life experiences (Gerstenblatt, 2013). The experiences of the individuals are told through collage portraits (Kamal, 2019).

In qualitative research, collages are particularly helpful when using narrative inquiry (Gerstenblatt, 2013) because of their ability to explore people's experiences. A collage can be used during data generation in three ways: as a reflective process, a way to conceptualise ideas and as a form of elicitation. (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). In this study, it was used for reflection, elicitation, and conceptualisation. These three ways are discussed below.

As a reflective process, collage allows individuals to revisit memories and articulate genuine feelings and thoughts about their experiences (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This method helps co-researchers share their leadership experiences and critique themselves. In this study, CMT members used images and text to reflect on their experiences while creating collages. Since our memories are selective (Muylaert et al., 2014), collages help co-researchers remember and tell their stories in a meaningful way.

Collage as a form of conceptualisation involves using visual elements to organise and develop ideas (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). In this study, co-researchers used collages to visually represent their experiences and insights on leadership in a rural TVET college. Visual methods

like collages help externalise ideas, making them more concrete (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This process enhances understanding, as visual representations can uncover patterns and connections not easily seen through words alone (Gerstenblant, 2013).

Collage, when used as an elicitation process, allows participants to express themselves in new and creative ways, encouraging fresh ideas and interpretations (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This method can uncover hidden thoughts and previously unrecognised connections, enabling co-researchers to reflect on their leadership experiences and generate unique insights. By engaging in collage, CMT members were able to convey their personal leadership experiences and reinterpret their actions and behaviours. Additionally, using collage as a form of elicitation can provoke both intellectual and emotional responses from participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), allowing them to express deep emotions and reactions (Gerstenblant, 2013). This creative approach not only reveals each participant's unique experiences but also offers CMT members a reflective space to share hidden thoughts, producing rich and meaningful data (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010).

In this study, collage was utilised to capture all of these features. The CMT members were initially informed about the study and its objectives through multiple conversations. I then explained the collage-making process, emphasising its role as both a form of conceptualisation and a reflective tool to bring their lived experiences to life. I encouraged the CMT members to fully engage in the collage-making process, allowing them to evoke and revisit previously forgotten experiences. I also urged them to create their collages expressively, to capture aspects of their experiences that might be difficult to articulate through spoken words. Finally, as will be elaborated below, the conversations surrounding their collages served as a form of elicitation, further deepening the exploration of their experiences.

4.6.1 Overview of the data generation process

To gain insight into the co-researchers' lived experiences, it was important to build rapport. According to Cohen et al. (2017), rapport involves creating positive relationships between the researcher and participants based on mutual understanding, trust, and support. It is crucial in qualitative research, as it enables participants to freely and confidently share their experiences. I was fortunate to have already established working relationships with the CMT members, which facilitated the process.

However, I did not rely solely on my positionality as a colleague, we maintained consistent communication. After, several conversations, we agreed to schedule our first in-person meeting. This initial meeting involved discussing the co-researchers journey at the TVET College and their role. The pre-existing familiarity made it easy to establish rapport and start our official meetings productively. They all preferred to use either offices or boardrooms for their meetings, typically scheduling them in the afternoon when the campus was quiet, and everyone had left. This choice of location and timing was made for those exact reasons.

After these initial meetings, I explained that the co-researchers would create a collage and I would provide guidance to ensure they understood the task. I offered necessary materials like scissors, paper, glue, magazines, and newspapers, but most chose to use their own, with only one accepting the provided materials. Given the scarcity of magazines, I allowed co-researchers to use pictures and text from the internet. I asked them to find images and text that best described their experiences, challenges, and enablers in leading teaching and learning, emphasising that no art skills were required (Roberts & Woods, 2018). The co-researchers created their collages by cutting images and texts from various sources that represented their leadership experiences, challenges, enablers, and the impact of the rural context (see Appendix F to J, pages 122 – 126).

In each private meeting, each co-researcher brought their collage. I began by welcoming and explaining the narration process. With the collages laid out on the table, they shared their stories, explaining the significance of each image or text and how it related to their leadership experiences as CMT members. These collages told stories and provided insights into how they lead, addressing the three research puzzles. As they shared their stories, they reflected on their collages, describing the meaning of each image and text, which revealed their personal and professional journeys in leadership.

Throughout our conversations, I adopted an open and attentive approach, encouraging them to share their experiences. I provided a platform for them to express themselves freely, and whenever I needed further clarification or a deeper understanding of a particular aspect of their narrative, I interjected with pertinent questions.

Moving from canvas to conversations, I drew on Jovchelovitch and Bauer's (2000) five primary phases as a framework, adopting four which include initiation, narration, questioning and concluding talks phases. I arranged three one-on-one sharing sessions where they shared their experiences using the collages for their multiple versatile intertwining initiations, narration, and questioning phases. The co-researchers shared their stories using their collages as a reference, while I listened actively and non-evaluatively. Questions were asked after each narrative segment to clarify events and avoid leading questions. The process continued until the co-researchers were finished. Concluding talks were informal discussions after the recording ended. These discussions were used as a starting point for the subsequent sessions. We exercised reflexivity during this process, reflecting on the conversation and anticipating future directions. Each co-researcher had two sessions lasting for approximately 1 hour each. Due to the rapport we had established we had additional communication with the co-researchers, at times initiated by them. All these engagements, which also happened after member-checking of the co-researchers' analysed data strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings and provided rich in-depth data.

In some instances, I found it helpful to jot down questions that arose naturally from the stories they were sharing. I chose not to interrupt their flow but instead waited for an appropriate moment to pose these questions once they were done telling their story. However, there were times when I interrupted to probe further or sought clarification to ensure I did not overlook any aspect of their recounting. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive and in-depth exploration of their experiences, fostering a richer and more meaningful dialogue.

4.7 Data analysis

According to Loh (2013) and McMillan and Schumacher (2014), data analysis entails organising the generated data and making meaning of how the co-researchers experienced, interpreted, and understood the phenomenon. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method that searches for patterns, which are called themes. These scholars state that this method analyses different facets of the research puzzles, helping the researcher produce credible findings. Thematic analysis is known for its flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is

notably flexible because it can be applied across a variety of theoretical and epistemological frameworks, making it adaptable to different research contexts. This flexibility allows researchers to analyse qualitative data either inductively or deductively. Furthermore, thematic analysis can range from providing a rich description of the entire data set to offering a more detailed account of specific themes. This adaptability allows researchers to tailor the analysis to the needs of the research question, which makes it a highly versatile method for exploring patterns and meanings within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was the right choice for this study because it helped to organise and understand the complex data from the co-researchers' stories. According to Loh (2013), analysing data means figuring out how co-researchers experienced and understood the phenomenon, which is important for grasping their leadership roles on a rural campus.

Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that thematic analysis looks for patterns, or themes, in the data, which allows for a detailed look at the co-researchers' experiences. This method is flexible, making it easier to explore different parts of the research puzzles and make reliable findings by describing the data in detail. The capacity for thematic analysis to organise data clearly while capturing the depth of the co-researchers' stories made it perfect for this study, which aimed to understand the complex human experiences and events in leading teaching and learning in a rural setting.

The following section provides a detailed account of the data analysis process.

4.7.1 An overview of the data analysis process

The thematic analysis of this study was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006, p.87) approach, which highlights "familiarising yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report as the steps to follow". I elaborate on each step below.

Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) familiarising oneself with the data means that you need to deeply understand the data by spending a lot of time with it. This usually involves reading the data repeatedly, and actively looking for meanings, patterns, and important details. Before I could do that, I first had to organise and transcribe the data verbatim (Cohen et al., 2017). While transcribing, I was immersed in the data and through listening, I started to make sense of the data and connections they made with the respective research puzzles. Transcribing verbatim ensured

that the transcripts were a true version of the information shared in the conversations (Butina, 2015). I then read and re-read the transcripts to gain an understanding of the stories while noting initial ideas and thoughts. This phase of the process was important to help me develop a far more thorough understanding of the data.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

The process of coding is part of the analysis as one organises the data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After I had immersed myself in the data, I started sorting ideas, thoughts, and events around the research puzzles. This phase began after I had read and familiarised myself with the data and generated an initial list of ideas from the data. This phase then involved the production of initial codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to me, the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 3: Creating themes

Creating themes involves grouping codes into broader patterns that capture significant aspects of the data related to the research puzzles (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unlike codes, which are specific labels assigned to individual data pieces, themes are overarching patterns. This phase began after all data had been initially coded and collated, resulting in a long list of codes. I then analysed these codes to see how they might combine to form themes. This process refocused the analysis from the specific codes to broader themes, involving sorting codes into potential themes and collating all relevant data extracts within these themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 4: Reviewing themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), step 4 is about reviewing themes. This means checking if each theme has enough data to support it and ensuring the data within each theme fits together well (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I refined my themes by reviewing the data extracts for each one to see if they made sense together. If a theme was too broad or had too little data, I either merged it with another theme or split it into separate ones. I kept adjusting the themes until they represented the data and were distinct from each other (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

Step 5 begins once the researcher has a clear thematic map of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This step involves defining and refining themes to capture their essence and understanding what each theme represents. I conducted ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. This involved going back to the data for each theme and organising it into a coherent story by identifying the essence of each theme and determining what aspect of the data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 6: Producing the report

Step 6 starts after identifying clear themes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involves writing the final report to explain the data's complexity, clearly and convincingly. The report must be concise, logical, and engaging, avoiding unnecessary repetition. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the importance of backing up these themes with enough evidence from the data. In my work, I carefully wrote the report, using data effectively that not only described the data but also argued effectively in line with my research puzzles, following Braun & Clarke's approach.

4.8 Trustworthiness

For a study to be considered valuable and contributory to the advancement of knowledge, it must adhere to certain widely accepted quality guidelines (Loh, 2013; Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The criteria adopted in this study are credibility, apparenacy and transferability. These criteria were followed to help generate data, provide clear ways to analyse it and complete a thorough report of results. This ensured the study's conclusions were trustworthy and strong, meeting the high standards expected in qualitative research methods. I discuss the criteria below.

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the accuracy and reliability of the study's findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). It hinges on the researchers' credibility and the rigour with which the study was conducted. In this study, I assessed the accuracy of the findings by analysing information from conversations about collages and carefully summarising details to identify recurring themes that support the main conclusions. The careful selection of sampling methods also ensures trustworthiness (Campbell et al., 2020). This study employed purposive sampling, which enhanced the data's trustworthiness and rigour, increasing the credibility of the findings (Campbell et al.,

2020). While the experiences of CMT members are subjective, it is essential to ensure rigour and quality in the research process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

4.8.2 Apparency

Apparency is similar to credibility and addresses the plausibility of the presented narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). A plausible account resonates with the reader as true and believable. Apparency is significant in the narrative inquiry because it confirms that the data generated reflects the co-researchers' explanations, ideas, and thoughts, not the researcher's (Connelly & Clandinin, 2007). To ensure apparency in this study, I transparently presented co-researchers stories without imposing my interpretations. This involved detailing how data were generated and analysed, ensuring the co-researchers explanations and ideas were faithfully reflected. To ensure apparency in this study, I carefully presented the co-researchers' stories without adding my own interpretations. I clearly explained how the data was generated and analysed, making sure the co-researchers' ideas and experiences were accurately reflected. By keeping their stories realistic and true to their experiences, I ensured the findings felt genuine, which strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2007).

4.8.3 Transferability

Narrative inquiries are not meant for generalisation (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Instead, Connelly and Clandinin (2007) suggest using transferability, where readers determine if findings apply to their own context. Transferability refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be applied to other settings or contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Kivunja and Kayini (2017) state that a qualitative study satisfying this requirement provides findings relevant to those in similar situations. For effective transferability, readers need sufficient details about the study, research methods, context, duration, and findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). To achieve this, I provided detailed descriptions of the co-researchers' profiles and the campus environment where they led.

4.9 Ethical issues

To ensure ethical compliance, I followed a structured process. In January 2023, I obtained gatekeeper permission from the institution where the study was conducted, a crucial step aligned with university ethical guidelines (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). Subsequently, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Humanities and Social Sciences Research

Ethics Committee (HSSREC), which was granted in April 2023 after a month-long approval process. With ethical clearance secured, I began co-researcher recruitment through email, providing detailed information about the study's purpose, objectives, and data generation methods. I emphasised co-researchers' right to informed consent and confidentiality, in line with ethical standards outlined by Wiles (2013). Informed consent means that co-researchers were fully informed about the study and their role, ensuring they understood all aspects before agreeing to participate willingly. I ensured confidentiality by ensuring that all information shared by co-researchers was kept private and I did not share their personal details with anyone. Co-researchers were assured of voluntary participation and the option to withdraw at any stage without repercussions (Kortjass, 2019). To protect identities I gave them pseudonyms and changed some personal details like their age. This helped to ensure that even if someone reads the study, they would not be able to recognise who the co-researchers were, following guidelines for confidentiality and anonymity in narrative research (Wiles, 2013).

Given that narrative inquiry is inherently relational (Clandinin & Caine, 2013), maintaining ethical standards was paramount throughout. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained as participants shared stories, with careful consideration to anonymise incidental mentions of others not directly involved in the study (Cohen et al., 2011). Entry and exit negotiations were managed sensitively to respect co-researchers' autonomy (Clandinin et al., 2007). Throughout, precautions were taken to prevent harm and uphold ethical integrity in narrative research practices (Clandinin et al., 2007).

4.10 Limitations

According to Bell (2002), study limitations refer to factors that may impede the research process. Firstly, this study's rural focus presents challenges such as community and student strikes and, the busy schedule of the co-researchers, which disrupted data generation. To mitigate this we found a way to work around our busy schedules. Another limitation was the potential co-researcher withdrawal. To address this, I maintained a reserve pool of co-researchers, though fortunately, all co-researchers remained engaged.

A limitation related to the research process involves the instruments used for data generation. This study primarily used collage inquiry, where co-researchers created and shared collages to represent their experiences. One challenge with these methods is the reliance on the co-researchers' ability

to accurately articulate their thoughts and feelings, which can lead to misinterpretations or omissions affecting the findings. Creswell (2009) notes that qualitative methods, especially those involving personal narratives, are subject to the limitations of the co-researcher's self-reports, which may not always be entirely accurate or complete.

To address this, I conducted detailed and thorough conversations, allowing ample time for co-researchers to fully express their views, and provided clear instructions and support for creating their collages. Additionally, I incorporated follow-up meetings to clarify and expand on the initial data, capturing a more comprehensive and accurate representation of the co-researchers' experiences. This iterative approach aligns with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) argument that prolonged engagement and persistent observation are essential for enhancing the credibility and accuracy of qualitative data.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used to explore the leadership experiences of CMT members in a rural TVET college. It begins with an explanation of the interpretive research paradigm, chosen for its focus on understanding subjective experiences within specific contexts, and particularly how rurality influences leadership in teaching and learning. The qualitative research approach, employing narrative inquiry, was selected to delve deeply into CMT members' personal and leadership experiences. Co-researchers' selection utilised purposive and convenience sampling methods to ensure a diverse data set. Data generation involved recorded conversations from collages and was analysed through thematic analysis to uncover key patterns and themes. Issues of trustworthiness, ethics and limitations to the study were addressed.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used to guide this study's research process. It outlined the data generation method, which involved using a collage. This chapter presents and discusses the findings, aiming to answer the research puzzles posed in the study. The chapter is organised to gain insights into the lives of the CMT members by analysing their lived experiences. The aim was to identify themes that address the three critical puzzles introduced in Chapter One. The discussion of the findings will highlight the lived experiences of the CMT members by describing the following themes.

5.2 Approaches to Leading Teaching and Learning

This theme elucidates how the CMT members lead teaching and learning. It responds to research puzzle one, which asks, "*How do the CMT members lead teaching and learning in a rural TVET college campus?*" Upon analysis of the data of the five co-researchers, several key findings arose from the study. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of their role, encompassing management and leadership functions. Below, the theme discusses allocating time to plan, establishing communication systems for dissemination of information and using systems to improve efficacy which are classified as management functions. After that, the theme discusses motivating staff and students, working with others and leading teaching and learning through monitoring which are classified as the leadership functions. I also present the images from the co-researchers' collages to show how the images represent their experiences in leading teaching and learning. The subsequent sections detail the multifaceted approach CMT members use to lead teaching and learning.

5.2.1 Management functions

Management relates to handling, organising, or executing tasks for a specific purpose (Lloyd & Aho, 2020). Concerning management functions, the CMT members managed teaching and learning by allocating time to plan, establishing communication systems for dissemination of information and using systems to improve efficacy.

5.2.1.1 Allocating Time to Plan

The data reveals that CMT members dedicated time to planning. CMT members engaged in planning for upcoming semesters and their daily activities, acknowledging the importance of planning to effectively manage the multiple responsibilities associated with their roles. While some of these responsibilities were administrative and operational, they were crucial in facilitating the smooth execution of teaching and learning activities. They shared the following:

I plan for the semester properly. I make sure I do the timetable, check that each lecturer's file has all the documents staff will need for the semester, and meet with the staff to discuss the due dates. (Ms Zenzele)

Ms Zamile used the college plan as a guide to their planning activities. She stated the following:

I plan for work. I use the college plan to prioritise tasks that need to be done for the day. (Ms Zamile)



Figure 5.1 Ms Zamile's image 1

Mrs Becky also planned to ensure she could meet the multiple responsibilities of leading teaching and learning. She echoed these sentiments:

There is a lot of paperwork that goes into teaching and learning. I have to monitor students and lecturers in class, check the lecturer's POA files, check attendance registers and leave forms, have staff meetings, and coordinate subject committees. I have to get information ready for the prelims and all administration processes. I make sure that lecturers submit marks on time so that marks can be captured and submitted. I plan and manage registrations, internal assessments, and national examinations. (Mrs Becky)

According to Anderson (2017), planning is a vital management function for leaders striving to achieve their goals and objectives. Kareska (2017) further states that planning is a crucial management function involving the systematic organisation of tasks specifying who, what, and when to carry out different work activities. Therefore, leaders, including CMT members, must allocate sufficient time to planning to enhance the likelihood of goal attainment (Kabeyi, 2019). In a study by Basi (2021), similar findings emerged. Basi (2021) found that CMT members invest their time in planning and setting up systems to run the campuses effectively. Planning therefore emerges as a significant management function used by the CMT to ensure they can fulfil their role of leading teaching and learning.

In this study, the co-researchers also mentioned their rationale for planning. They shared that planning gave them a systemic way to manage their multiple responsibilities. They said the following:

I do not like working in chaos. I like everything to be organised and systematic. I have seen that if you organise yourself well, you can manage your time even though there is a lot of work. (Mrs Karen)

Similarly, Mr DD expressed that planning was important to balance and meet his multiple task demands.

There is administrative work and actual teaching and learning. Therefore, it is not easy to focus on everything equally. By planning and multitasking, I can balance the two. When I plan I am able need fit in everything in the time I have. (Mr DD)

Basset (2016) asserts that achieving a delicate balance requires leaders to manage and prioritise tasks, ensuring successful completion, meticulously. The findings above suggest that the CMT members understand the need for planning. Effective planning is crucial for leaders to guarantee that teaching and learning activities are completed quickly and effectively, improving student results (Anderson, 2017). These findings emphasise the significance of time management in planning, which is a crucial component of successful leadership in the field of education (Bush et al., 2020). In essence, these findings highlight the intricate relationship between effective administration, leadership responsibilities, and the overall success of teaching and learning initiatives.

5.2.1.2 Establishing Communication Systems for Dissemination of Information

CMT members viewed communication as an important aspect of their work. Communication was enabled through various platforms to quickly disseminate important information about teaching and learning. It also assisted with elucidating issues, mitigating delays, and minimising misunderstandings.

Ms Zenzele and Ms Zamile mentioned the following:

I sometimes use WhatsApp. I share information and send reminders to staff for submission dates, especially those who consistently fail to meet deadlines. (Ms Zenzele)

The best way is to send an SMS, WhatsApp, or e-mail. Whenever I receive the college assessment plan, I immediately send it to the lecturers, and I keep reminding them of the due dates. (Ms Zamile)

Amanchukwu et al. (2015) confirm that the leaders' role includes communication and that leaders stay in constant communication with every stakeholder involved. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) add

that, in challenging contexts, leaders are advised to employ a range of communication channels to consistently engage with stakeholders, elements that can be drawn from the co-researchers' voices.

Ms Zenzele and Ms Zamile further stated the benefits of communicating with stakeholders.

There is less conflict because the more we communicate, the fewer misunderstandings we have, as we are all clear and aware of our responsibilities. (Ms Zenzele)

I encourage staff to communicate any issues as early as possible. This helps when there are delays and late submissions. It gives me enough time to reschedule. (Ms Zamile)

Usadolo et al. (2022) suggest that clear and open lines of communication facilitate a smooth flow of information between leaders and their followers fostering positive working relationships. Such relationships benefit lecturers, students, and colleges by promoting a healthy teaching and learning environment (Usadolo et al., 2022).

The data demonstrates that communication helps leaders disseminate information and prevent misunderstandings in terms of deadlines (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). Having communication channels assisted the leaders in ensuring that there were minimal interruptions or delays and in the event of any, they could still salvage the situation by rescheduling. Additionally, Usadolo et al. (2022) assert that clear and open communication contributes to conflict resolution. The data indicates that members of the CMT employ various communication techniques to mitigate conflicts, contributing to the organisation's positive work environment. This implies that communication is a crucial leadership practice for CMT members, enabling them to lead effectively.

5.2.1.3 Using Systems to Improve Efficacy

In addition to communication, the CMT members in this study used the Student Profiler system to improve efficacy. This system was used for organising. Organising involves the systematic arrangement and allocation of resources, including informational, human, and others, to achieve specific objectives (Lloyd & Aho, 2020). Placing students in programmes can be seen as a function of organising, as it entails structuring educational resources to match students' needs and goals. For instance, CMT members highlighted the significance of utilising the Student Profiler system for conducting baseline assessments and profiling students, which helps in organising students into suitable programmes.

Mrs Karen shared that they used the system to appropriately place students who lack previous career guidance. Stating this, she said:

Most of our students lack proper career guidance. Some students are adamant about studying certain courses, but they do not have the background knowledge for those courses and that is where the failure rate comes from. The profiler system gathers information about their abilities, home life, eating ways, lifestyle, and other areas. We then use that information to assist the students and to see the type of background that they come from and place them into programmes suitable for their needs. With our Student Profiler system, we can now select the students based on their academic results.

According to Basi (2021), a lack of prior career guidance among rural students leads them to enrol in programmes for which they are ill-suited. Consequently, when students choose programmes without adequate knowledge, their academic performance suffers (Gaffoor & Bilj, 2019). These scholars' findings are plausible given that Mrs Karen further mentioned that since the inception of Student Profiler, there have been notable improvements in students' performance. Stating this, Mrs Karen said, *"Some lecturers have noted a slight improvement in the type of students that we have now."*

Ms Zamile also lauded the new system, stating that it had improved efficiency. She said:

We now have the new online pre-enrolment and Student Profiler systems, which are making our lives easier now.

Ms Zenzele mentioned that the system is used for baseline assessment, helping them identify learning gaps much earlier than before. Stating this, she said:

Some of our students already come with learning challenges, which we previously could not ascertain. We did not have a way to identify before, but now the Student Profiler is assisting us. The profiler helps us to identify students' gaps before they are in class.

According to Hallinger (2018), a good placement system establishes a setting that is conducive to academic success and promotes effective teaching and learning within both the campus and the classroom. Similarly, Basi's (2021) research found that proficient execution of student profiling and placement significantly influences overall student performance. As evidenced by the CMT members, using the Student Profiler system plays a significant role in identifying knowledge gaps and placing students into relevant programmes, all of which have a positive impact on student outcomes. Furthermore, this system proves instrumental in identifying knowledge gaps and placing students, based on their academic merit. These aspects are pivotal for ensuring the success of students in their respective programmes, aligning to promote effective teaching and learning.

Further, leadership for learning asserts that leaders impact academic structures and processes cognisant of the community characteristics in which their leadership is enacted (Hallinger, 2011).

In this study, the CMT members' understanding of the lack of access to online facilities and the inadequacy of career guidance in rural contexts is made clear, at times they invite students to do this on campus and then use the student profiler to get information so they can direct students to relevant courses based on their academic merits.

Though effective to some extent, Mrs Becky noted some blind spots in the system. Voicing these, she stated the following concerns:

Even with the online system, students have a little bit of information available regarding courses. There is much more explanation that needs to go into the specific programme information, which direction students can take if they choose a programme, what careers can come from the specific course of study and, what are the possibilities from there onward. (Mrs Becky)

Mrs Becky's observation suggests that while the systems may be effective, there is still a need to engage in further counsel to ensure the appropriate placement of students. However, Mrs Karen highlighted the challenges faced when students are determined to pursue specific courses despite lacking the necessary knowledge. She stated:

Some students are adamant about doing certain courses, but they just do not have the knowledge. The students who want to do financial management, but have never done accounting in their life before and do not know what is it actually for, or what it means and that is where the failure rate comes in. (Mrs Karen)

It is important to note that even when counsel has been given to students, there is a possibility that they may still insist on their choices. While this may be seen in a negative light, some research (Basi, 2019; Nzembe, 2019) indicates that students who select courses aligned with their preferences tend to excel academically, as opposed to those who do not. Those who are placed in their programmes of choice are motivated and a positive attitude among students has been linked to higher academic performance (Nzembe, 2019). Conversely, a negative attitude towards their programme or college work can lead to poor performance, thereby perpetuating existing issues in student achievement within the sector (Buthelezi, 2018). Thus, while profiling and placement may have positive student outcomes, caution must be exercised to avoid placing students in programmes where they will lack motivation. In addition to management functions, the CMT members also utilised various leadership approaches to lead teaching and learning.

5.2.2 Leadership functions

Bush et al. (2019) describe leadership as a process of influence that moulds individuals' behaviour. Concerning leadership functions, the CMT members led teaching and learning by motivating staff and students, working with others, and monitoring teaching and learning.

5.2.2.1 Motivating Staff and Students

Some CMT members shared that they motivate both staff and students. CMT members used various strategies, including staff awards, to acknowledge and reward performance, boost morale, and create a positive working atmosphere. They mentioned other efforts to motivate staff through support, including identifying and addressing issues immediately, even with limited resources.

Ms Zamile shared the following relating to student motivation.

Students get discouraged because their life at college is not easy. We have to motivate them to keep them focused and interested in their studies. Therefore, I get close to them and try to assist them with whatever they need on campus. (Ms Zamile)

According to Badenhorst and Radile (2018), a lack of motivation often leads to unwillingness to learn, high absenteeism, and disinterest in academic pursuits. Consequently, it becomes imperative for CMT members to consistently motivate students as they navigate the challenges of college life. Sanders et al. (2016) found that motivation is directly linked to student success. Nzembe (2019) further recommends that TVET colleges proactively design, develop, implement, and evaluate motivation models to enhance student participation and success.

While some students were demotivated, Ms Zamile pointed out that a lack of motivation does not apply to every student. She said:

Not all of our students are discouraged. Some still have hope because they know and can see other students who have succeeded because of the TVET education. (Ms Zamile)

These contrasting perspectives highlight the varied experiences of students within the context. While many face significant challenges leading to demotivation, others find hope in the success stories around them. This variation indicates the need for tailored motivational strategies to address diverse student needs. Hallinger (2011) emphasises the role of leaders in understanding and responding to these differences, to foster a supportive and motivating environment. By recognising and addressing unique challenges and motivations, CMT members can better support students' academic success and well-being.

While motivation was extended to students, the CMT members also ensured that they extended it to staff. Mrs Karen shared that they motivate staff by creating spaces for engagement and awarding good performance. She said the following:

We motivate staff as often as possible. We hold meetings with them to find out where they are experiencing issues and see how, with our limited resources on campus, we can help. We try to meet their needs

immediately where we can. We also have staff awards where the staff are recognised for their good pass rates. (Mrs Karen)

The findings suggest that motivation is crucial in CMT leadership practices. Hallinger (2019) indicates that leaders impact student learning by motivating staff. Balkrishen and Meistry (2016) highlight leadership's role in enhancing campus outcomes by shaping lecturer motivations. Leithwood et al. (2020) assert that recognising and rewarding achievements boosts motivation and supports staff development. Mabaso (2017) emphasises the importance of rewards in higher education, and Nzembe (2017) notes that rewards increase lecturer confidence, skills acquisition, and willingness to take on more responsibilities. Recognition practices, akin to organisational rituals, also foster staff motivation and ensure compliance (Akanji et al., 2020). This demonstrates the multifaceted ways leadership can influence motivation, enhance staff engagement, and ultimately improve student outcomes.

Although the CMT members did not elaborate on the benefits of motivating staff, Akanji et al. (2020) state that it can lead to increased job satisfaction, and organisational commitment, and significantly reduce staff turnover rates. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) and Balkrishen and Meistry (2016) add that increased staff motivation improves productivity and that reward initiatives enhance staff development and retention. These insights suggest the critical link between motivational strategies, leadership effectiveness, and organisational outcomes in the context.

5.2.2.2 Working with Others

The CMT members further shared that they work with others. For some of them, this approach had been learned as they gained more experience in their roles. In working with others, the CMT members emphasised shared decision-making. They stated the following:

In the initial stages, my approach was rather stringent. This was driven by my desire for efficiency. I would directly instruct lecturers on tasks in front of students without considering the impact on their reputation. However, my management style has changed. I now lean towards a participative approach. I prefer teamwork over a boss-centric demeanour. I advocate for joint decision-making, encouraging others to come alongside me in the decision-making process. (Mrs Karen)

Ms Zenzele shared similar sentiments: She said:

Early in my role, I recognised the need to establish a solid foundation, prompting a fresh start where we could build connections individually. To foster a collaborative environment, I consciously refrained from leading from the front based on experiences. Instead, I opted to step back, allowed the team to voice their opinions, make decisions collectively, and offer guidance and input when needed and it worked. (Ms Zenzele)

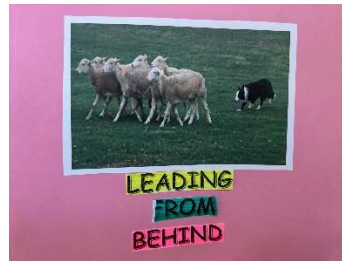


Figure 5.2 Ms Zenzele's image 1

The co-researchers' voices indicate that their leadership practices have evolved from working in isolation to collaborating with others. According to Amanchukwu et al. (2015), this shift from a directive style to a more collaborative approach is typical as leaders gain experience. Novice leaders often start with a strict, task-oriented style for efficiency and control. However, with experience, they recognise the limitations of this approach and begin to value team contributions.

While these benefits could be yielded, Mrs Karen indicated that it does not always happen because there are times when final decisions must be made without additional input. She stated:

There are stages where you cannot consult anymore and you have to make a final decision. It is those final decisions that the staff normally do not like, but if those are critical decisions that staff cannot have an input on, you go ahead and make the decision. (Mrs Karen)

This is not surprising since leaders utilise various leadership approaches to respond to different situations. In this vein, Basi (2021) found that CMT members in rural campuses utilised different leadership styles, while Amanchukwu et al. (2015) noted that there are some shortcomings in democratic leadership, particularly in scenarios where promptness is crucial. As indicated by the co-researchers' voices, their styles have evolved and, in some situations, they change to respond to the contextual issues they face.

The co-researchers shared further benefits of working with others. Through collaborative efforts, they were able to utilise the social capital and expertise of their colleges to advance educational goals. They shared the following:

Our team brings diverse industry experiences. Each person has unique expertise that not everyone has. I promote teamwork; those with specialised knowledge in various aspects can share that with others. This creates a good environment where we keep assisting each other. (Mr DD)



Figure 5.3 Mr DD's image 1

We help each other as peers. I preach that language. If you know that you are good in a particular subject, be willing to help others. (Ms Zamile)

Mrs Becky shared similar sentiments:

We do not always get assistance from outside, but we do have skills and knowledge inside, so we do assist each other. I mean we can learn quite a lot from each other, and that is one of the main things that I promote is teamwork and a buddy system. If lecturers need assistance, I am always the first one to say, I am available. (Mrs Becky)

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2013), professional capital encompasses three streams. The first is human capital, which is the talent of individuals (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). The second is social capital, which pertains to the collective power of a group (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). Lastly is decisional capital, described as “the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learners and cultivated over many years” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013, p. 37). Evidence from the CMT members shows that collaborating with others enabled them to tap into these three streams of capital thus creating a collaborative environment where staff members could assist each other and share their skills and expertise to improve overall educational goals.

Working with others opens channels for peer support, aligning with the leadership for learning model, which advocates for shared leadership (Hallinger, 2011). This model emphasises engaging others in decision-making, fostering relationships, and enhancing staff capacity to improve individual skills and student outcomes (Hallinger, 2011). Sharing leadership also increases staff motivation and team efficiency (Zhu et al., 2018). Kabeyi (2019) suggests that employees are more motivated when their efforts contribute to organisational goals. By promoting collaboration and shared decision-making, CMT members empower others to lead, adding to the resources needed for campus improvement.

5.2.2.3 Leading Teaching and Learning through Monitoring

Monitoring teaching and learning was another key leadership practice employed by the CMT members. As research suggests, leaders play a crucial role in monitoring educational processes to

ensure quality and support continuous improvement (Murphy, 2019). Hallinger et al. (2020) highlight the importance of this role, explicating that leaders need to religiously assess that teaching and learning activities are in line with guidelines and objectives for education. Bush et al. (2019) state that monitoring is multifaceted and can involve classroom observations, witnessing teachers in practice, and providing feedback. The CMT in this study also used multiple monitoring approaches, some of which included class visits and random walkabouts, some being planned and others being unplanned. Some co-researchers indicated that they first need to plan for these strategies.

Ms Zamile's strategy included planned and unplanned monitoring activities. Stating this, she said:

In my campus, there is planned monitoring and unplanned monitoring. For planned monitoring, what I do at the beginning of the year is ask the lecturers to submit their POAs with their year plans. The year plan needs to have planned dates for teaching and learning, especially for NCV, as they need to complete their syllabus by 8 September. (Ms Zamile)

Ms Zenzele mentioned using planned monitoring by engaging in class visits. She shared the following sentiments:

My responsibility is to draw up a class visit plan and share it with lecturers so that they are aware of when monitoring is taking place. (Ms Zenzele)

Other co-researchers shared the different approaches they employ to monitor teaching and learning. Ms Zamile shared that she walks around to check students are in class:

For unplanned monitoring, I just walk around with the timetable and supervise the students who are on campus, but not in class. (Ms Zamile)

On the other hand, Ms Zenzele shared how she checks if teaching and learning are taking place:

As CMT members, we go to different venues to supervise that lecturers and students are in class, and lecturers are teaching. We greet students who are outside and find out why or find out if the students who are outside are meant to be there and if they are waiting for a lecturer. We then attend to that and ensure the lecturer goes to class and if they are not available we cancel that class. (Ms Zenzele)

In addition, Ms Zamile shared that the rationale for this approach was to ensure that effective teaching and learning was occurring. She stated:

We need to monitor teaching and learning so that we can provide solutions for lecturers and students in their classes. (Ms Zamile)

Additionally, some CMT members expressed their frustrations with the challenges they encounter when monitoring teaching and learning. They shared the following:

The unfortunate thing about this job is the fact that there is not enough time to focus on monitoring teaching and learning or ensuring effective teaching and learning. Executing that is challenging because, given everything we are dealing with, that particular aspect is honestly receiving insufficient attention. (Mrs Becky)

With all of these challenges, it is quite difficult to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place. (Ms Zenzele)

Despite challenges, CMT members prioritise monitoring teaching and learning as a core leadership responsibility. This aligns with Dlamini's (2021) emphasis on the critical role of CMT leadership and the need to enhance this focus to optimise student outcomes. Scholars such as Balkrishen and Mestry (2016) and Robertson and Frick (2018) highlight that rigorous monitoring positively impacts learning quality and overall student performance. By identifying areas for improvement and providing targeted support to lecturers and students, this approach ensures the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

Monitoring teaching and learning is crucial for ensuring time on task and protecting instructional time. Balkrishen (2019) suggests that CMTs should establish positive, supportive environments for staff and students to minimise disruptions and maintain the focus on learning. Goldring et al. (2020) argue that non-academic activities leading to lost instructional time can negatively impact student performance. Therefore, CMTs play a crucial role in safeguarding instructional time by ensuring classes start and finish on time and that sufficient time is dedicated to academic activities.

These CMT members' persistent focus on monitoring aligns with the leadership for learning model, emphasising the importance of academic structures and processes (Hallinger, 2011). Their commitment to this practice, despite challenges, illustrates a key leadership duty. The model demonstrates how these structures and processes enable leadership to indirectly impact student achievement (Hallinger, 2011). Leadership in teaching and learning is thus a complex task requiring a multifaceted approach. The following theme will explore the factors that enable and constrain CMT members in their leadership of teaching and learning.

5.3 Enabling and constraining factors to CMT leadership

This theme responds to research puzzle two, which asks, "*What factors enable or constrain the leadership of CMT members in leading teaching and learning at a rural TVET college campus?*"

The CMT members responsible for leading rural campuses identified various factors that both facilitated and hindered their efforts in leading teaching and learning. In the subsequent theme,

these factors will be presented as constraints and enablers, highlighting their impact on the leadership of CMT members in teaching and learning. Below, I present the constraining factors.

5.3.1 Factors that constrain the leadership of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning

The constraints they faced included inadequate leadership preparation and support, overwhelming work overload, senior management's lack of understanding and support for campus needs, and financial challenges affecting students.

5.3.1.1 Inadequate Leadership Preparation and Support

CMT members reported a lack of formal leadership training upon appointment, which hindered their effectiveness in their roles. Without access to structured training, they had to rely solely on their own experience, which sometimes fell short in addressing the leadership challenges they encountered. Seeing these shortcomings, they found diverse ways to empower themselves to navigate their leadership roles.

Mrs Karen shared how she taught herself to use the college management information system:

In this job, you are self-taught and hope that you taught yourself right otherwise, you learn. We would try to figure things out ourselves, learn how to use the Coltech system and eventually master it. (Mrs Karen)

Similarly, Mr DD shared that they developed systems that would help them do the work:

We started everything from scratch. We had to come up with systems in place for us to be able to work, and there was no other way because, at the end of the day, results were needed, we had to make it work. (Mr DD)

This aligns with research by Robertson and Frick (2018) who found that TVET leaders typically do not receive formal training when assuming their positions. Generally, inadequate leadership preparation is common in South Africa for most people ascending to management positions. As noted by Wolstencroft and Lloyd (2019) limited leadership development is a significant constraint in TVET leadership, adversely affecting their performance. To address this issue, Balkrishen (2019) advocates for providing CMTs with essential training and development. Importantly, Balkrishen (2019) emphasises the need for tailored training that aligns with the unique requirements and contextual needs of each leader and their respective campuses. This approach ensures that leaders can effectively respond to the specific needs of their campuses. While this is the ideal, it is noteworthy that despite facing constraints in professional development opportunities,

CMT members displayed resourcefulness and agency by actively engaging in self-directed professional growth.

In addition to teaching themselves work Mrs Becky also added that she relied on other CMT members from sister colleges for assistance:

What I did to ensure the work was done was I had to figure out things myself and I phoned a few CMT members from sister colleges around, saying to them this is what we have, is this what we are supposed to do, and am I on the right track? (Mrs Becky)

The voice of this co-researcher seems to suggest that they were able to identify their lack of leadership skills and expertise, and from this assessment, they worked with others to engage in their professional development. Though not explicitly stated, it appears that she relied on professional learning communities (PLCs) to aid her learning. According to Dufour (2007), PLCs provide considerable benefits for the improvement of leadership skills by providing a collaborative environment in which leaders may participate in introspective discussions, share best practices and together address issues. According to Dufour (2007), PLCs provide leaders with opportunities to develop their leadership abilities, broaden their knowledge, and acquire new viewpoints, all of which contribute to their increased efficacy in leadership. Effective educational leadership requires ongoing learning and growth, which a PLC's supportive environment promotes (DuFour, 2007).

What is also apparent in the voices presented above is that the CMT members have the agency to seek alternate ways to capacitate themselves. CMT members demonstrated resourcefulness and a drive for self-directed professional development. This agency is crucial for meeting challenges head-on and guaranteeing that leadership practices keep getting better. Balkrishen (2019) asserts that proactive professional growth is essential for good leadership, particularly in intricate educational environments. Maintaining high standards of teaching and learning requires leaders to be committed to both personal and professional growth, which is demonstrated by their initiative in looking for resources and learning opportunities outside of their immediate surroundings (Balkrishen, 2019).

Uniquely, Ms Zenzele shared that she drew on her personal experience and exposure to various campus management responsibilities she had gained while working closely with CMT members whilst she was still a post-level one lecturer. She stated:

What helped me was that I had always kept close contact with my seniors, and the CMT members. I was that person that they could rely on. Before I was part of CMT, my supervisor knew that if they needed anything done, they would ask me and I would do it, even things that were not part of my scope of work. (Ms Zenzele)

Ms Zenzele's experience indicates that those moving into leadership do not enter this role on a blank slate. According to Moorosi and Grant (2018), the professional socialisation of leaders can begin unconsciously, even before they aspire to leadership roles. These influences subtly shape their leadership characteristics, personalities, and value systems, ultimately affecting their practices later in their careers (Moorosi & Grant, 2018). Mvimbe (2019) and Nkau (2021), who found that CMT members heavily rely on their personal experience and knowledge because of the absence of prior training and development upon assuming their roles, have also cited the reliance on personal experiences.

The data show the importance of personal knowledge and experience in shaping effective leadership, as highlighted by Hallinger's leadership for learning model. The model emphasises that leaders' knowledge and experiences profoundly influence their practices (Hallinger, 2011). This is further reported in Mvimbe (2019) and Nkau's (2021) studies. In rural TVET colleges, reliance on personal knowledge and experience is common and crucial, and Hallinger's model suggests that effective leadership must draw on experiences and ingrained values to navigate challenges and enhance educational outcomes.

5.3.1.2 Overwhelming Work Overload

Another constraint mentioned by CMT members was the overwhelming work overload. The duties and responsibilities of CMTs, as stated earlier include planning, organising by profiling students and placing them into appropriate programmes, motivating both staff and students, while establishing various channels of communication and working with others. The CMT members shared that they had an insurmountable workload and at times felt overwhelmed, making it challenging to lead effectively. Their voices are presented below:

There are additional responsibilities, and there are endless due dates, which you need to meet and still be in class. There is no free time for us. There is no time for us to do marking or any admin work at the office. (Mrs Becky)



Figure 5.4 Mrs Becky's image 1

Additionally, CMT members lamented about overseeing a greater number of individuals and dealing with multiple student matters.

It is a lot of work for one person to be supervising 39 lecturers and even more challenging to get all the work done. We are working with staff and students from the time that you walk in until you walk out. (Mrs Becky)

I had 28 lecturers that I was supervising, they would take turns to come to the office for whatever they needed, and the students would come with their enquiries and challenges. Everybody wants to be attended to immediately and they want things done now! (Ms Zenzele)

We had to fulfil multiple roles on campus due to the absence of HoDs. We functioned as both senior lecturers and acting HoDs simultaneously, carrying out the workload of four individuals. This situation persisted for several years and it was a lot of responsibility. (Mr DD)

I was managing 52 staff members and 9 programmes and it was too much for me. (Ms Zamile)

The CMT members expressed feeling overwhelmed by their workload, noting that they primarily focused on administrative tasks in the office, rather than classroom activities. According to Bush et al. (2019), educational leaders are feeling overwhelmed by their workloads in the majority of regions of Africa. Findings from Bush et al. (2019) show that a significant amount of teaching and learning time is lost as a result of leaders' involvement in external meetings, which reduces the students' contact time. Additionally, these scholars state that this kind of workload leads to work overload, and as a result, leaders spend less time on instructional leadership matters. In this study, some CMT members also resorted to missing their classes. They shared the following:

I am expected to attend meetings, on campus and sometimes away, I then miss class so teaching and learning is not taking place. (Mr DD)

Once I start working in the office, I cannot go to class, I will stay in the office the whole day because lecturers and students will come to me and they all need my attention. (Ms Zamile)

To mitigate time lost, some CMT members worked on weekends and started classes in the morning to recoup the lost instructional time.

I make sure I take students for extra lessons. Sometimes I come on Saturdays to cover up for the time lost so that they pass and their NFSAS is not affected. (Ms Zenzele)

There were many times when I asked my students to come to class at 7 am and by doing that I was able to get so much work done. (Ms Zamile)

Mrs Becky shouldered her work responsibilities by taking work home, a practice that had negatively impacted her personal life.

The only way to ensure that I get it all done is to take my admin work home, if I do not do that it will not get done and I will get stuck. (Mrs Becky)

Sharing the impact of this, she stated:

Taking work home influences your private life because you are spending so much time working at home and you do not spend that time with your family or your friends and there is tension there. (Mrs Becky)

According to Akanji et al. (2020), academic leaders who regularly take work home may experience increased stress, burnout, and a compromised work-life balance, which can ultimately affect their overall well-being and job satisfaction. Therefore, while well intentioned, this practice can have a severe impact on overall well-being.

Studies by Balkrishen (2019), Dlamini (2021), and Robertson and Frick (2018) support these findings. They demonstrate that the extensive additional responsibilities placed on CMTs, which split their focus between academic leadership and operational management, consume their time and impede their ability to perform core duties and focus on teaching and learning. This division in priorities can shift leaders' attention away from the core mission of teaching and learning.

Consequently, the overwhelming workload of CMT members raises concerns about the neglect of their instructional leadership role, which could jeopardise the quality of teaching and learning and potentially impact student performance. However, despite these challenges, CMT members consistently find ways to ensure that all their tasks are completed and they compensate for the time lost in class. This commitment to completing tasks demonstrates their dedication to their roles, although it may come with its own set of implications. However, even though such efforts are made, it is important to further explore how measures such as Saturday classes and morning classes impact students and their learning outcomes.

5.3.1.3 Senior Management's Lack of Understanding and Support for Campus Needs

Significantly, some CMT members shared that they received inadequate support from senior management and other central office managers. Some of the issues they highlighted include delays in procurement and recruitment processes, directly affecting teaching and learning outcomes, and diminishing morale among staff, students, and CMT members. Their voices are presented below:

We do not see the central office coming to our campuses for monitoring. We only see them once there is a problem on the campus and that does not assist us. (Ms Zamile)

There is no support from senior managers, so you are very much on your own and this can be overwhelming and cause frustration on campus. (Mrs Karen)

There are reasons why the resources are not there, supply chain management (SCM) processes mostly affect it, especially when it comes to computer labs being equipped, and the SCM has a role to play. (Mr DD)

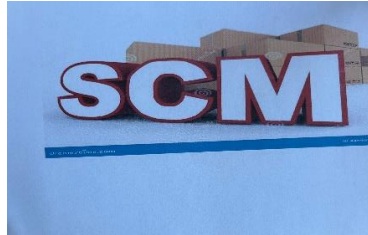


Figure 5.5 Mr DD's image 2

Senior Management Team (SMT) does not understand when you say the campus urgently needs something for the classrooms. They take their time and do not see a problem with that. When you make important and urgent requests for the campus, sometimes it is not approved, because there is all this red tape. (Mrs Karen)

The recruitment process usually takes almost eight weeks to unfold, which leads to delays in teaching and learning for the students. Some students have been in class without a lecturer for two to three months. We as senior lecturers are demotivated, and we feel that whatever you say or request the management will not listen to you. (Ms Zamile)

The data shows that CMT members face a variety of difficulties, including inadequate support from senior management and support unit managers. As demonstrated in their voices, these challenges have the potential to negatively affect student results by causing frustration and disruptions in teaching and learning. According to Basset (2016), middle managers struggle without the support of senior managers. This study highlights how important it is to have better organisational support. In general, organisational support plays a critical role in reducing these difficulties and creating a setting that is favourable to instruction and learning.

The CMT members further shared their perspectives about the issues that influenced the lack of support. For the most part, they believed that the absence of support was rooted in the college SMT and other central office managers' lack of understanding of their management role, regarding their roles and the lack of experience in the TVET sector. They shared the following:

I think if there was more cohesion between the central management and the campus management, they would be able to understand the campus needs. Their lack of understanding and sense of urgency comes from the fact that none of the senior managers have TVET experience, they come from other sectors. (Mrs Karen)

I think there is a big lack of understanding of the role of each manager. It also does not help that generally there is very little support or none for CMT. SMT does not have a clue about what a senior lecturer deals with daily. (Mrs Becky)



Figure 5.6 Mrs Becky's image 2

Our college management cannot assist fully because of their background. They do not have knowledge or experience in the TVET sector. (Ms Zamile)

A similar finding was highlighted by Robertson and Frick (2018), suggesting that many TVET college leaders transitioned from the basic education sector, lacking the knowledge and experience necessary for success in the TVET sector. This limitation directly impacts their leadership practices, as they struggle to meet the sector's specific demands (Robertson & Frick, 2018). The literature reviewed emphasises that leadership in TVET colleges must possess a comprehensive understanding of the sector's unique challenges and requirements to ensure effective teaching and learning (Balkrishen, 2019). Against this expectation, the CMT voices suggest that there is a disconnect between the college senior management, the central office managers and the campus. This leads to demotivation and adverse impacts on teaching and learning. This finding resonates with Balkrishen's (2019) assertion that some CMT members receive insufficient assistance from the central office in addressing college-related concerns. He says that this lack of support contributes to feelings of loneliness among CMTs, leads to non-compliance, and hinders their ability to make crucial decisions. Basset (2016) further emphasises that effective leadership by middle managers is contingent on receiving support from upper management. Therefore, effective decision-making and leading a TVET college in the right direction require leaders with a profound understanding of teaching and learning, essential for keeping pace with sector innovations and trends (Robertson & Frick (2018).

Hallinger (2011) emphasises that the institutional system shapes the environment, influencing attitudes towards authority and decision-making. The leadership for learning model highlights the role of leaders in creating an atmosphere that fosters continuous development in teaching and learning. A lack of support from senior management hinders CMT members from implementing innovative practices and addressing new challenges effectively. These difficulties draw attention

to how crucial good leadership practices are to creating a favourable learning environment and, eventually, influencing student outcomes.

5.3.1.4 Financial Challenges Affecting Students

CMT members also shared that another constraint in leading teaching and learning is financial challenges affecting students in TVET colleges. In the South African context, the majority of TVET students are NSFAS beneficiaries and the scheme's instability and delays in disbursing funds harm student attendance and often result in strikes (Dlamini, 2021). While these are common challenges in all higher education institutions, they are rife in the TVET sector. Mrs Becky explains:

Most of our rural students, I would say 99.9% of them, are dependent on NSFAS for finances which has its challenges. We have never been able to implement the 80% attendance policy because we know that students rely on NSFAS to get the transport money to come to class, but they cannot, so funding does affect the students. (Mrs Becky)

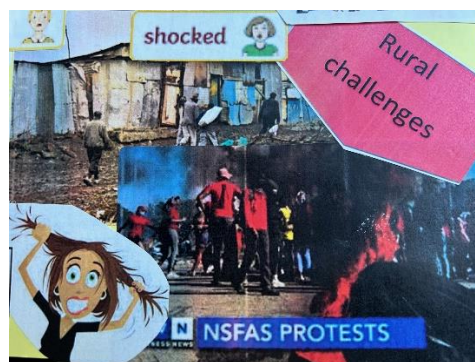


Figure 5.7 Mrs Becky's image 3

Mrs Karen elaborated further, elucidating the consequences. She stated:

If NSFAS has not paid student allowances, the students will not have money for food and transport to be able to come to class. The sector itself is just so unstable. The NSFAS is unstable, which causes all of our problems, such as strikes and poor attendance. (Mrs Karen)

Similarly, Ms Zenzele further explained the ripple effect of funding issues. She said:

Every year you find that the pass rate is dropping drastically because some students do not attend classes due to allowance non-payment. Then they do not qualify for exams and they have to come back the next semester. If they fail, they do not get funding and they have to pay for themselves. (Ms Zenzele)

While acknowledging administrative challenges within NSFAS, Mr DD shared a different perception highlighting that such funding was crucial for transformation and the expansion of access to previously disadvantaged groups. Below is his view:

TVET colleges were previously reserved only for a particular group. Now the era has changed, and there is NSFAS, for those who do not have enough funds. Although NSFAS pays late, this scheme does give those who want to further their studies a chance so they can be able to obtain or acquire the knowledge so that they can have skills that are required for our economy. (Mr DD)

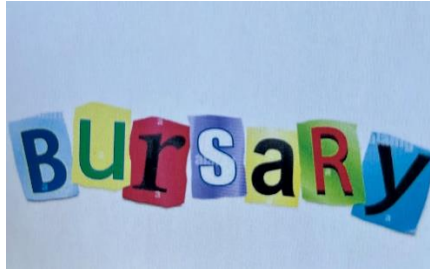


Figure 5.8 Mr DD's image 3

This study brings to light a crucial constraint in leading teaching and learning, namely the financial challenges affecting students in TVET colleges. The co-researchers noted that a significant portion of their students rely on the NSFAS because of their social status. However, they highlighted that NSFAS often encounters delays and fails to disburse funds to students promptly, resulting in poor student attendance and subsequent student strikes. These disruptions on campus, in turn, contribute to a loss of instructional time, affecting leadership by potentially taking their focus away from their primary duties of teaching and learning (Dlamini, 2021).

According to Mahlangu (2019), the loss in instructional time has an effect not just on the individual students, but also on the overall quality of education that TVET colleges offer. Nzembe (2017) notes that time loss results in reduced pass rates, higher dropout rates, and ultimately fewer trained graduates joining the workforce. To help students and guarantee continuous learning, there is an urgent need for more effective and dependable financial aid schemes (Buthelezi, 2018).

NSFAS delays in disbursing funds are a nationwide issue. These data show the need for transparent and proactive communication with students regarding the status of their financial aid to help manage expectations and alleviate frustration. Although the CMT uses communication to disseminate information, it is unclear how they utilise these strategies to keep students informed about delays and available support options to minimise the loss of instructional time.

5.4 Factors enabling the leadership of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning

This section presents the factors that enabled CMT to lead teaching and learning. Upon analysis of the data, there were two key findings arising from the study in this regard. They are working as one for a common purpose and seeing the fruits of one's labour. Below I present these enabling factors.

5.4.1 Working as one for a common purpose

The CMT members mentioned that working collaboratively with their staff towards a common purpose improved their leadership skills and boosted their overall job satisfaction, even in the face of challenges.

Mrs Karen shared that building a cohesive, dependable team committed to achieving positive student outcomes served as her motivation. She stated:

Several factors make my job more enjoyable and manageable, like building strong relationships with both my staff and students also add to my job satisfaction. Additionally, having a dependable CMT team that focuses on their specific tasks and completes their work. It is great when I do not have to constantly monitor staff behaviour. (Mrs Karen)

Similarly, Mrs Becky shared that working with committed staff made her job easier. She said the following:

There are aspects that make my work easier. For instance, there are staff members and other CMT members who work hard to submit work on time and other CMT members who give me support. (Mrs Becky)

These findings reveal the value of collaborative leadership and job satisfaction in a rural TVET college. Working closely with dedicated and supportive colleagues allows CMT members to navigate their roles more effectively, fostering a positive and productive educational environment. This collaborative approach not only helps in managing the inherent challenges of rural contexts but also contributes to personal job satisfaction and professional growth for the leaders involved.

Hallinger (2011) emphasises the importance of collaborative leadership in creating effective learning environments. He asserts that leadership is not a solitary endeavour but a shared process that involves working closely with staff and other stakeholders (Hallinger, 2011). This collaboration is crucial for addressing the unique challenges of rural TVET colleges and enhancing the overall educational experience.

Job satisfaction, defined by Jeremiah et al. (2019) as feelings of happiness or satisfaction at work is crucial for productivity. They note that content employees are more passionate and productive. Similarly, Mabaso (2017) found that satisfied staff feel proud, emotionally attached, and have a sense of belonging, linking job satisfaction to organisational commitment. This study highlights that CMT members' job satisfaction is essential for organisational commitment. However, while CMT members can identify many factors hindering their leadership, they can only point to a few that support their ability to lead teaching and learning effectively.

5.4.2 Seeing the fruits of one's labour

The fruits of one's labour refer to the deep satisfaction that comes from witnessing tangible student success. The CMT members shared that seeing their students succeed was a motivational factor that made their work fulfilling. Stating this, they shared the following:

What keeps me committed to the TVET sector is the satisfaction of seeing my students finally grasp the concepts I have been teaching them and when I have provided empathy, support, and guidance to my students in need. These things keep me going (Mrs Becky)

Another rewarding aspect is helping individual students succeed. It is heart-warming when students recognise and appreciate my efforts, whether they approach me on the street or during college graduation events. Seeing students achieve their goals. Knowing I played a part in their success is incredibly fulfilling and motivates me to continue doing my job well. (Mrs Karen)



Figure 5.9 Mrs Karen's image 1

Similarly, Ms Zamile stated:

Whenever you see or meet students who have completed their studies, you are proud of what you have produced, even more so if it is students from my community. It becomes a compliment to me that at least I have done something or changed someone's life. So, then I keep on. (Ms Zamile)

The co-researchers highlighted the rewarding aspects of their roles, emphasising the fulfilment they experience from helping students succeed and witnessing the positive impact on their lives. While this did not directly impact or circumvent the challenges of their roles, it was an intrinsic

motivation that fuelled them to continue in their leadership endeavours. This finding shows that intrinsic motivation stemming from student success enables CMT members to navigate these challenges with resilience and dedication. By focusing on the personal rewards of fostering student growth and empowerment, CMT members find renewed purpose and motivation in their leadership endeavours. This intrinsic motivation not only sustains their commitment but also enhances their effectiveness in leading educational initiatives within a rural TVET college. The following theme will elucidate the context of rurality's influence on the leadership of the CMT members in teaching and learning.

5.5 The context of rurality's influence on the leadership of the CMT members in teaching and learning

This last theme discusses the influence of rurality on CMT members' leadership for teaching and learning. It responds to research puzzle three which asks, "*How does the context of rurality influence the leadership of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning?*" While undertaking multiple responsibilities to lead the rural campuses, the CMT members have shared that they encountered specific challenges inherent to the rural context, which posed various constraints to their leadership. These challenges include issues related to enrolment numbers, limited student accommodation, community-related challenges for teaching and learning in rural campuses, fostering student interest and attendance through extracurricular activities and resource and infrastructure scarcity impacting student workplace readiness. In the following sections, I thematically discuss these challenges.

5.5.1 Issues with Enrolment Numbers

The context of rurality impacted CMT members in varied ways when it comes to issues of enrolment. Some of the CMT members shared that they had a large population of students, while others struggled with meeting enrolment targets within the desired timeframes. Those who struggled with meeting the targets further expressed that this resulted in delayed class commencement and subsequent loss of valuable teaching time. In comparison to other favourable contexts, co-researchers expressed their belief that the situation in terms of enrolments is different in urban areas. They believe that the issue of rurality impacted them in that sense.

Mrs Karen and Mr DD contrasted their rural college with urban colleges, stating that urban colleges often complete registration in a day, with full class groups and classes commencing shortly after. This underscores the influence of context on enrolment processes, as urban areas generally have higher student affordability and accessibility (Jeffrey & Johnson, 2019). Mrs Karen stated:

When it comes to enrolments, if you look at us compared to the other colleges in the Durban area you find that they have an influx of students. They can finish their registration in literally a day, all their class groups are full and all the registration admin is done and a week or two later, classes commence. Whereas with us, it is completely different. (Mrs Karen)

Mr DD stated:

For campuses that are in urban areas, there is an influx of students, they do not struggle with enrolment numbers. (Mr DD)

Despite challenges with meeting enrolment targets, some rural campuses experience high enrolment numbers. Ms Zenzele, for instance, noted a high demand for their programmes, attributing it to the availability of residences. Ms Zenzele said:

There is a high demand for our programmes; we always reach our numbers on time. What seems to be attracting the students to our campus is the residences and that is what students say as well. (Ms Zenzele)

As pointed out by Li et al. (2022) in their study of distance higher education and regional equality in China, there is a variation in enrolment difficulties found in rural settings, with some colleges finding it difficult to reach enrolment goals and others experiencing tremendous demand. The findings show that such delays in student enrolment can negatively impact the resumption of teaching and learning activities. Campuses that want to reach their enrolment goals may prolong the registration period, reopen applications, and carry out administrative procedures again. Smith (2022) suggests that context-specific practices are necessary to manage enrolment issues because they cause a loss of instructional time and delay the academic calendar. CMTs in rural TVET colleges need to develop robust strategic plans for enrolment management that account for the unique challenges posed by rural contexts. This includes anticipating and mitigating delays in enrolment processes and effective marketing strategies that can impact teaching and learning schedules (Smith, 2022).

5.5.2 Limited Student Accommodation

Limited student accommodation emerged as another contextual challenge for rural CMT members. The issue of proximity for off-campus students resulted in travel delays, late coming and at times absenteeism. The CMT voices are presented below.

Mrs Becky explains how the distance affects students on campus. She shared the following:

Some of our students are not from town; they are coming from far away, so there is quite a distance between those areas and the campus. Therefore, it does affect being in class on time and being on time for exams. (Mrs Becky)

Ms Zenzele further shared some negative incidents that had befallen off-campus students. She stated:

Many unfortunate things have happened to our students who do not stay at the residences. We have cases of students who were robbed, raped and even murdered outside campus. This affected us badly as a campus and even in terms of teaching and learning. (Ms Zenzele)

The voices presented above suggest a scarcity of on-campus accommodation, leading to students residing off-campus. This lack of on-campus housing contributes to challenges such as increased travel distances and some devastating social problems, affecting punctuality and attendance, particularly for students from remote areas. Additionally, there are serious safety concerns for off-campus students impacting both the campus community and the overall teaching and learning environment. According to Tinto (2017), students who live on campus exhibit greater engagement in campus events and have higher rates of academic success in comparison to their off-campus peers. Jones and Blackey (2020) note that inadequate student housing can also cause students to experience higher levels of stress, which can negatively affect their mental health and general academic performance. This suggests that off-campus residences may not be conducive for students as they have an impact on their academic performance and well-being, leveraging additional leadership challenges for CMT members.

In rural settings, the challenge of limited student accommodation exacerbates existing difficulties because of the geographical isolation of these areas. Unlike urban TVETs, rural TVETs often lack sufficient housing options, forcing many students to seek accommodation far from campus. This distance, as noted by Mrs Becky, can significantly impact students' ability to attend classes punctually and participate in exams. Moreover, Ms Zenzele's account of safety concerns highlights the unique risks faced by students living off-campus in rural areas, where access to support services may be limited. These challenges not only affect individual students but also have broader implications for the entire campus community and the overall teaching and learning environment in rural a TVET college.

The rural context presents additional complexities, such as limited public transportation options and inadequate infrastructure, which further compound the challenges faced by students living off-campus (Tinto, 2017). These issues can lead to increased travel times, higher transportation costs, and greater difficulty accessing essential services. As a result, students from rural areas may experience higher levels of stress and financial burden, which can negatively impact their academic performance and overall well-being (Nzember, 2017). Strategies such as providing support services for students living off-campus can help mitigate these challenges (Tinto, 2017). However, in this study, the data does not show any instances of CMT members engaging in those activities.

5.5.3 Community-Related Challenges for Teaching and Learning in Rural Campuses

A few CMT members shared that certain challenges arise from the specific community in which the institution is located. They all seem to have similar experiences when it comes to community-related issues and their impact on teaching and learning in the rural context.

Mrs Becky explained the direct impact of community strikes on teaching and learning. She said:

There are many challenges in rural areas. We have strikes not only on campus but also in the areas where our students are staying. When there are service delivery protests, the community blocks roads limiting access to the campus. Students come late or they have to stay away and miss classes. (Mrs Becky)

On the other hand, Ms Zamile shared how the campus' close proximity to the community created challenges. She said:

Being in this area has many challenges. Most of the things done by the community affect us directly because we are right in the community, next to people's houses. Other times we have to close the campus because of the planned grass fires coming from the community. (Ms Zamile)



Figure 5.10 Ms Zamile's image 2

These findings show the significant impact of community-related activities on teaching and learning in rural TVET campuses (Hallinger, 2011). The proximity to local communities means that disruptions, such as strikes or protests, directly affect student attendance and instructional time. This is especially challenging in rural areas, where limited infrastructure and alternative routes exacerbate the problem.

Whilst there are some challenges which are inherent to the communities, one CMT member shared that the community members are also helpful during student strikes. Ms Zamile explained:

The community helps us when students are on strike because usually when students are on strike, they block the main roads and this affects the community. In those cases, we have community members engaging with students and the college to come up with a solution because if the students close the roads striking the community loses business. (Ms Zamile)

As evidenced by Ms Zamile, despite these difficulties, community members can be supportive, especially during student strikes, engaging with students and the college to find solutions. Myende (2019) emphasises the importance of community involvement in addressing educational challenges beyond the institution's control.

Interestingly, these findings highlight how the community's proximity can both support and hinder educational processes. While community support during student strikes is valuable, community activities can also force campus closures and disrupt classes. This dual impact illustrates the complex relationship between a rural TVET college and its surrounding communities, emphasising the need for effective communication and contingency planning to mitigate the adverse effects on education. Hallinger (2011) highlights the critical role of community characteristics in shaping student outcomes, reinforcing that leadership effectiveness in rural contexts is deeply intertwined with the broader community environment.

5.5.4 Fostering Student Interest and Attendance Through Extracurricular Activities

In a rural campus context, CMT members at the TVET college have stressed the significance of employing extracurricular activities, including sports and cultural activities, to maintain student engagement. CMT members hold the belief that a campus should not solely focus on academics but also strive to establish a space for students to socialise. This approach becomes particularly crucial in rural areas where students may experience a sense of demotivation, discouragement, loss, and isolation. Mrs Karen shared that:

We have started incorporating extracurricular activities similar to high schools. This helps students feel more integrated and view TVET as more than just a place to study. These activities, including sports, cultural events, book reviews, and debate competitions, are expected to attract more students. (Mrs Karen)

Mr DD added:

Extracurricular activities have a direct or indirect impact on teaching and learning. If students are involved in sports and debates, that keeps them involved or interested in teaching and learning. (Mr DD)

The data reveal that CMT members believe integrating extracurricular activities, such as sports and cultural events, into the TVET college environment is crucial for creating a holistic educational experience and improving student interest. They emphasise that a well-rounded education, extending beyond academics, is essential for keeping students motivated and engaged. The Student Support Services Plan (DHET, 2020) advocates this by urging TVET colleges to schedule co-curricular events for students during or after class times.

Christison (2013) suggests that extracurricular activities are pivotal for holistic student development, providing opportunities to explore interests beyond the academic curriculum. Engaging in these activities improves academic achievement, boosts self-confidence, and enhances interpersonal skills. By offering a wide range of extracurricular opportunities, TVET colleges can foster a dynamic campus community that caters to diverse student interests (DHET, 2020). The positive outcomes associated with these activities suggest that TVET colleges can significantly benefit from expanding their extracurricular offerings.

The CMT members seem to have contextual literacy. Clarke and Wildy (2013) state that contextual literacy gives leaders contextual awareness, enabling their understanding of internal and external contextual complexities. These include the “socioeconomic, demographic, cultural and historical composition of the community” from which it draws its student population (Clarke & Wildy, 2013, p. 35). Contextual literacy is crucial because it guides decision-making and aids leaders in determining the schools’ interests and priorities (Clarke & Wildy, 2013). Thus, the CMT in this study, cognisant of the challenges in rural contexts, take the initiative shown above. Such initiatives are important because Smith (2022) warns that the lack of extracurricular activities can lead to negative effects on student engagement and overall campus life.

5.5.5 Resource and Infrastructure Scarcity Affecting Student Workplace Readiness

The scarcity of teaching resources and infrastructure on campuses significantly constrains CMT members, profoundly affecting teaching and learning. The co-researchers highlighted the critical

issue of inadequate resources such as textbooks, staff, library facilities, and infrastructure like computer labs and internet access, which hinders effective teaching and learning. Their voices are presented below:

TVET colleges are struggling with the lack of infrastructure and resources and that impacts everything we do on campus. Lecturers did not even have a basic technological thing like a laptop during COVID. There is still no WiFi on the campus, in 2023. Technologically, we are very much disadvantaged. (Mrs Becky)

We are doing what we can with the students, but it is not preparing them for the workplace. When they go into the working world, they are going to see stuff completely differently and then wonder what was happening at college. (Mrs Karen)

We do not have a media centre; we do not have a nearby library or our library on campus. Students still do not have access to the Internet. (Ms Zamile)

Most co-researchers emphasised the impact of resource and infrastructure limitations on teaching and learning, highlighting the critical need for immediate attention to address these challenges:

When it comes to the lecturers, a lot of frustration and unhappiness on campus is caused by the lack of resources, lack of space for staff and classroom space. (Mrs Becky)

It becomes difficult to balance the quality of teaching. Without the teaching materials, infrastructure, resources and the technology we are not able to offer the education we want to our students. (Ms Zenzele)

Resources are a huge problem. It is not easy to teach and learn in an environment that does not have resources and because of this we then have to stick to traditional ways of teaching. (Mr DD)

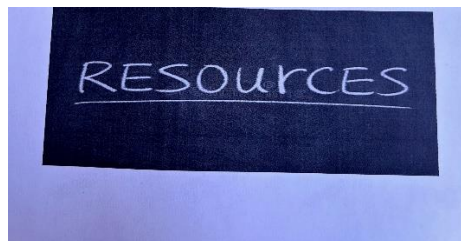


Figure 5.11 Mr DD's image 4

We struggle because there are not enough resources. Students cannot even study on their own because there is no space for that and that has also affected our student's performance. (Ms Zamile)

The literature reviewed supports these findings. Basi (2021), Dlamini (2021) and Sithole (2021) had concurring findings. Similarly, Papier (2017) found that the lack of infrastructure negatively impacts teaching and learning.

Additionally, the issue of the digital divide is emerging from the data. The digital divide is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where access to modern technological resources is often limited or non-existent (Roberts et al, 2017). The digital divide pertains to inequalities in access to digital technology across various groups (Roberts et al., 2017). These gaps arise from various factors, such as the availability and accessibility of different technologies (Roberts et al, 2017). As

mentioned above, in this rural TVET college the lack of internet access, computer labs, and other digital tools means that students and staff are at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts, who typically have better access to technology. The absence of basic technology underscores the technological gap faced by these institutions. This disparity significantly impacts teaching and learning in a rural TVET college.

The scarcity of resources and infrastructure in a rural TVET college shows how broader societal and institutional factors affect leadership. Hallinger's model stresses that effective leaders adapt to societal values and institutional setups (Hallinger, 2011). In a rural TVET college, leaders face challenges like limited resources and infrastructure, which are shaped by these contexts. They must navigate these issues to improve leadership practices and educational outcomes.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings on how CMT members lead teaching and learning, emphasising key aspects such as time management, student placement using the Student Profiler system, and effective communication. It also explored the constraints and enablers of CMT leadership, including inadequate leadership preparation, overwhelming work overload, and the positive influence of seeing the fruits of their labour. The CMT demonstrates how they perform the different management and leadership functions to lead teaching and learning. Although they lack support and are overwhelmed with work overload, they have found ways to get the work done. Additionally, the chapter examined the unique challenges posed by the rural context, such as enrolment issues, limited student accommodation, and resource scarcity, all of which impact CMT leadership in teaching and learning. The leadership for learning model was used throughout themes to show how CMT enact leadership and respond to challenges and opportunities in their rural setting.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the data that was generated through collage conversations. Seventeen themes emerged from the data, and I have used them to present the findings. The themes are: allocating time to plan; using systems to improve efficacy; motivating staff and students; establishing various channels of communication; working with others; leading teaching and learning through monitoring; inadequate leadership preparation and support; overwhelming work overload; senior management's lack of understanding and support for campus needs; financial challenges affecting students; working as one for a common purpose; seeing the fruits of one's labour; issues with enrolment numbers; limited student accommodation; fostering student interest and attendance through extracurricular activities; community-related challenges for teaching and learning in rural campuses and resource and infrastructure scarcity affecting student workplace readiness. This final chapter concludes the study by summarising its key elements and presenting reflections, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from these findings.

6.2 Summary of the study

This study explored CMT members' experiences in leading teaching and learning in a rural TVET college, anchored by three research puzzles. Six chapters were presented in the report. Each of these chapters will be summarised below:

Chapter One provided an overview of the study. In this chapter, I presented the background of the study, elucidating the historical background of TVET colleges, the significance of the sector, some challenges experienced in the sector, and the pertinent issue of the lack of policy guidelines for TVET college leadership. I then presented the statement of the problem, showing ideal conditions for a well-functioning TVET sector, the current status quo against this ideal, and the implications for the sector and TVET leaders, given the current prevailing condition. Three research puzzles were then provided. After that I conceptualised the two main concepts of this study. I moved on to present my justifications, showing how my personal and professional experiences have motivated me to pursue this study. In the theoretical justification, I presented the silences in the literature,

showing the scarcity of scholarship around the leadership of rural TVET college CMT members and further showing the lack of inquiries in the sector that have delved into such research using arts-based methods. Chapter one ended by presenting the structure of the study to guide the reader as they engage with my study.

Chapter Two provided a literature review, drawing from previous research conducted both locally and globally. The review featured three key themes. The first theme created a clear picture of the TVET sector, highlighting the current state and dynamics within it, showing that leaders employ multiple approaches in their leadership enactment. There is no universal approach to leadership; practices must be adaptable to the unique context of each setting. CMT members face numerous challenges and have found different ways to respond. CMTs play a vital role in fostering a supportive and positive learning environment that promotes academic excellence. By addressing both academic and personal needs, CMTs enhance overall student achievement and well-being, contributing to a more effective and inviting learning environment. CMTs also grant staff autonomy, which has been effective with experienced staff but requires careful monitoring and regular feedback to prevent negative outcomes such as incomplete work or low productivity. The literature reveals that context significantly impacts leadership. The rural context affects how CMTs lead, necessitating adaptive and context-specific leadership practices.

Chapter Three provided the theoretical lens. The lens used for this study was the leadership for learning model by Hallinger. I discussed the various components including, beliefs and values, knowledge and experience, vision and goals, academic structures and processes societal culture, institutional systems, staff and community characteristics, school organisation, people capacity, student outcomes, and the context for leadership, showing how leadership is influenced by these and how this is done within a context. The chapter further shows how these influence student outcomes and how they shape leadership and how this shapes student outcomes. The model also highlights leadership being an indirect influence on student outcomes. This lens aided in analysing CMT members' leadership in rural TVET colleges and the impact of context on leadership enactment.

In Chapter Four, the study, being qualitative in nature, is located within the interpretive paradigm which enabled me to conduct an in-depth exploration into the lived experiences of CMT members. I relied on the co-researchers collage conversations as every CMT member had a story to tell. The

narrative inquiry was chosen as my methodology to guide the collage inquiry in this study. The co-researchers were chosen through purposive sampling and I was able to ensure all ethical issues surrounding my study were adhered to. As a novice researcher, I was confident about going into the field and learnt that narrative inquiry was a unique methodology.

Chapter Five presented the data presentation and discussion. The findings presented in this chapter will be elucidated in the conclusions below.

6.3 Learning from the experiences of CMT members leading in rural contexts: Conclusions drawn from the data

This section provides the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study and the literature reviewed. These conclusions are drawn around each research puzzle. This study was informed by three research puzzles which are:

6.3.1 How do the CMT members lead teaching and learning in a rural TVET college campus?

Leading a rural TVET campus requires a combination of approaches. In this study, the CMT members employed a blend of managerial and leadership strategies, suggesting that leadership in such contexts demands a delicate balance between the two. Their leadership practices align with transformational leadership, which emphasises motivating and inspiring stakeholders toward the ownership and pursuit of collective goals (Bass & Riggio, 2010). This is evident in how the CMT members motivated both staff and students, recognising that such motivation is essential in rural settings, where numerous challenges exist. Their ability to motivate and inspire reflects their contextual awareness, which, according to Clarke and Wildy (2013), involves understanding both internal and external complexities and using this understanding to guide decision-making.

Moreover, the CMT members' leadership approaches align with distributed leadership, which promotes a sense of shared purpose, collaboration, and ownership among team members (Harris, 2013). Leithwood et al. (2019) argue that leadership has a greater impact when it is widely distributed. For the CMT members, teamwork and collaboration were essential in decision-making processes related to teaching and learning, particularly in light of the resource constraints within their context.

The study highlights how the CMT members skilfully blend management and leadership practices to navigate the complexities of leading a rural TVET campus. By balancing essential management functions with leadership strategies focused on motivation and collaboration, they foster an environment conducive to both staff and student success. The study also emphasises the importance of contextual awareness, as the CMT members demonstrated a deep understanding of the unique challenges posed by their resource-constrained environment. This understanding enabled them to adapt their leadership practices effectively, using teamwork and collaboration to enhance decision-making and ultimately improve student performance. As Leithwood et al. (2019) suggest, it is not the leadership practices themselves but the ways in which leaders apply them that demonstrate responsiveness to the contexts in which they work. The evolution of these practices reflects the CMT members' ability to lead successfully within their specific context, showcasing how leadership can be tailored to address both organisational needs and contextual realities.

6.3.2 What factors enable or constrain the leadership of CMT members in leading teaching and learning at a rural TVET college campus?

The study reveals that CMT members face more constraints than enablers in their leadership roles, a finding consistent with the challenges typically associated with rural contexts. This underscores the influence of context on leadership, as noted by Hallinger (2018) and Leithwood et al. (2020), and highlights rural contexts as examples of prejudiced environments. Prejudiced contexts are characterised by “predictable, systematic social and economic inequalities in experience and outcomes based on people’s social group memberships” (Murphey et al., 2018, p. 66).

Murphey et al. (2018) argue that recognising prejudice within specific environments allows leaders to align their practices with the needs of those affected, drawing attention to overlooked causes of social inequality and exploring innovative strategies to address these disparities. This is evident in the CMT members' leadership approaches, which reflect their efforts to navigate and mitigate the challenges inherent in their rural context.

As discussed, the CMT members faced various challenges that hindered their leadership. However, collaborating with their staff toward a shared purpose significantly enhanced their job satisfaction and emerged as a key enabling factor. Additionally, the CMT members found motivation in

witnessing their students' success and seeing the tangible results of their efforts. These enablers, combined with the leadership approaches they employed, suggest a leadership typology rooted in Ubuntu.

Ubuntu, as a leadership philosophy, is centred on values such as humanness, compassion, love, community, reciprocity, harmony, dignity, respect, and responsiveness (Malunga, 2009; Ncube, 2010; Nzimakwe, 2014). It underscores collectivism, interconnectedness, and relationship-building, which are fundamental for fostering trust and collaboration. By embodying these principles, the CMT members demonstrated an approach that prioritises community and shared responsibility, aligning with the core tenets of Ubuntu leadership.

6.3.3 How does the context of rurality influence the leadership of the CMT members in leading teaching and learning?

The CMT members reported several contextual factors that influenced their leadership, presenting both constraints and unique resources. This awareness demonstrates their contextual awareness. Clarke and Wildy (2013) suggest that contextual awareness allows leaders to understand internal and external complexities, using this understanding to guide decision-making. This was evident in the study, where CMT members navigated challenges such as using extracurricular activities to boost student attendance and engagement.

Furthermore, the CMT members' awareness suggests that they are context-responsive leaders. Bredeson et al. (2011) describe context-responsive leadership as the practical application of wisdom, where leaders use knowledge, skills, and virtues to adapt their leadership in response to dynamic contextual variables. This was evident as the CMT members continually adapted their practices, such as closing campuses during planned grass fires to ensure safety.

Despite these challenges, the community often served as a valuable support system, actively participating in bridging resource gaps and providing local solutions. This reflects an asset-based approach, which views schools and communities as inseparable, leveraging local skills, knowledge, and resources to enhance the school's capacity to deliver quality education (Myende, 2019). This approach focuses on the strengths within a community rather than its deficits, promoting positive change (Ennis & West, 2020).

6.4 Theoretical Reflections

The leadership for learning model highlights that leaders are influenced by their personal experiences (Hallinger, 2011). In this study, it emerged that some CMT members relied on their past experiences in the early phases of their leadership. The findings also revealed that the CMT members had contextual literacy, an understanding of beliefs and values, knowledge and experience, vision and goals, academic structures and processes, people capacity, student outcomes, the context for leadership, and how this shaped their leadership. In terms of the social culture, they demonstrated contextual literacy by using the Student Profiler to assist students with choosing the appropriate programmes as they were aware that some students would have not been able to access relevant student counselling services before their enrolment. In response to the community characteristics and the societal culture, some CMT members took the initiative to provide co-curricular activities based on the understanding that such opportunities were scarce for students in rural contexts.

6.5 Methodological Reflections

Recruiting co-researchers was a crucial step in this study, requiring flexibility and persistence, especially during the busy period for CMT members in May and June. It was my first time using this methodology. I learned a great deal about its practical applications, emphasising the importance of adaptability and collaborative learning in research. This experience broadened my perspective and enhanced my research skills.

It was also the co-researchers' first time using the methodology, and they were deeply concerned about meeting the "high standards expected of a master's degree level." One co-researcher nervously exclaimed, "I hope I will not disappoint you; I do not want you to fail." I found this rather amusing because they were under the impression that there were marks allocated to the collages. However, this mind-set showed they understood the importance of their role in this study. I provided constant reassurance, emphasising that there was no absolute right or wrong way to create a collage, allowing them to express themselves freely.

For one of the meetings, one co-researcher agreed to us meeting, but when I arrived, there was no collage prepared. They said they could not quite understand what was expected of them, which

caused a delay, as I had to give them enough time to find the images and create a collage. Managing these delays and balancing co-researcher expectations was essential. Communication via WhatsApp and email addressed these challenges promptly, maintaining research integrity and preserving the authenticity of co-researchers' stories.

Thoughtful planning, methodological alignment with research goals, and adaptive strategies were crucial in navigating this study. Apart from data generation, which involved extensive conversations, using this methodology generated an enormous amount of data. Analysing and presenting this data became a challenge because there was simply "too much" of it. I felt like I was betraying the co-researchers by having to reduce the data, as I aimed to represent and amplify their voices. I asked myself the hard question: Who am I being faithful to? The institution or the people's voices? This was not an easy decision. I went back and forth but was eventually forced to make a choice. Even though there were five collages from the co-researchers, integrating them with the stories was challenging.

Being in this metaphorical inquiry space changed my perspective on people's experiences. Using this methodology and listening to CMT members narrate their stories made me look at people differently. It is easy to judge why some people in leadership fail to perform, blaming them for sheer laziness without understanding the real factors that affect them and the motivations behind their leadership decisions.

The collage methodology yielded rich insights into leadership in a rural TVET college. The study achieved a holistic understanding of how context shapes leadership practices, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

6.6 Personal Reflections

Before embarking on this journey, my life felt stagnant for a decade. By God's grace people did not notice, and some even envied my life, but I knew the truth, I was not making progress. Studying for this degree changed everything. Suddenly, every aspect of my life began to take shape and align, it felt like I had just answered my calling.

Reflecting on this project has been a journey that stretched me physically and mentally. The challenges I faced gave me every reason to quit, but I persisted, constantly reminding myself why I chose to pursue this degree. My biggest challenges arose during data generation. Persistent car issues forced me to rely on public transport, teaching me invaluable lessons in adaptability and resilience. I vividly recall one instance where I waited in a taxi for nearly two hours on my way to one of the campuses, making me late for a meeting with a co-researcher. This delay disrupted my schedule, pushing the meeting late into the afternoon and postponing another. By the time we finished, it was so late that taxis were no longer available at the rank. How I got home that day is a story for another day. These experiences, while frustrating, strengthened my determination and underscored the importance of perseverance in adversity.

Balancing work and studying has been one of the most challenging experiences of my life. The overwhelming hours required for this degree left me struggling to manage my work and personal life. My demanding job often left me exhausted, unable to rest even when I desperately needed to. There were days when sheer fatigue prevented me from even opening my laptop. To cope, I began starting my days at 2 am, leveraging early mornings when my mind was fresh. It was tough, but I found a way.

Despite these challenges, navigating them has deepened my self-awareness and compassion for others' experiences. This project has shaped me not only as a novice researcher but also as a young professional woman. It has taken me to unexpected places, provided opportunities for growth and learning, and introduced me to remarkable people. Each hurdle I faced contributed to my personal and professional development.

My commitment to my studies has significantly impacted my family life and relationships. Since starting this degree, it has taken precedence over everything and everyone. I have not seen my friends in two years, and I feel like I have not been a good friend. I visit home less frequently. I had to explain to my family why I could not spend as much time with them as before. Seeing my family life and relationships take a backseat has been challenging. Despite the sacrifices, completing this project fills me with immense joy and fulfilment, affirming that with determination, I can achieve anything.

6.7 Recommendations

In this section, I provide practical recommendations based on the findings of the study, which explored the leadership experience of teaching and learning by CMT members in a rural TVET college. These recommendations aim to address the challenges and influence the enabling factors identified in the study, with a focus on improving leadership for teaching and learning and student outcomes in a rural TVET college context. I, therefore, make the following recommendations for practice and further research.

6.7.1 Recommendations for Practice

The college senior management can support the continuous leadership development of CMT members by implementing structured induction and mentoring programs. There needs to be ongoing engagement between the CMT and the college senior management to outline and address red tape and bureaucratic measures in terms of processes and procedures, helping the senior management understand the constraints these may pose. Prioritising teaching and learning initiatives and optimising the processes will mitigate delays, fostering a conducive environment for educational success. The DHET should expedite policy development regarding CMT roles, providing a standard understanding of their responsibilities. Addressing these policy gaps could significantly benefit both CMT members and their colleagues. Promoting community engagement can leverage positive community involvement to address student-related issues and enhance college-community relationships. Involving local businesses in educational activities and industry partnerships can provide practical training opportunities, aligning TVET programmes with local economic needs and enhancing students' employability. These recommendations aim to strengthen leadership in rural TVET colleges, fostering supportive environments tailored to rural contexts. Implementation will not only improve educational outcomes but also ensure the relevance and effectiveness of TVET education in meeting community and industry needs.

6.7.2 Recommendations for future research

This study highlights context-specific leadership practices in rural TVET settings, enhancing understanding and offering practical insights for improving teaching and learning quality. Scholarly research on CMTs remains limited, particularly in using self-reflexive methodologies to explore their experiences. Researchers should employ diverse approaches to reveal the multifaceted experiences of CMT members. Comparative research between rural and urban TVET

colleges would uncover cross-contextual best practices and solutions, informing targeted interventions for improved performance. Longitudinal studies tracking the lasting impacts of leadership interventions will deepen insights into effective strategies, guiding continuous improvement efforts and policy development.

6.8 Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of CMT members in leading teaching and learning at a rural TVET college, guided by three primary research puzzles. Through qualitative narrative inquiry, the study revealed that CMT members employ a blend of managerial and leadership approaches, with a focus on planning, communication, motivation, and collaboration to navigate the unique challenges of rural contexts. The study uncovered the significant constraints faced by CMT members, such as inadequate leadership preparation, overwhelming workloads, student financial issues and a lack of support from college senior management, which highlight the urgent need for robust support systems and clearer policy guidelines tailored to the TVET sector. Furthermore, the study shows that the rural context profoundly shapes leadership practices, with community involvement and extracurricular activities emerging as crucial for improving student engagement and outcomes. This research contributes valuable insights into context-specific educational leadership, emphasising that effective leadership in rural TVET settings requires adaptive strategies that align with the realities of rural life. These findings not only deepen our understanding of educational leadership in rural TVET environments but also suggest practical ways to strengthen leadership practices and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Future research should expand on these dynamics, exploring varied approaches to reveal the full scope of CMT experiences and further inform leadership development in these settings.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



17 May 2023

Barbara Nomzamo Mandlazi (222113120)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear BN Mandlazi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/0005539/2023
Project title: Leading teaching and learning in a rural technical and vocational education and training college:
Narratives of six campus management team members
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 21 April 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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

This approval is valid until 17 May 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040114-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele [Chair]

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag 250007, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephones: +27 (0)31 250 8350/435 473550 / Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/research-ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Ridgeway ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX B: GATEKEEPERS LETTER (COLLEGE)



NR. 77 Mimbica St, Catzville, 3370 | Private Bag 2903, Ladysmith, 3370. Tel: +27 36 459 3800 | Fax: +27 36 651 4746

Student number: 222113120

Dear Ms BN Mandlazi

RE: PERMISSION TO USE MNAMBITHI TVET COLLEGE AS A SITE OF RESEARCH

The college hereby grants you permission to conduct a research study using our campuses as sites of your research study titled: *"Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College : Narratives of six Campus Management Team members."*

The college is convinced that this study will add value to the organisation and the sector at large.

In addition, the college would like to emphasise that the following conditions need to apply during the study:

- Maintain confidentially at all times.
- The name of the college or any sites cannot be used in any documents.
- The name/s of the staff employed by the college cannot be used.
- The purpose, objectives and terms of research must be clearly explained to the participants.
- Participants must give consent in writing.
- The findings of the study be made available to college management.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

MR C.J. Ndlela

College Principal

31/01/2023

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

████████████████████

████████████████

Vryheid

3107

10 February 2023

Dear Campus Manager/Senior Lecturer

I am Barbara Nomzamo Mandlanzi, a Master's student from the Educational Leadership Management and Policy Discipline, School of Education, College of Humanities, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (222113120@stu.ukzn.ac.za, ████████████████████).

You are invited to consider participating in a study involving research in *Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College: Narratives of six Campus Management Team members*. The aim and purpose of this research are:

- To understand the lived experiences of campus management team members in leading teaching and learning on a rural campus.
- To look at the factors that constrain or enable the leadership of the campus management team members.
- To understand how the context of rurality influences your leadership.

I hereby request your participation in this research study. The study is expected to enrol six participants and two campus management team members from each of the three campuses at the college. It will involve narrative interviews and collages. The interviews will all be recorded so I can later present the data generated as required. These recordings will be kept as a private resource for the study. Confidentiality will be maintained. The duration of your participation, if you choose

to enrol and remain in the study, is expected to be 8 weeks from May to June 2023. Each interview is expected to take about 1 hour. The narrative interviews will take place during the lunch break or after school. Regarding the collage, as a participant, you will be issued magazines and newspapers where you must cut pictures and/or text that best describes or relates to your experience.

The study will provide no direct benefits to participants. This study hopes to add value to the field of education and the education sector at large. Therefore, I am inviting you to be part of this research because of the belief that you will add much value to this research.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00005539/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions, you may contact the researcher at 222113120@stu.ukzn.ac.za / [REDACTED] or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

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

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you may withdraw participation at any point. In the event that you wish to withdraw participation, you will not incur a penalty in any way. In a

case where you are unfit to carry on participating in the research or are not available for two or more interviews, I will have to terminate your participation in the study.

This study will not provide any direct benefits to the participant. In the case of Ms Teams' virtual meetings, the data you have used will be compensated.

Your confidentiality and privacy are guaranteed. Your name or personal information will not be disclosed; the study will use pseudonyms. Any information you share will be used as data for this study and nothing else. The data generated will be in interview transcripts and collage portraits. These will then be stored in highly secure storage on my computer and the hard drive of the supervisor. After five years, the files will be destroyed, and all transcripts will be shredded.

Should you accept my request and be willing to participate in this research, kindly complete the following declaration of the consent form.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled *Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College: Narratives of six Campus Management Team members* by Nomzamo Mandlanzi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits to which I usually am entitled.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 222113120@stu.ukzn.ac.za / [REDACTED].

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers, then I 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

I hereby provide consent to the following:

Audio-record my interview

YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College: Narratives of five Campus Management Team members.

Day 1 - Preliminary questions

1. When did you start working at the college or on this campus?
2. How long have you been in your current position?
3. How has the enrolment of your campus been in the past 2-3 years, and what is the current enrolment for 2023?
4. How would you rate the campus academic performance in the past 2-3 years?

Day 2

The participant will be asked to narrate their experiences using collages and explain how it relates to their story and journey in leadership throughout the process.

Guiding interview questions

1. Narrate your experience as the current leader of teaching and learning. Share challenging and good moments.
2. How do you respond to challenging moments?
3. How would you describe your leadership style, and what has influenced that?

Day 3

Guiding interview questions

1. How do you lead teaching and learning on your campus?
2. What are the teaching and learning challenges on your campus?

3. What complexities does the location of this campus pose?
4. What kind of support do you need?
5. Before we end this conversation, is there anything you would like to share with me that you feel necessary but that I may not have asked you? Please feel free to share with me.

APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 28-Jun-2024 9:36 PM CAT
ID: 2409958042
Word Count: 30342
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Nomzamo Turn it in 1.docx By MandlanziNomzamo

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APPENDIX F: COLLAGE (Ms Zenzele)

BIG

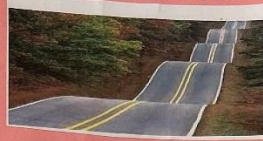


SHOES



USELESS

BUMPY



ROAD



ISOLATED



BUILD A STRONG
FOUNDATION



LEADING
FROM
BEHIND

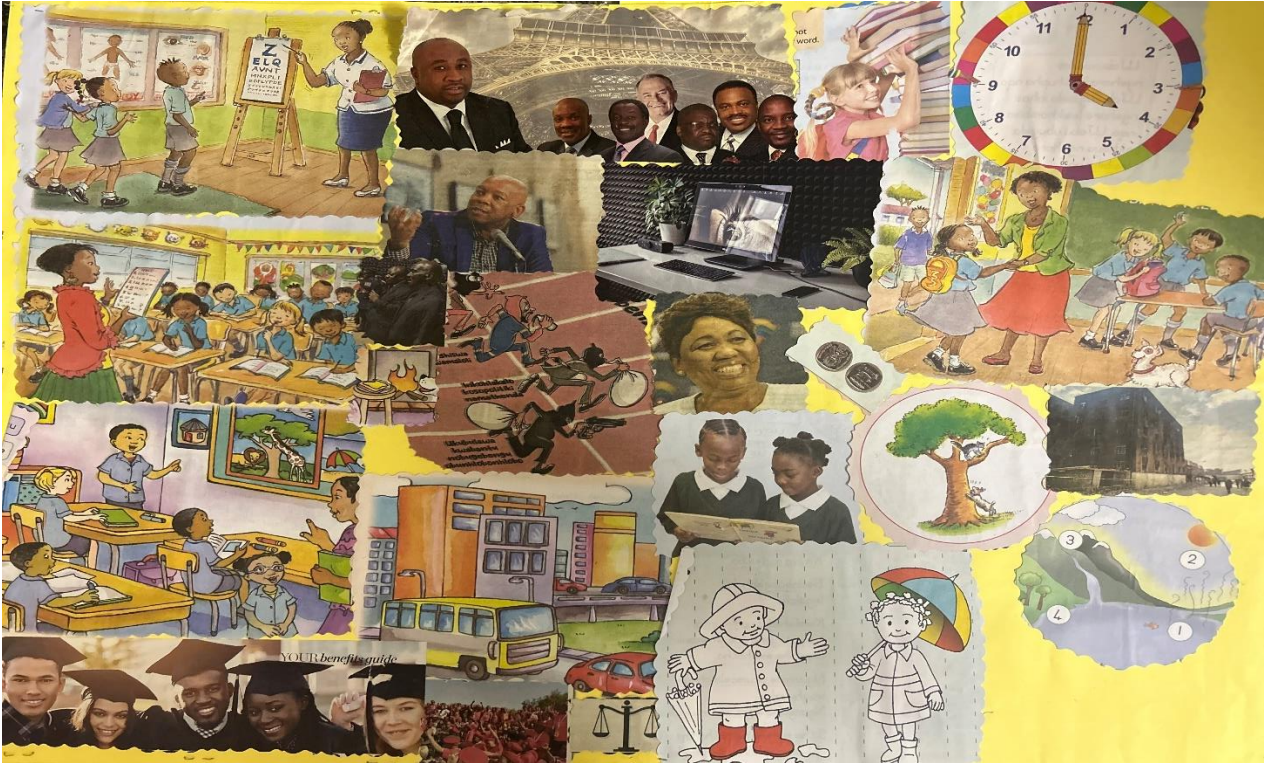


SPREAD YOUR WINGS
AND FLY



THERE ARE MANY
GAPS

APPENDIX G: COLLAGE (Ms Zamile)



APPENDIX H: COLLAGE (Mrs Karen)



APPENDIX J: COLLAGE (Mr DD)



APPENDIX K: EDITOR'S REPORT

N. E. Avery
Education Consultant
76 Warwick Road
Pietermaritzburg
15/07/2024

Barbara Nomzamo Mandlanzi

Student Number: 222113120

Confirmation of Language Editing of MEd Dissertation: Leading teaching and learning in a rural Technical and Vocational Education and Training College: Narratives of five Campus Management Team members.

Dear Ms Mandlanzi

This letter serves as confirmation that I conducted an edit of the abovementioned Dissertation as requested by you on 27 June 2024. In accordance with the request, the editorial process was limited to an English language edit and formatting of the Dissertation and I made no intentional substantive changes to the content. As usual in an editorial process I indicate that you are at liberty to accept or reject the proposed changes to ensure that no unintended modifications have been made to the original manuscript.

I have enjoyed working with you and congratulate you on completing this substantial piece of work.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of N. E. Avery.

N. E. Avery