



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CAMPUS  
MANAGERS IN A TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
COLLEGE**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the academic requirements for the  
degree of Master of Education in the Discipline of Educational Leadership Management  
and Policy**

**College of Humanities, School of Education**

**Edgewood Campus**

**Supervisor: Dr B.N.C.K. MKHIZE**

**December 2021**

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Nonkululeko Petronella Sithole, declare that this research report, “**leadership in times of crisis: lived experiences of campus managers in a Technical Vocational Education and Training college**” abides by the rules:

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## STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

Signature:



Date: 13 November 2021

Supervisor: Dr B. N. C. K. Mkhize

# ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL



11 April 2021

Mrs Nonkululeko Petronella Sithole (220108446)  
School Of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Sithole,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002623/2021

Project title: Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a Technical and Vocational Education and Training college

Degree: Masters

## Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 17 March 2021 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 11 April 2022.

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.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

## **DEDICATION**

I would first like to dedicate this work to my **Lord, Jesus Christ**. I could not have done this without his guidance. I would also like to dedicate this work to my late sister Zamide Happiness Mngadi who strongly believed that education is a lifetime investment.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, my journey has ended. The two years of my Masters degree has been the most challenging yet very educational experience in my life. I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for the different roles they played in my life so that I could be able to complete my dissertation:

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3. To my colleagues. Thank you for your support, thank you for having my back in our department. I know we had a busy year but through with all you managed to do most so that I could achieve my dream. I will forever value our team spirit and unity.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study focused on exploring campus managers lived experiences in times of crisis, particularly during COVID 19 in a TVET college. The study examined the leadership challenges inherent in these experiences and the strategies they used to mitigate those challenges. Furthermore, the study looked at different research studies and publications in order to understand and establish leadership in TVET colleges in times of crisis. Three research puzzles were used as instruments to generate field texts. These research puzzles include; What are campus managers' lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic? What leadership challenges do campus managers in a TVET college encounter during the COVID-19 pandemic? How do campus managers in a TVET college mitigate the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic? Adaptive leadership theory was used in the study as a framework to help analyse and interpret data about the nature of the leadership challenges experienced by campus managers during COVID-19 pandemic and how they adapt and thrive in challenging environment. This study was conducted using narrative inquiry as methodology as this is most appropriate approach to gathering data about lived experiences. Narrative interviews and artefacts were used as data generation methods for field texts. Narrative analysis (first level) and Analysis of narratives were used to analyse field texts. Different perspectives emerged when it came to how campus managers enact leadership on a day-to-day basis. The study found the following key practices: working with internal and external stakeholders, marketing and networking events, implementing governing processes, preparing budgets, managing campus infrastructure, procurement, adapting online teaching and learning. The study revealed challenges that campus managers encounter in their day-to-day leadership during COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges were: losing staff members, managing people with comorbidities and people who are absent, lack of provision of suitable tools for online teaching and learning and keeping everyone safe Leadership of campus managers used the following strategies to mitigate challenges; engagement of stakeholders, online network practices and development of people. I can conclude that the three campus managers found new ways of leading their TVET college campuses and colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ANC	African National Congress
CIEG	College Infrastructure Efficiency Grant
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPTD	Continual Professional Teacher Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPA	Deputy Principal - Academic
FET	Further Education and Training
GA	General Assistants
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
HRDCSA	Human Resource Development Council of South Africa
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISAT	Integrative Summative Assessment Task
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NEHAWU	National Educational, Health and Allied Workers Union
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PL	Post Level
PPN	Post Provisioning Norms
PSA	Public Servants' Association of South Africa
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

SACPO	South African College Principals Organisation
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SSS	Student Support Services
SRC	Student Representative Council
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This study examines campus managers' lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, in a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college. This, the first chapter, serves as an introduction of the study and provides some background to the research problem. In introducing the study, the chapter provides an orientation to the study and it commences by providing the background to the problem, the statement of the problem, the rationale and the significance of the study. This is followed by the statement of the research aims and the questions, followed by the demarcation and the organisation of the study.

#### **1.2 Background to the study**

The South African Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges (formerly the Further Education and Training or FET colleges) are higher educational institutions that provide access to post-school education to many young people for entry into the workplace. From their inception, TVET colleges are viewed as 'a vehicle for providing skills that respond to the economic needs of the country' (Buthelezi 2016; Gewer, 2016). They offer broad training, technological studies and related sciences to develop the individual student's knowledge of science and technology in a broad occupational area that requires technical and professional competencies and specific occupational skills (Buthelezi & Wedekind, 2016). Typically, a TVET college may have five or more campuses. Each campus has a campus manager who reports to the principal and central office's top college management (Buthelezi & Wedekind, 2016). In the South African context, lecturers, as defined in the Further Education and Training Act, No. 16 of 2006, answer to senior lecturers who are, in turn, report to the campus managers for their respective departments' operations (Republic of South Africa, 2006). The rector, based at head office, is the principal of the entire college.

Challenges facing TVET colleges have been noted. For instance, a Training Needs Assessment Study commissioned by the South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO) in 2014, conducted by Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDCSA, 2014),

revealed several major challenges that face TVET college leadership. The first challenge that came to light related to management issues. The findings showed that, TVET management in general, was largely poor in that it failed to offer proper instructional guidance to the lecturers and the students. It also found that lecturers displayed patent shortcomings in their lecturing capabilities. Thirdly, the findings revealed that the NC(V) attracted large numbers of students with different levels of academic readiness, thus requiring lecturers to teach two very different cohorts of students in the same classroom (HRDCSA, 2014). This arguably, has caused high levels of frustration for both the lecturers and the students. Furthermore, it has been noted that there is little articulation between different management, administration and lecturing staff layers, and students (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Such disharmony between different layers added to the institutional challenges when dealing with issues of accountability and inadequate performance of students (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Other scholars (Field, Musset & Galvarez-Alvan, 2014) remark that the present mix of programmes and qualifications in the TVET sector is complex to administer; is frowned upon by the business sector; it is difficult for students and parents to understand, and that it is often quality assured poorly. Compounding the problem, in the parlance of Buthelezi (2018, p.13), TVET colleges are attracting students who are “immature, irresponsible, unmotivated, difficult, demanding, and disruptive in the classroom”. Therefore, there seems to be a need for flexibility and autonomy for TVET college leadership so that it introduces specific intervention programmes that suit their unique institutional conditions.

Notwithstanding the challenges highlighted above, TVET colleges, like many any other sectors, has been negatively affected by an unprecedented crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has slowed down normal learning opportunities and access to education and training by people that are already in vulnerable conditions and disadvantaged has been negatively impacted (Majumdar, Araiztegui, & Tknika, 2020). The notion that everyone’s safety should not be compromised by the need to be physically present in schools and training institutions, has necessitated other modes of delivery of lessons (Dube, 2020). Hundreds of students and teaching personnel worldwide are trapped in their homes, under self-isolation measures (Majumdar et al., 2020). Hence, learning processes are not taking place the way they would under normal conditions. “With a sudden halt to the normal running of technical and vocational schools and training institutions, students, trainees and apprentices, are systematically unable to continue planned learning and training processes” (Majumdar et

al., 2020, p. 6). All the issues I have highlighted, underscore the challenges faced by TVET leaders and managers, and they require innovation and adaptation to the new realities.

One of the immediate responses that many institutions (universities, some schools and TVET colleges), have made has been to upload their learning programmes on the online platforms (Mncube, Mutongoza, Olawale, 2021). This strategy has been adopted nationally and globally, to ensure that learning materials and resources are accessible to the students (Dube, 2020). This is an immediate solution to mitigate the impact that interruption of the learning process has on students. Virtual classes are replacing in person lessons and work placements of TVET students. Examination and accreditation procedures are being discussed to adapt to the current situation and to find a way around the established procedures, without hurting the existing protocols and systems (Mncube et al., 2021). The priority has been to continue with the learning process without interruption. “The degree of efficacy may vary from one country to the other, and even within the same country” (Majumdar, et al., 2020, p. 7). However, this aim does not seem to be fully achieved due to some recurrent challenges facing TVET colleges in South Africa. The most common challenges include funding for TVET colleges, leadership capacity (Balkrishen, 2019) and infrastructural barriers (Sithole, 2019).

The process to mitigate the negative effects of learning disruption is hindered by *inter alia*, access to internet and to free and quality web-based tools, poor internet performance in some countries and areas, limited available open online resources and online teaching solutions (Laufer, Leiser, Deacon, Perrin de Brichambaut, Fecher, Kobsda & Hesse, 2021). Regarding learning platforms, there are a lot of platforms available for free of charge (Majumdar, et al., 2020). However, such platforms may not be effective for the TVET college sector due to the fact that many of its learning programmes are largely practical nature where students need to practice their skills (Majumdar, et al., 2020). Use of technology-aided practice-based learning such as the use of virtual simulators is one of the examples that might help (Majumdar, et al., 2020). Campus managers play an important middle management role in TVET colleges and are up in arms strategising and implementing mitigation strategies minimise the negative effects of the pandemic on TVET students. This study sought to explore campus managers' lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The response to COVID-19 has had extremely serious repercussion for higher education throughout the world in terms of perpetual uncertainties that have led to functional and structural economic and social problems and challenges at all organisational and institutional levels (Adam, Henstridge & Adam, 2020; Gerszon, Mahler, Castaneda & Aguilar, 2020). The challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic have put pressure on campus managers in TVET colleges, like in any other institutions, to think out of the box and deploy strategies and approaches that they have not implemented before to respond to the crisis (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). This may not be an easy thing to do and could be a stressful exercise given that the role and the influence of the leader are magnified in times of change (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). Harris (2020) also notes that times of crisis are stressful, unpredictable and strange for any leaders. Compounding these challenges for campus managers, are the pre-existing institutional and systemic issues and inefficiencies highlighted in the background above. Despite these challenges, TVET college management, particularly for this study, campus managers, had to keep 'swimming against the tide', with limited toolbox at their disposal. There is noteworthy paucity of scholarship on TVET colleges (Robertson & Frick, 2018), particularly the leadership experiences and practices of campus managers during times of crisis. In this study, I adopted a narrative inquiry to elicit the lived experiences of campus managers as they led their respective campuses and also identify the paths they took to respond to the challenges brought about by the presence of COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

My research study is a narrative inquiry. I have provided three justifications for this study, namely, the personal, practical and social justification.

##### **1.4.1 Personal Justification**

Here is my personal story. I was raised by my uncle and his wife after the passing of my mother. From the age of 7 years, I became part of my uncle's family. My uncle and his wife did not get much of opportunities in terms of obtaining formal education, but both worked very hard to keep the family together. Being a determined person, I took education seriously and I always imagined myself being successful in life. I became a prefect at primary school which made me realise my leadership abilities and potential leadership opportunities. I wore my prefect badge with pride and performed my responsibilities with pride as any leader would do. I was also a

Sunday school leader during my very tender age where I was responsible for making sure that the service venue was in order, for marking attendance register, collecting Sunday offering and communicating with my seniors and Sunday school kids within the church. During my days at high school, I was again appointed as a prefect, a class monitor and later on, I was elected to be part of Representative Council of Learners (RCL) where I represented students and became their voice.

As I started reading around my topic, I realised that leadership is something that I have demonstrated at school, home, church and at work. I feel that I have gone an extra mile to get any work done. I have always wondered how campus managers would cope under unforeseen circumstances. As a leader myself, it has been my interest to understand leadership of campus managers during times of crisis which has led me to conduct research on the chosen topic.

#### **1.4.2 Practical Justification**

After finishing my matric, I enrolled for undergraduate degree which I finished within the minimum timeframe. In 2013, I decided to enrol for Post Graduate Certificate in Education which I completed in 2014. Currently I am a Post Level 1 lecturer in a TVET college based in a KwaZulu-Natal township. I have worked as a professional lecturer for five years in two different campuses. During these years I have observed how campus management deal with issues of leading and managing their campuses. I have witnessed how campus managers react to challenges in their campuses and strategies they use to mitigate these challenges. I have observed a lack of campus infrastructure and poor maintenance. I have witnessed how centralisation negatively affects campus management day to day leadership practices.

Ever since joining the higher education sector, I have been interested in the experiences of campus managers and the challenges they may encounter. My interest emanates from observing the effect of the challenges brought by the COVID-19 on the leadership of campus managers in TVET colleges throughout the country. I observed the disruption of the 2020 academic year, which has negatively impacted student achievement. As a lecturer in a TVET college, I have been concerned about the challenges that we encountered daily. A significant challenge facing us is the breakdown of communication that occurs at multiple levels within the TVET college. Information is often delayed, sometimes inaccurate, and non-transparent. My personal

experiences and informal observations have motivated my formal research on the topic: *Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college*. I hope that this study will equip me to contribute towards understandings about and improvement of leadership practices and overcoming challenges, especially during times of crisis.

### **1.4.3 Social Justification**

Social justification for this study is the limited research available with regards to leadership in times of COVID-19. A gap exists on leadership of campus managers as I began to engage with the available literature. For instance, Smith and Riley (2012) focused their study on leadership attributes and skills required of school leaders in times of crisis. Harris and Jones (2020) focused their study on school leadership in disruptive times. Murphy and Dunn (2012) focused on effective senior leadership in times of crisis in any organisation. Netolicky (2020) explored how school leaders lead during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the available literature that I reviewed, I did not come across literature that was based explicitly on leadership of campus managers in times of crisis. Therefore, I believe that it is vital that I examine the lived experiences of TVET college campus managers and explore the challenges that the campus managers experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they respond to these challenges.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

Most studies that I have read investigated the lived experiences of school principals. It appears that very limited research has been carried out on the leadership of campus managers in TVET colleges. There are even fewer studies that focus on the times of crisis. This study may help to address the limited knowledge of leadership experiences of campus managers in TVET colleges and, thus, may contribute to the understanding of leadership of campus managers' challenges in TVET colleges. This study is significant because its findings might expose campus managers' experiences in TVET colleges during times of crisis and thus assist top management on how they can support campus managers during times of crisis. The findings of the study may also be used by other campus managers on how they can mitigate challenges they may encounter during COVID-19. This exploratory study is essential as Robertson and Frick (2018, p.73) remind us that there is "a paucity of scholarly work focused on South African vocational education."

## **1.6 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the lived experiences of TVET college campus managers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore the challenges that the campus managers experience during the COVID-19 pandemic
3. To explore how campus managers in a TVET college mitigate the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **1.7 Research puzzles**

1. What are campus managers' lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What leadership challenges do campus managers in a TVET college encounter during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How do campus managers in a TVET college mitigate the challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## **1.8 Clarification of key concepts used in the study**

There are three key concepts whose application in this study is clarified. The three key concepts are; leadership, crisis and campus manager.

### **1.8.1 Leadership**

The concept of leadership is a complex term to define as there is no single definition (Bush, 2008; Bush, 2019; Bush & Glover, 2003). It has been defined differently by many authors who mostly agree that leadership is a process of influencing people to achieve organisational goals (Yukl, 1989; Bush, 2008; Bush, 2019; Bush & Glover, 2003). Leadership is conceptualised in this study as an interactive process where a group of people is influenced towards the achievement of targeted organisational goals. Therefore, leadership is the ability to facilitate

vision in complex situations. A good leader has the ability to influence people through communication and the fulfilment of goals (Delia, 2018).

### **1.8.2 Crisis**

"Crisis involves a period of discontinuity, a situation in which the core values of the organisation are under threat, and this requires critical decision making" (Zamoum & Gorpe, 2018, p. 204). According to Smith and Rilley (2012), a crisis is an urgent situation that requires immediate action by an organisation and by leaders within that organisation. In the context of this study, the term crisis refers to an urgent situation that requires leaders to make decisions quickly as the advent of COVID-19 has done.

### **1.8.3 Campus Managers**

Campus managers are Post Level Five lecturers based on the TVET College campuses (Bonzet, & Frick, 2019). They play a similar leadership role to that of high school principals (Balkrishen, 2019). Campus managers are responsible for managing all campus activities and they report to college principal and central office (Buthelezi & Wedekind, 2016).

## **1.9 Delimitations of the study**

This research study was conducted in a public TVET college in the KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The study focused on three campus managers, each responsible for a different campus within the same TVET college. Participants were selected according to their formal leadership roles and their willingness to participate in the study, as they had applied leadership practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was limited to campus managers who have been serving during the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020-2021.

## **1.10 Organisation of the chapters**

The research study consists of six chapters. The layout of each chapter is presented below.

### **Chapter One**

This chapter introduces the research problem; and thus, serves as an orientation to the study. It begins by introducing the study, providing a background to the study and the statement of the problem. Other elements of the chapter include the purpose and rationale, the significance of the study, the objectives and the research questions. These elements are followed by the clarification of key concepts. Lastly, it outlines the delimitations of the study.

## **Chapter Two**

This chapter reviews literature on issues around the lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college. This review focuses on the research questions that underpin the study. The review of the literature develops to a theoretical framework. The identified theory that frames the understanding of leadership in times of crisis is discussed in detail. Towards the end of the chapter, I try to clarify the connection between the theory and the focus of the study, namely, the campus managers' lived leadership experiences in times of crisis, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Chapter Three**

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research paradigm, design and methodology that was applied. Issues of research sampling, sampling instruments, data generation methods and data analysis are discussed. Other critical issues covered in this chapter are trustworthiness, ethical issues and limitations of the study.

## **Chapter Four**

This chapter presents a discussion of the first level of analysis, called a narrative analysis. In the first level of analysis, the narrative accounts of participants (field texts) are configured into research texts. Narrative analysis is about re-storying the narratives of the participants generated through interviews and artefacts to make the narratives meaningful. This chapter is responding to the research puzzles which focuses on the lived experiences of campus managers, challenges that the campus managers experience and how they mitigate these challenges as leadership in their campuses.

## **Chapter Five**

This chapter present the second level of analysis referred to as analysis of narratives. Field text is discussed and themes that have emerged are presented and discussed relating them to the literature and theoretical framework adopted for the study. In this chapter I look at similar themes which emerged from the three participants and those which are exclusive to individual participants. It is in this chapter that I attempt to solve research puzzles guiding the study.

## **Chapter Six**

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study. Based on the conclusions made, the chapter offers recommendations for campus managers in TVET colleges and top management. It also makes suggestions for future research studies.

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

The aim of Chapter One is to provide an orientation to the research study. The background to the study, as well as the rationale and the significance of the study are outlined. The statement of the problem and objectives are stated and the research questions are posed. Clarification of key concepts and the delimitations of the study are provided.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprises the literature review and the theoretical framework for this study. “The literature review is an attempt to summarise the existing state of knowledge about a subject” (Knopf, 2006, p. 128). The literature review presented in this study considers information around campus managers' lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter focuses on both local and international debates about the studied phenomenon. The chapter is presented in a thematic manner that describes the purpose of the study and raises key issues that give answers to the research puzzles. Literature on adaptive leadership theory is included in the review.

#### **2.2 Conceptualisation of key concepts**

To ensure consistent view of key terms in the study, below I provide clarification of leadership and management.

##### **2.2.1 The concepts of leadership and management**

The concept of leadership overlaps with two related terms, management and administration (Bush, 2008). The term 'management' is widely used in Britain, Europe and Africa, while the term 'administration' is preferred in the United States, Canada and Australia (Bush, & Glover, 2003, p. 9). For this study, it is of paramount importance to differentiate between leadership and management to be able to address the three research puzzles guiding the study.

For scholars, the concepts of leadership and management can be used interchangeably (Algahtani, 2014; Bush, 2008; Grant, 2010; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). However, other scholars such as Azad and Anderson (2017); Cuban (1988); Yukl (1989) hold a different view, and regard the two term (leadership and management) as being conceptually different. I am aligned to the latter view on the relationship between leadership and management. Leadership is about change and leaders are always looking for long term goals (Cuban, 1988; Yukl, 1989)

while management is about maintaining activities (Clarke, 2007; Grant, 2009; Cuban, 1988). “Campus managers are responsible for executing management and leadership activities on a daily basis (Mothapo, 2019, p. 57). Leadership and management as different concept reside within an individual person as they share common critical features (Azad & Anderson, 2017). Therefore, one can argue that they are two sides of the same coin, as both leadership and management are needed for academic institutions such as TVET colleges to carry out the roles and succeed.

In the TVET sector the term management is predominant while the term leadership is often not considered (Mothapo, 2019). According to the findings by Robertson and Frick (2018), while campus managers understand the difference between leadership and management, they are not always able to make a distinction between them (Algahtani, 2014). Clarke (2007) posits that leadership is influencing others’ actions in achieving desirable ends while management is maintaining efficiently, current organisational arrangements. Therefore, given the nature of work of campus managers in TVET colleges, it is evident that they have to influence their subordinates to achieve projected goals while nurturing organisational resources that already exist within their campus.

### **2.2.2 The concept of leadership**

The concept “leadership” is central to the study as the focus is on campus managers' lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis. Leadership has been defined many times which makes it complex, multidimensional phenomena (Bush, 2019; DePree, 1989). Expressing a similar view, Ahmad (2015) argues that the definition of leadership is dynamic as most scholars tend to give their own interpretations. Other scholars (see, Adams, 2018; Boonla & Treputtharat, 2014; Delia, 2018; Spendlove, 2007) provide definitions of leadership that reflects the assumption that leadership is a process of guiding and directing the behaviour of people in the working environment. These scholars define leadership as the process through which a leader uses his or her influence (Northouse, 2013), to facilitate the decision-making process, set goals for the organisation (Boonla & Treputtharat, 2014), communication (Delia, 2018), and encouraging team spirit in order to achieve common goals.

Juntrasook (2014) gives four meanings of leadership at higher education institutions. First, leadership is a position to which a person is appointed. Second, the person demonstrates his/her

leadership competency through his/her performance. Third, leadership is practice, namely, connecting with people, ensuring mutual trust, communicating clearly with all stakeholders and delegating leadership within the academic institution (Fernandez, & Shaw, 2020). And lastly, leadership entails being a professional role model in behaviour, thoughts and communication (Juntrasook, 2014).

### **2.2.3 The concept of management**

According to Strydom (2008), management is a process where work-related activities are coordinated so that people performing the activities complete them effectively and efficiently. This is the stability and efficiency notion that Bush (2008), Clarke (2007) and Grant (2009) speak about. Arguing along similar lines, Bush (2006, p. 2) defines management as “routine maintenance of present operations and maintaining efficiently and effectively, current organisational arrangements”. Campus managers are focused on the idea of getting things done as opposed to achieving the best results. This is because their functions are based largely on maintaining what already exists rather than initiating change. Management is referred to as “process of getting things done effectively and efficiently through and with people (Robbind & Decenzo, 2004, p. 6). Management functions include planning, organising, leading, and controlling (Machado, 2008).

### **2.3 The leadership role of the TVET campus managers**

Campus managers are responsible for carrying out their leadership and management duties as prescribed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (DHET Report, 2009). DHET Report (2009) outlines campus manager responsibilities which includes the following; the ability to involve internal and external stakeholders, arranging marketing and networking events, compliance with and implementing effective institutional governance processes and procedures, preparing their own budgets, securing, managing and maintaining the fixed and moveable property/ infrastructure, responding to internal and external opportunities to promote their campuses, and to maintain stakeholder relations, establish and maintain effective programmes and administration systems.

Drawing from the policy directives of the Department of Higher Education and Training, it can be argued that the manner in which leadership should be exercised has already been prescribed.

I say this based on the fact that campus managers have the responsibility to involve internal and external stakeholders in the successful operation of their campuses. In other words, by ignoring internal and external stakeholders, campus managers would be violating a standard procedure. While there is a tendency to equate the term 'leadership' with the traits and behaviours of individual leaders such as those of campus managers, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for individuals and stakeholders to work collaboratively in order to achieve leadership goals (Bolden, 2020). A study by Babalola (2014) done in Nigeria revealed that leaders in higher education such as TVET managers were required to enforce strong involvement of all stakeholders including, the governments; higher education institutions, students and their families, employees, business and industry, the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, the community and professional associations.

Campus managers are tasked with other responsibilities such as arranging marketing and networking events for their campuses. Gonzalez-Sancho and Vincent-Lancrin (2016) and Marzano and Toth (2013) concur that virtual networking functionalities such as mailing lists, blogs, and social media groups enable campus managers to interact with other leaders across provinces and even countries. For campus managers to be innovative, they cannot work alone, but they must network with other related leaders to formulate the best solutions for their campuses. Balkrishen (2019) shares a similar view that campus managers can use technology to be part of and enhance networking events.

Campus managers respond to internal and external opportunities to promote their campuses and to maintain stakeholder relations. Robertson and Frick (2018) posit that campus managers in South Africa need to be visionary, be able to identify opportunities for their campuses and make things happen. Robertson and Frick (2018) further state that leaders need to keep up to date with new developments, remain in tune with stakeholders and be informed about national and international trends as opportunities in changing times.

Campus managers comply with and implement effective institutional governance processes and procedure (DHET, 2009). According to Sithole (2019), campus managers are responsible for maintaining order, taking into consideration policies, procedures and regulations governing the college. Campus managers require basic resources such as policies, procedures, systems and capacity in order to accomplish their assigned responsibilities successfully (Kraak, Parterson & Boka, 2016). The functioning of the campus depends on the processes and

procedures issued by the DHET as campus managers are subjected to compliance rather than developing these policies and legislations for their own campuses (Mothapo, 2019) .

The South African Further Education and Training (FETCA), Act No. 16 of 2006, prescribes that all campuses are to prepare their own budgets each financial year and that campus managers are accountable for all managerial functions (Republic of South Africa, 2006). According to Briggs (2019), principals are responsible for their schools with similar responsibilities to those of campus managers. They are the chief executive and accounting officers entrusted with the responsibility of controlling revenue and ensuring that school funds are utilised accordingly. I concur with Briggs (2019) that campus managers in TVET colleges should compile annual campus income, expenditure, and capital budgets and monitor actual performance within their campuses. Campus managers must adhere to strict budget plans to effectively manage funds for their campuses (Briggs, 2019). It is the role of the campus manager to do a regular crosscheck and monitor the campus account, insisting on the collection of receipts of purchases by staff. The discussion on the leadership role of TVET campus managers clearly shows that financial management is a crucial component of their responsibilities.

Campus managers secure, manage and maintain fixed and moveable property and infrastructure of their campuses. Khakau (2019) maintains that quality infrastructure improves a learner's academic performance. In this regard, the TVET college campus managers are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to teaching and learning. According to Wilson (2019), campus managers should deliver goods and services at the right time, right quality, right quantity and the correct price as indicated in the procurement management plan. Wilson (2019) further argues that procurement process followed by some campus managers in some TVET colleges in South Africa, falls short in delivery time and in quality of goods and services.

Campus managers have to establish and maintain effective programmes and administration systems (DHET, 2009). The findings of a research done by Sithole (2019), revealed that the utilisation of Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS), Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS), Continual Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) and Student Support Services (SSS) systems in a TVET college ensured effective administration of the college. Campus managers use ICASS and IQMS as scientific management practices to monitor and

evaluate performances. In other words, it is critical that campus managers establish and maintain effective administrative systems.

Campus managers remain charged with responsibilities of leading and managing campuses to achieve objectives of their colleges (DHET, 2009). Therefore, effective functioning of campuses relies greatly on competent leaders. As the TVET sector is challenged with problems, the role of campus managers requires adaptive leadership where stakeholders are encouraged to give their inputs in decision making on matters such as campus resources and teaching and learning (Heifetz, Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). The next section reviews literature on leadership challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic and how these challenges can be mitigated.

## **2.4 Challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic on campus managers' leadership**

COVID-19 pandemic has posed innumerable challenges on the work of leaders of institutions at various levels, including campus managers in all TVET colleges in the country. Campus managers across the world are confronted with challenges to their leadership on a day-to-day basis because of this pandemic. In the context of TVET colleges in South Africa, there are various leadership challenges experienced by campus managers and college principals and different strategies used to mitigate these challenges have been adopted. In order to understand leadership in times of COVID-19 pandemic from different angles, this section presents various debates and experiences drawn from local and international literature. This section has made reference to both school leaders and higher education leaders due to limited literature on TVET colleges. There are different crises that the world has faced. However, this study explores campus managers lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis. Therefore, the crisis in focus in this section and the study as a whole, refers to the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic.

### **2.4.1 Perspectives from international studies**

Fotheringham, Harriott, Healy, Areng, McGill and Wilson (2020) presented a study that addressed pressures and influences which school leaders as policy makers experienced during COVID-19 pandemic. Data were generated using surveys and interviews. The participants were randomly picked from primary and secondary schools based in England in June 2020.

The findings suggested that the quantity, quality and frequency of top down communication have contributed to school leaders' stress. The study also found that communication and collaboration between school leaders and school communities played a major role in supporting leaders during rapid change. The study recommended that the government and the education sector should address communication, collaboration and change issues as means to harness the challenges and opportunities which have been identified by school leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study by Harris and Jones (2020), conducted in United Kingdom focused on school leadership during disruptive times of COVID-19 pandemic and how school leadership responded to the pandemic. This study relates to the current study as it provides some insights that can be used since the current study is about leadership in times of crisis. The findings of the study were that school leadership practices had changed considerably because of COVID19 pandemic; that new preparation and training programmes may be needed to mitigate leadership challenges with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; that self-care must be prioritised by school leaders; that forging stronger relationships with stakeholders and distributive leadership should be foregrounded as these had become a necessity.

Fernandez and Shaw's (2020) study, conducted in United States focused on leadership best practices that can be used to navigate unpredictable and adaptive challenges such as that posed by COVID-19 pandemic. The study's findings indicted that there were three leadership practices that principals adopted. First, leaders utilised a type of servant leadership which emphasises empowerment, involvement, working collectively. Second, leaders distributed leadership responsibilities to teams within the organisation. Third, leaders emphasised the need to always communicate with all stakeholders involved using variety of communication channels. The study by Fernandez and Shaw (2020) is similar to the current study in that it focused on leadership practices during COVID-19 in academic. The main difference is that it focused on leadership practices of academic leaders generally, and not on leaders of schools or colleges. The study also addressed adaptive challenges which relate to adaptive leadership theoretical framework used in the current study. The study suggested that academic leaders must have adaptive capacity to be open to learn new things and evolve in crisis such as COVID-19.

Laufer, Leiser, Deacon, Perrin de Brichambaut, Fecher, Kobsda and Hesse's (2021) study focused on the experiences of educational leaders around the world on rapid digital transformation. The purpose of the study was to understand how leaders in the education sector experienced the challenges and opportunities that came with digital turn during the pandemic. The study used a sequential methods design using questionnaire, contextual interviews and a follow up questionnaire. The study recruited a diverse sample where participants were selected from 24 different countries from different types of institutions. The findings from the study were that different factors played a role in how turning to digital platforms affected digital learning. These factors included lack of infrastructure; poor connections in regions; teachers and students lack technological devices and software; students' home environment; funding and support from the government vary greatly. The methodology and research design are totally different from the current study. This study recommended that there should be enhanced collaboration between higher education institutions. Leaders working in well-resourced institutions can share their resources with other institutions and build bridges against inequalities that could be existing. Leaders can expand higher education networks where global challenges can be addressed on international collaboration relying on global knowledge community.

#### **2.4.2 Perspectives from the African continent**

Kedir and Geleta (2017) conducted a study in Ethiopia which focused on raising awareness to TVET college leaders on the importance of improving their leadership competence to meet leadership challenges in their institutions. The selected participants consisted of trainers, management team members and college Deans. The target sample of participants differed from the current study as the focus is on campus managers. The findings from the study were that leaders failed to effectively lead innovation and change, and also that they were not capable to make use of various approaches in securing and utilising resources. The study recommended that the TVET commission should make it a priority to plan and invest resources for the development of leadership practices in the region of Oromia. The significance of this study is that it raises awareness on the importance of campus managers to improve their leadership competences to meet leadership challenges such as the one brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tamrat (2021) conducted a study in Private Higher Education (PHE) institution which focused on the impact COVID-19 pandemic had on the private higher education in Ethiopia. This study was done in the context of private higher education, different from the current study which is public Higher Education. Data generation methods used were different from that of the current study. The study used diary and questionnaires as data generation methods. The findings revealed how COVID-19 pandemic had negatively affected the academic and the business management of the Private Higher Education something which has affected both public and private TVET institutions. The government instructed schools to give the necessary COVID-19 awareness as recommended by government to the students and do follow up; avoid physical contact lessons and networks; provide online teaching (Tamrat, 2021). The findings indicated that there were challenges relating to shifting to online teaching and learning; that there was poor preparation; that there was a lack of communication due to uncertainty and informational gap at the sectoral level. The study recommended that college leaders should commit to the building of the ICT infrastructure; that they should adapt to the changing environment; that they should find interventions towards online platforms; that they should reduce internet costs and that students would be able to access computers with reduced costs. This could be applicable to South African TVET colleges which saw similar challenges with online teaching platforms.

### **2.4.3 Perspectives from South African studies**

Based on the above international and African leadership challenges, it is evident that leadership challenges in TVET sector exists in most parts of the world. In the South African context, various scholars (Balkrishen, 2019; Lebakeng 2018; Mncube, Mutongoza & Olwawale, 2021; Mothapo, 2019; Moyo & Smit, 2017; Robertson & Frick, 2018; Sithole, 2019) have conducted studies which focused on leadership and management challenges of TVET colleges. Balkrishen (2019) conducted a mixed method approach study which was both quantitative and qualitative, that focused on how leadership of campus managers of TVET campuses in South Africa may be further developed. The study employed sequential explanatory design to collect and analyse the quantitative data followed by collection and analysis of the qualitative data. The findings from participants of the Mpumalanga TVET college revealed that campus managers' leadership capacity was mediocre. The study also found that campus managers had very limited decision-making powers due to the centralisation of management structures and, such centralisation presented challenges in terms of quick responses on matters that require

immediate attention (Balkrishen, 2019). Campus managers felt that they were not able to act on their own initiatives but that they should always refer all matters to senior management in the central office.

Some campus managers did not get support from central office when they initiated networking sessions with other campus managers due to scarcity of funding for leadership development. Failure to attend network and requisite training had negative implications for the campus managers and TVET colleges because human capital is important if institutions are to be run efficiently (Balkrishen, 2019). Access to leadership capacity building assists in ensuring that campus managers understand their roles and responsibilities. The non-compliance by campus managers to college policies and processes such as health and safety was, according to the study, due to lack of knowledge that could be obtained from workshops, networking, conferences and seminars (Balkrishen, 2019). The study suggested that DHET needed to start exploiting benefits of technology through virtual classrooms and tools for delivering online classrooms of which are beneficial to the development of campus managers (Balkrishen, 2019). The study further suggested the use of technology to enhance networking where campus managers could start interacting and doing presentations, engaging with learning resources while working in an online setting. All these matters are considered to be beneficial for campus managers as they lead teaching and learning.

Sithole (2019) conducted a qualitative study focusing on evaluating management structure of the Umgungundlovu TVET College in order to improve its efficiency through enhancing its management structure. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews with staff members and students. The findings of the study revealed serious challenges facing the management structure which included a lack of resources such as hostels, libraries, computers and technology tools and managerial competence. Campus managers as part of management structure in colleges did not participate in the planning and development of policies, yet they were expected to ensure compliance in the implementation of management systems including ICASS and IQMS. Sithole (2019) also found that centralisation of decision-making powers at the college principal's office was problematic. Sometimes, college principals were not willing to delegate their powers to lower levels at campus managers' offices, and this negatively affected efficient management in TVET college campuses (Sithole, 2019). For instance, campus managers are expected to wait for approval of urgent requisitions documents from the central office instead of dealing with those requisitions at the campus level. The study

suggested changing funding model and increasing budgets to accommodate infrastructure and other resources (Sithole, 2019). The study also suggested decentralised management systems to allow campus managers as lower level managers to run their campuses independently and take decisions in time.

Mothapo (2019) conducted a qualitative study which focused on the strategic management and leadership, policies, procedures and regulations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of day-to-day activities of TVET colleges in South Africa. The study found that management were subjected to compliance to policies and circulars issues by the DHET rather than given opportunities to make their input in the development of these regulated instructions (Mothapo, 2019). Bureaucratic structure leaves less room for campus managers to be creative leaders when solving campus challenges. The study suggested that TVET principals and all SMT managers can improve their capabilities when solving problems through undergoing training and development programmes (Mothapo, 2019).

In a democratic country such as South Africa, we can never exclude the influence of politics when we talk about education. According to Lebakeng (2018), politics in South Africa plays a major role when TVET campus managers try engaging with external stakeholders such as different members of the community. Lebakeng (2018) conducted a qualitative study to identify challenges that TVET leadership faced when involving communities in which they operated, and how such challenges were addressed. The findings of the study revealed that there was lack of interactions between TVET leadership and the community. One of the challenges was that college leaders expected the community to come to the school premises when the college experienced problems instead of the leaders going to the community (Lebakeng, 2018). Political difference in communities was found to be a contributing factor when it comes to TVET leaders engaging with communities. Therefore, it is important that TVET leaders understand political dynamics in the local communities. During the pandemic, cooperation between the TVET colleges and local community was essential. Some campuses were involving community to manufacture face masks thereby addressing challenges of the community, focusing on the urgent need of youth employment and equipping them with entrepreneurial skills (Majumdar et al., 2020).

Robertson and Frick (2018) conducted a qualitative study aimed at understanding and reporting on current and future leaders' perceptions on what they think are the roles of leadership and

management in TVET sector. The findings of this study suggested that the demands of leadership and management have created conflicting priorities for leaders in this sector. Leaders have not been able to distinguish between leadership and management roles at the college (Robertson & Frick, 2018). Leaders in TVET colleges believed that they were the last people to hear about the passed laws from the DHET. The study also found that leaders were now consulting with internal and external stakeholders to make decisions; building strong collaborative relationships to improve curriculum which could have a positive effect in the classroom practice (Robertson & Frick, 2018). Leaders have acknowledged that they needed leadership development programmes to make better decisions in complex situations. The study suggested that leaders needed to be visionary; identify opportunities for their campuses and be informed about the changing environment. The study advocated a custom-made development programme for TVET leaders which will accommodate knowledge and skills needed by TVET leaders (Robertson & Frick, 2018).

Mncube, Mutongoza and Olawale (2021) conducted a study in a context of rural university in South Africa. The study collected data through questionnaires and interviews. The aim of this study was to explore how the leadership in the higher education managed to cope with the unique challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the study revealed that they had put some management measures in place to efficiently manage the university. The findings also identified a number of challenges such as safety on campuses, postponement of examinations, compromised research and existing international collaboration with university stakeholders. The study recommended that the South African government and higher education institutions needed to invest more on the infrastructural facilities in compliance with health and safety regulations (Mncube, Mutongoza & Olawale, 2021). This will guarantee safety of all stakeholders within the higher education. The study also recommended investment on technical infrastructural facilities which will enable institutions to be able to shift from conventional assessment, teaching and learning approaches to a more blended teaching and learning (Mncube, Mutongoza & Olawale, 2021). Leaders during COVID-19 relied on support documents like guides, resource packaging for moving teaching and learning to online environment.

Moyo and Smit (2017) presented a narrative study conducted in a school context on the experiences of school principals dealing with HIV/AIDS- related issues. This was a qualitative study using descriptive data analysis technique. The findings of the study revealed the existence

of inadequate leadership training in South African schools as well as insufficient training and management skills to develop strategies to mitigate challenges brought by HIV and AIDS on teaching and learning (Moyo & Smit, 2017). This study is related to the current study in terms of dealing with the pandemic in the education sector, though these are two different pandemics in different settings. This study relates to the current study as both the studies applied narrative inquiry methodology to capture the experiences of the school leaders in times of pandemic. School leadership experiences challenges when the environment changes (Moyo & Smit, 2017). COVID-19 pandemic has caused sadness, depression and anxiety among the people (Moyo & Smit, 2017). School leadership continues to support affected teachers without the support structure from the government. HIV and AIDS, just like COVID-19 pandemic, has caused significant disruption to school plans presenting overwhelming challenges to school principals and campus managers (Moyo & Smit, 2017). The study suggested that school principals needed to get training and development on issues of HIV and AIDS pandemic so that they have adequate knowledge and skills needed to handle the pandemic; they should be able to influence behaviour change to the school and the community and use creativity to mitigate stigma and discrimination associated with the pandemic.

Mushwana and Chiromo (2020) conducted a study in seven TVET colleges in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The selected participants included 139 National Certificate level 3 TVET college students that were pursuing their studies in vocational subjects in Engineering and Related Design (ERD). The purpose of the study was aimed at investigating infrastructure in the ERD division in the TVET colleges. The findings of the study identified challenges such as shortage of equipment and machines used in the workshops; shortage of audio-visual equipment, student accommodation and transport for the selected TVET colleges (Mushwana & Chiromo, 2020). The study relates closely to the current study in terms of the context of the TVET college focus. A pattern from the African studies is that they seemed to lack or fall behind when it comes to infrastructure in the TVET colleges. College management working together with campus managers need to provide and improve infrastructure to accommodate COVID-19 rules and regulations (Mushwana & Chiromo, 2020).

Another study was conducted by Aina and Ogegbu (2021) in a private TVET college in a South African context. This study explored the experiences of lecturers regarding virtual learning during the school lockdown. Data was collected and analysed using content analysis. Data was generated using face-to-face semi structured interviews and non-participant observation. The

study found that lecturers were positive about the transitioning from traditional teaching and learning to virtual teaching and learning. However, the same lecturers experienced several challenges namely, technical problems, ineffective communication from management, workload, inadequate training, lack of access to ICT tools and lack of other structural support within the college which negatively impacted their effective implementation of virtual teaching. The study also found that students were not provided with technological resources as this was private TVET college (Aina & Ogegbo, 2021). This study addressed challenges that are similar to the current study, but differed in that the study tackled the challenges that were experienced by lecturers.

## **2.5 Emerging issues from the reviewed literature**

In the next section I summaries emerging issues from the reviewed literature which includes leadership challenges and strategies that have been used to mitigate these challenges.

### **2.5.1 Leadership challenges that the campus managers experience during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Literature reviewed in the current study highlights that campus managers are confronted with various challenges in carrying out their leadership duties during COVID-19 pandemic. The most common challenges include funding campuses, leadership capacity, the implementation of online teaching and learning, infrastructural barriers in compliance with COVID-19 pandemic, and centralisation and top management.

#### **2.5.1.1 Funding campuses**

Leaders in TVET colleges are faced with ongoing resource challenges. According to Tamrat (2021), higher education institutions in Ethiopia could not make available a required huge amount of budget for infrastructure and human resource in order to run online programmes and courses as a transition from a face-to-face teaching to a virtual modality during COVID-19. Central office limits the allocation of funds towards leadership development for campus managers (Balkrishen, 2019). According to Laufer et al. (2021), institutions face financial challenges, thus, failing to secure needed licences and software for online teaching; COVID-19 has had an impact on the economy which affected parents' ability to pay in these institutions

and funding and support from the government varies greatly. It was established that support from the government was not robust enough to allow organisations to experiment with online teaching and learning. The prevailing situation in TVET colleges is blamed on insufficient budget allocated by the Government (Buthelezi, 2018).

### **2.5.1.2 Leadership capacity**

The review of literature suggests that there is a need for leadership development in TVET colleges. Campus managers' leadership capacity is perceived to be mediocre (Balkrishen, 2019). Balkrishen (2019) posits that professional development opportunities for campus managers are very limited. He found that the few existing leadership development opportunities are either not well coordinated or do not add any value to campus managers. Literature has indicated that the lack of leadership development contributes to campus managers not being able to make competent decisions during COVID-19 pandemic. Mncube et al. (2021) posit that there has been a lot of cancellation of international and local conferences due to COVID-19 pandemic which has negatively affected networking amongst academics and students. This was done because leaders felt it was impossible for them to continue their operations as they used to before the pandemic. Leadership in high institutions in Ethiopia showed high level of uncertainty and hopelessness towards fate of their organisations (Tamrat, 2021).

### **2.5.1.3 Implementation of online teaching and learning**

The finding of Mncube et al. (2021) highlighted that the challenges of higher institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic included inadequate infrastructure to facilitate online teaching and learning with immediate effect; students did not have equal access to the laptops and internet facilities; lecturers not able to teach practical and laboratories, music and art courses online. According to Aina and Ogegbo (2021), campus management presented lecturers with inadequate training, lack of access to ICT tools and lack of other structural support within the college which impacts their effective implementation of virtual teaching. The study also highlighted how students were not provided with technological resources as this was the case in private TVET colleges. There were obstacles to online teaching and learning, and thus, affecting countries worldwide including South African TVET campus managers (Dube, 2020; Laufer et al., 2021). These obstacles include a lack of access to computers and internet

connections; lack of training for staff and students, and student inequalities caused by their backgrounds.

#### **2.5.1.4 Infrastructural barriers in compliance with COVID-19 pandemic**

According to Sithole (2019), TVET college managers at campus level in South Africa find it difficult to maintain college infrastructure such as student accommodation, as well as, to provide adequate toilet facilities for the total number of students who are registered at the campus. This has led to females and males having to share these facilities, which is not considered a good practice. Among other things, South African TVET colleges fail to provide, manage and maintain library facilities (Buthelezi, 2018, Kanyangale & Sibanda, 2020; Mushwana & Chiromo, 2020; Sithole, 2019). This means that students have to travel to get to the municipal libraries. Students rely on the libraries in to prepare for the examinations. Research findings by Kanyangale and Sibanda (2021) revealed numerous challenges which include; insufficient space in the computer laboratories; outdated computer facilities; outdated technology and inappropriate examination venues. In the same vein, Mushwana and Chiromo (2020), in their study conducted in the South African context, found that there was a shortage of equipment and machinery, visual equipment, accommodation and transport in TVET colleges. The shortage of infrastructure in the campuses make it difficult for campus managers to comply with COVID-19 pandemic processes and procedures.

#### **2.5.1.5 Centralisation and top management**

The organisational structure of the TVET sector has been seen as a barrier to effective management of this institution. For instance, the issue of centralisation of the management system has been seen as having a negative impact on campus administration (Sithole, 2019). According to Balkrishen (2019), there is lack of support from top management when campus management initiate networking events and training as funding for leadership development comes from central office. Campus managers are unable to be innovative and free to take risks because certain powers and responsibilities are centralised at TVET Commission level (Kedir, 2015). Such powers include; making requisitions; approval for the recruitment of staff and budgets (Balkrishen, 2019). Literature reviewed revealed that campus managers have very limited decision-making powers and this causes challenges in matters that require immediate attention. Campus managers feel that they are not able to act on their own initiatives but must

refer all matters to senior management in the central office and get approval from the principal (Sithole, 2019).

## **2.5.2 Overcoming leadership and management challenges presented by COVID-19**

The literature reviewed highlights four key areas for change if leadership and management challenges presented by COVID-19 are to be overcome. These key areas relate to funding formula for TVET college campuses; leadership capacity building; implementation of online teaching and learning, and removing Infrastructural barriers in compliance with COVID-19 pandemic. The four key areas are discussed next.

### **2.5.2.1 Funding campuses**

To mitigate challenges presented by limited funds allocated by the DHET, Humada-Ludeke (2013) suggests that campus managers should develop entrepreneurial skills and form strong partnerships as an additional funding stream in order to generate funds for their campuses. Laufer et al., (2021) recommends collaboration between institutions in order to facilitate programs around digital learning. Higher education leaders in well funded institutions are encouraged to build bridges across the gulfs of inequalities, sharing their resources with disadvantaged institutions. Sithole (2019) recommends that funding model for TVET colleges to be changed. This is necessary for considering TVET college infrastructure and facilities needed to comply with COVID-19 pandemic. As the government budgets for all the public TVET colleges, Sithole (2019) recommends that an increased budget should be considered for infrastructure and facilities. Sithole (2019) further recommends that students based in post-school education whether this is university or TVET college should get equal treatment when it comes to NSFAS benefits. Students and lecturers should have equal access to learning resources such as data and devices, cost of data can be reduced; free access to learning material, and providing tailor-made data for learning purposes only (Dube, 2020).

### **2.5.2.2 Leadership capacity**

There is no doubt that the development of effective leadership is prioritised worldwide in the VET sector, and so should South African TVET sector (Robertson & Frick, 2018). The DHET should make greater investments in the professional development of campus managers

(Balkrishen, 2019; Mothapo, 2019; Sithole, 2019). The DHET needs to establish intensive training programmes for campus managers, TVET colleges may have competent managers who will ensure that the required effective implementation of managerial functions takes place (Sithole, 2019). Certain South African universities offer postgraduate degrees which provide a good foundation for college leadership and management (Mothapo, 2019). LaPorte (2007) contributes to this debate by arguing that leadership capacity development is not about acquiring definite plans of action but, is also about being able to react appropriately when caught off guard. Campus managers can perform their leadership roles better in stressful times such as those posed by COVID-19, if they are actively involved in innovative leadership development programmes (Balkrishen, 2019). This could “help prepare school leaders to apply creative approaches that address the broader roles and responsibilities of leaders” (Mestry, 2017, p. 8).

### **2.5.2.3 Implementation of online teaching and learning**

Implementing online teaching and learning requires leaders to be innovative and collaborate for ideas (Heifetz et al. 2009). Strategies that campus managers can use to mitigate implementation of online teaching and learning may include; equal access to resources, providing training for both lecturers and students, identifying inequalities between the students choosing suitable tools; proving suitable tools (Dube, 2020) and collaborating with other TVET campuses for ideas (Fotheringham et al., 2021). In times of COVID-19 formative assessment has been achieved through distance learning using platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, the use of Virtual Learning Environments where questions can be asked and tasks, activities, and quizzes can be done (Bozkurt, Jung, Xiao, Vladimirschi, Schuwer, Egorov, & Paskevicius, 2020).

School leaders need to come up with creative ideas to bridge gap of inequalities excess to online learning. Strategies to mitigate these challenges included: setting up laptop loaning schemes; creating internet hot spots and partnership through collaborations were born as more long-term solutions (Laufer et al., 2021). Higher education leaders developed strategies which included planning for resource packages for moving teaching and learning to the online environment using specialised platforms and creating official websites that centralise the initiatives in this field; considered background of the disadvantaged students by instating measures meant to achieve equal education by providing computers and telecommunication packages by the

authorities (Mncube et al., 2021). The Department of Basic Education provided learners and teachers with devices to use for online learning and to gain access to information that relates to the fight against COVID-19 (Dube, 2020). These devices included smartphones, tablets, or general phones that support installation of learning packages such as Blackboard.

#### **2.5.2.4 Removing Infrastructural barriers in compliance with COVID-19 pandemic**

Sithole (2019) recommends that a funding model should consider fixed and movable infrastructure and facilities for TVET colleges. Bozkurt, Jung, Xiao, Vladimirschi, Schuwer, Egorov and Paskevicius (2020) recommend that learning tools and user-friendly platform can be used for the lesson that shifts from offline to online classroom to help the teachers and the students to succeed during the crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mncube et al. (2021) assert that campus managers together with top management and the government must consider investing in technical infrastructural facilities which will enable institutions to be able to shift from conventional assessment, teaching and learning approaches to a more blended teaching and learning. The study recommended that the South African government and higher education institutions need to invest more on the infrastructural facilities as compliance with health and safety regulations.

### **2.6 Theoretical framework**

Gabriel (2008) explains that a theory is considered as a generalised statement of abstractions or ideas that assert, explain, or predict relationships or connections between or among phenomena within the limits of critical bounding assumptions that the theory explicitly makes. Cohen et al. (2018) see theory as general sets of principles that are independent of the specific phenomenon to be explained. “A theoretical framework comprises the theories expressed by experts in the field into which you plan to research, which you draw upon to provide a theoretical coat hanger for your data analysis and interpretation of results” (Kivunja, p. 46, 2018). The definitions of a theoretical framework above suggest that a theoretical framework is a useful tool that will help me to organise ideas and concepts and will also connect my study with the existing knowledge in the field. It will help me to analyse and interpret the generated data. To understand the lived experiences of TVET college campus managers during COVID-19 pandemic, I have used adaptive leadership theory as advanced by Heifetz (1994).

This study is underpinned by Adaptive Leadership Theory which was introduced by Ronald Heifetz in the year 1994. As highlighted in literature, leadership is the process through which a leader uses his or her influence to facilitate the decision-making process, set goals for the organisation communication and encouraging team spirit in order to achieve common goals (Boonla & Treputtharat, 2014; Delia, 2018; Northouse, 2013). Leaders cannot work in isolation and cannot always have solutions to the problems in the organisations they lead but can use their influence to solve problems. According to Heifetz (1994), Adaptive Leadership Theory may be viewed as a framework that enables organisations to succeed in challenging environments. When organisations move to new environments brought by change, as well as, presented with new opportunities, new strategies and abilities are required from one to thrive, as well as, the leadership to mobilise them (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). Adaptive leadership allows leaders and followers to work collectively focusing on the specific problem and take into consideration everyone's input to solve the problem (Heifetz et al., 2009). All the stakeholders involved are working towards a common goal for the best solution through creative thinking, identification of rewards, opportunities, and any challenges that may surface. It is for this reason that Heifetz et al. (2009) assert that adaptive leadership takes into consideration diversity of inputs to solve the problem as the emphasis is not on individual from the top but group collaboration at the bottom.

While leadership address change during COVID-19 pandemic, problems may present themselves in two ways: technical problems and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994). Heifetz (1994) assert that technical challenges are clearly defined, and leaders can provide implementable solutions to the problems as the answer is known. Technical problems require knowledge of experts to solve and adaptive challenges requires adjustments, discoveries and experiments from many places in the organisation (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). Campus managers experiencing leadership challenges from their day-to-day practices may ask for assistance from other campus managers within their college or through networking groups to solve the problem. In contrast to technical problems, adaptive challenges root causes are not clear and possible solutions are unlikely to be implemented as this requires one to be innovative and be willing to learn (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). For example, campus managers may need to make adjustments in terms of teaching and learning: planning for new timetable; campus attendance capacity, as means of safety measures to combat COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge may be the unwillingness of people to follow procedures and processes put in place as safety measures. To

achieve the implementation of this adaptive challenge, it is important to alter people's values, habits and ways of working as the challenge reside in the hearts (Heifetz & Linsky 2004).

Adaptive Leadership Theory is used in this study as a framework that will help me analyse and interpret data about the nature of the leadership challenges experienced by campus managers during COVID-19 pandemic and how they mitigated these challenges and thrived in the challenging environment (Heifetz, 1994; Yuki & Mahsud, 2010). Adaptive leaders do not just make changes, but they carefully need to first recognise external environment and consider the best way that will affect the organisation positively (Khan, 2017). Adaptive leadership theory was appropriate for this study as leaders will define problems carefully and find appropriate solutions to these problems (Khan, 2017).

Adaptive work requires determining what currently requires change while rethinking how organisations will adapt and thrive in a new environment (Heifetz et al., 2009; Northouse, 2019). Hence, the principal function of adaptive leadership is to direct challenges and to seek innovation (Sherron, 2000). Generating innovative ideas may come with chaos but the shared diversity of ideas can lead to greater organisational adaptability and greater problem-solving capacity (Brown et al., 2020). Campus managers do not have all the answers to the problems caused by COVID-19 pandemic. In adaptive leadership, campus managers can engage stakeholders equally who are directly involved or affected by the problems causing changes to find workable solutions (Nelson & Squires, 2017). As a way of being creative and preventing dictatorship, campus managers can involve stakeholders where they will apply their knowledge to solve problems. This makes everyone in the organisation to feel valued, appreciated as well as the mind set of changing their attitude, the way they think about their roles. Adaptive leadership as a process focuses on the ability of a campus manager as a leader on how staff members in their respective campuses are inspired to adapt to changes brought by the pandemic.

The new environment brought by COVID-19 requires new strategies and abilities of leadership of campus managers. To practice adaptive leadership, campus managers need to help people navigate through this time of crisis as they sift through what is essential and what is expandable as they experiment with solutions to achieve college goals. Campus managers' role is to facilitate the emergence of these solutions and put processes and systems in place to facilitate implementation of these solutions.

## **2.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter focused on the review of local and international literature relating to the study focus. In line with the project title, *Leadership in times of crisis: Lived Experiences of campus managers in a Technical Vocational Education and Training College*, this chapter has sought to present the relevant literature that speaks to leadership of campus managers during COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter went further and discussed theoretical framework that framed the study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology that was used in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I explored the literature and discussed the theoretical framework underpinning the inquiry. In this chapter, I focused on outlining the research design and methodology used in the study. I begin by describing the interpretive paradigm as a world view to explore campus managers' experiences of leadership in times of crisis. Following this is a discussion and justification for using qualitative research approach for this exploration. Thereafter, I elaborate on narrative inquiry and justify the choice of using it to understand the lived experiences of campus managers. I then explain purposive sampling as the method used to choose the samples to be studied. Data generation methods and data analysis are discussed. Lastly, I discuss trustworthiness issues and ethical considerations that needed to be adhered to when conducting this narrative inquiry, the limitations of the study are presented at the end of this chapter.

### **3.2 Interpretive research paradigm**

This study is located within the interpretative paradigm. According to Hughes (2010), a paradigm describes how we see the world and organise it into a coherent whole. Hughes (2010) further posits that a paradigm frames a research topic; so, the choice of paradigm influences how the research topic is viewed. According to Lincoln and Guba (1994), a paradigm is the belief or assumption system that is based on how reality is viewed (ontology), how knowledge is produced (epistemology) and how information is gathered (methodology assumptions).

Interpretative paradigm allows the researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants and the core belief is that reality is socially constructed (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretive researchers “approach the reality from subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture” (Thanh & Thanh, 2015, p. 25). My study sought to understand the lived experiences of campus managers in times of crisis and to understand how they work towards meeting their college obligations. I believe that reality is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in most positivist, quantitative research. One of the reasons I used interpretive paradigm is because interpretivist according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) has no fixed ways of doing things. When participants tell their stories, anything is possible as there are no fixed ways of doing this (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). My ontological thinking is to allow my participants as they tell their stories to be as flexible as they would like. Campus managers are independent individuals who have their own experiences, values, and beliefs. Each individual participant

has unique experience of leading campus during the pandemic and therefore, would not necessarily be the same with other campus managers involved in the study.

The study is based on data gathered from three managers of campuses within the same TVET college, in order to obtain multiple perspectives about their lived experiences and the practices they employ to meet their college obligations during COVID-19 pandemic. This has provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon rather than a generalised understanding for the whole population (Creswell, 2007).

### **3.3 Qualitative research approach**

This study followed the qualitative research approach. According to Rossman and Rallis (2011), qualitative researchers gather data about sensory experience using multiple methods; that is, what people (including researchers themselves) see, feel, hear, taste and smell. For this study, I have gathered data from campus managers through virtual meeting while at their places of work to avoid extricating them from their everyday world and also because of COVID-19 pandemic. This has helped me understand their lived experiences and leadership practices in their authentic work environments.

Rossman and Rallis (2011) note that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative, focusing on description, analysis and interpretation. Qualitative researchers are interested in “understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). By applying multiple interpretations of campus managers’ realities, I wanted to understand their interpretation of leadership in times of crisis and how they experienced and interacted with their social world. I planned to develop a subjective understanding of leadership in times of crisis from campus managers’ perspectives without making predictions. Qualitative research makes use of words and pictures instead of using numbers to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009).

### **3.4 Narrative inquiry methodology**

The most appropriate approach to gathering data about lived experiences is through a narrative inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define narrative inquiry as human experience in which

humans personally and socially lead storied lives. For this reason, I felt it was important to start by sharing my personal experience of growing up. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) also note that the use of narratives is the foremost way of thinking about experiences. It was important that I familiarised myself with the three commonplaces before conducting my interviews. Temporality is the first commonplace which points researchers towards attending to the “past, present and the future of the people, places, things and events under the study” (Clandinin, 2013, 39). The second commonplace is sociality where researchers attend to personal and social conditions. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), personal conditions refer to the researcher and participants’ feelings, hopes, reactions, morals disposition and aesthetic reactions. Social conditions are about environment and conditions under which experiences and events are unfolding (Clandinin, 2013). The third commonplace is in reference to the physical place where the inquiry happens (Clandinin, 2013). These three commonplaces assisted in getting to know and understand my participants.

Narrative inquiry “is a form of a qualitative research that involves the gathering of narratives, through written, oral and visual means, while focusing on the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences and seeks to provide insight that befits the complexity of human life” (Josselson, 2006, p. 4). Through narratives by campus managers in their natural settings, I was better able to understand their lived experiences and practices. "Narrative inquiry provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the way humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (Webster, Mertova, 2007, p.3). Creswell (2012) notes that one of the goals of narrative enquiry is to give voice to unheard stories. Campus managers will relate their stories about their leadership during challenging times.

### **3.5 Selection of participants and research sites**

Sampling, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), refers to population on which the research will focus. Data needed to be obtained from a smaller group in such a way that knowledge gained from this small group, which is referred to as sample, represented the total population under the study (Cohen et al., 2018). The sampling method that was used for this study was purposive and convenient. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), a purposive sampling technique is used in qualitative studies in order for the researcher to access

in-depth knowledge from people with professional roles and power who are knowledgeable about a particular issue. I needed to make sure that I selected participants who are going to provide a rich diversity of stories of experience. Convenient sampling involved selecting participants that are accessible and convenient for the researcher (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013; Marshall, 1996).

I chose three campus managers on the basis of their experiences, professional roles, power and knowledge of the central phenomenon investigated in the study (Creswell, 2012). I used purposive sampling method as it allows for selection of relevant participants for the study (Rule & John, 2011). I selected three campuses from one public TVET college in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal for convenience as they were closer to where I live and work. When selecting the public TVET college, purposive and convenient sampling method was useful as this method uses small-scale qualitative studies (Cohen et al., 2011).

### **3.6 Methods of generating and eliciting stories**

For this qualitative research study, I used narrative interviews and artefacts inquiry to generate data. These methods are further explained below.

#### **3.6.1 Narrative interviews**

Narrative interviews were conducted over two days with the campus managers using the English language. IsiZulu was used to fill in the gaps or to ask for more details about an issue of interest (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015). “Narrative interviews are a way of collecting people’s stories about their experiences” (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 631). During these interviews, campus managers told their stories about their lived experiences and leadership challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviews enabled the participants to relate both their personal and professional stories.

According to Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016), narrative interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity to prioritise the story teller’s perspectives rather than imposing a more specific agenda. In this study, narrative interviews allowed the participants to control the direction and content of the interviews. They could choose what they felt free to talk about and they were at liberty to leave out what they found to be sensitive. They gave their perspectives

on their lived experiences as leaders of campuses and leadership challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016), narrative interviews may help me, the researcher, to better understand campus managers' experiences and behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.6.2 Artefact inquiry**

Artefact inquiry was used as a secondary data generation method. "Artefacts are objects that have cultural or historical significance" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 34). Participants were asked to bring visuals or objects which have had historical significance in their lived experiences and leadership practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. These personal objects were used during interviews and acted as primary sources in creating participants' stories. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), artefacts can be used to stimulate discussion, to glimpse into the past or the present, to help to imagine a scene, and help bring back memories. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) note that, artefacts may also be used to convey messages, even if those messages are unclear. For this study, campus managers reflected on how they mitigate the challenges encountered during COVID-19 pandemic using their chosen artefacts. These artefacts symbolised their experiences of leading campuses during the pandemic. Through the participants' voices, you could tell there was an emotional attachment to the objects used as they reflected back. Memories were not only positive but also negative.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Analysis of data, which were the participants' stories, was double-pronged involving: narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. Merriam (2009) describes data analysis as the process of making sense of the data by consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read. I read the transcripts, field notes and artefacts from the participants. As I read, I noted observations and comments in my journal. This process of making notes to try and answer research questions is called coding. Assigning codes to pieces of data allowed me to construct categories.

#### **3.7.1 Narrative Analysis**

According to Hatch and Wisniewski (1995), narrative analysis is the procedure through which the data is organised by the researcher into a coherent developmental account. Narrative analysis is followed by data synthesis. “The result of a narrative analysis is an explanation that is retrospective, having linked past events together to account for how a final outcome might have come about” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p.16). Narrative analysis is an umbrella term for a family of methods that share a focus on stories (Riessman, 2008). According to Smith (2016), when doing narrative analysis, the researcher will focus on one specific story. The researcher should be wary of over-coding the data by trying to keep the story intact in order to preserve the wealth of storied detail contained in it. Narrative analysis focuses strongly on human lives and their experiences.

Firstly, it was important that I generated the stories from different campus managers. Secondly, I carefully transcribed data from the recorded interviews. Transcription is “a constructive process in which analytical thoughts can emerge and percolate” (Smith, 2016, p. 215). I had to decide what data was important and how I would present it. During the transcription of data, crucial stories started to emerge. I had to rearrange these crucial stories (events, actions and incidents) chronologically, creating structured storylines (process of emplotment) and combining the plots to produce a coherent, meaningful whole. This process is referred to as re-storying the stories (Clandinin, 2013). Given the above, the tool I used to configure the plots of participants’ narratives in order to construct a coherent narrative is concept mapping (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This generated further ideas to contribute to the research study.

### **3.7.2 Analysis of Narratives**

According to Hatch and Wisniewski (1995), analysis of narratives is the collection of stories as data and analysis of them applying paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories, characters or settings. (Polkinghorne, 1995). From the re-storied stories of the participants, I distinguished themes and categories that commonly and varyingly run across the landscape of participants’ stories. I then subsequently discovered how such categories and concepts were related to one another. Therefore, this approach to analysis moves from stories to common and varying components or features within such stories (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysis of narratives requires the construction of a database which consists of several stories.

### **3.8 Issues of trustworthiness**

Ensuring trustworthiness is critical to a qualitative study. While the criteria for trustworthiness in a qualitative study involves addressing issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); in narrative inquiry, principles of verisimilitude and utility in terms of trustworthiness must be observed (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Loh, 2013).

Loh (2013) posits that narrative studies should meet the criterion of verisimilitude, (whether it rings true), and of utility, (whether it is useful). According to Blumenfeld-Jones (1995), “narrative study must achieve verisimilitude, 'ring true', and demonstrate believability to ensure trustworthiness". Readers need to believe that what is being said does reflect campus managers' real-life experiences. According to Creswell (2007), verisimilitude in the research literature is defined as a criterion for a good literary study where the writing seems so real and alive that readers are directly led into the world of the study.

The researchers should ensure utility, according to Loh (2013), by looking at the usefulness of the study and its relevance to the research community. Utility can be achieved by ensuring “member checking, specifically peer validation and audience validation” (Loh, 2013, p. 10). Eisner (1998) provides three criteria to test study's usefulness; firstly, to help understand a situation that would be confusing; secondly, to provide descriptions and interpretation; and lastly, to highlight, explain and provide directions to the reader. Trustworthiness guarantees that the research methods used to collect narratives in the study clearly capture the voices of the participants. Narrative interviews were recorded and transcribed into narrative stories. Research participants were, as suggested by Morse, Barrett, and Mayan (2002), given an opportunity to view transcribed data in order to verify that their voices and not that of researcher, were presented.

According to Guba (1981), transferability of qualitative inquiry can be ensured by collecting thick descriptive data which will allow comparison of the context to other possible context to which transfer might be contemplated. By doing this, the researcher can produce a thick description of the context and be able to make a judgement about it fitting in with other possible contexts. “Thick descriptive data-narrative developed about the context so that judgements about degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who wish to apply all or part of the

findings elsewhere” (Schwandt, p. 19, 2007). It is important that the findings of the study have meaning to the readers especially because they have not been part of the study. I have provided a descriptive account of lived experiences of campus managers as leadership in times of crisis making the reader to make judgement of the phenomenon and be able to relate this to their own experiences. The readers should also find similarities so that they can relate the findings in the study to their own experiences.

### **3.9 Ethical issues**

To ensure the quality of my study, I had to thoroughly address all ethical issues concerning my research. One way of addressing ethical issues was by obtaining permission from gatekeepers. I had to apply for ethical clearance at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. “Ethical codes of practice are designed to protect the interest of individuals and institutions” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 115). I wrote a letter to the college administrator requesting permission to conduct my research study within the college. I wrote letters to campus managers requesting permission to conduct my study on their campuses. Letters granting permission to participate were handed to the sampled participants. These letters served to inform participants of the topic of the study, its duration, where the study was going to be located, and how much of their time was needed.

The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the research study. Campus managers needed to sign consent forms to agree to participate and to allow voice recording during the interviews. Wang and Geale (2015) point out that it is unethical to surprise your participants with recording devices during the interview. “Consent thus protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant, should anything go wrong in the research” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018, p. 122). This was used to acknowledge their right to privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. It was also important that I protect the identities of my participants as well as the names of the research sites where my study was conducted. I made use of pseudonyms for participants’ identities and research sites.

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

This study focused on only three campus managers within the same college, located in one province, KwaZulu-Natal. The outcome cannot be generalised since this is a small-scale research project. However, data generated should be sufficient to give a broader perspective on the final research study. Access to campuses by visitors was limited because of the need to adhere to COVID-19 regulations, safety restrictions and guidelines. This affected interviews with participants. As I was working full time Monday to Friday, it was also difficult to schedule interviews without affecting my full-time job. To generate data, I was able to arrange to meet with my participants during college holidays. My research took place in the TVET sector; this may have resulted in personal bias as I also serve in this sector, possibly affecting data generated and data analysis. In this regard, it was important for me to maintain an objective researcher-participant relationship.

### **3.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion on the research design and methodology adopted for this study. In my discussion I justified the use of the qualitative approach and the narrative enquiry methodology. Issues of trustworthiness, ethics and limitations to the study were addressed. The following chapter presents the first level of analysis of the campus managers' narratives.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### NARRATIVES OF CAMPUS MANAGERS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter included the research design and methodology employed in this study. I highlighted the use of the interpretive paradigm. Further to that, the use of the qualitative approach and the narrative inquiry methodology were discussed. In the same chapter I discussed sampling techniques and data generation methods. Issues of trustworthiness, ethics and limitations to the study were addressed. The current chapter presents the first level of analysis which is narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). In this chapter, I present the narratives of campus managers' lived experiences generated from participants through narrative interviews and artefacts. The purpose of these re-storied narratives is to provide the missing pieces of the three research puzzles underpinning this inquiry. Below, the campus managers' stories are presented independently using pseudonyms. I commence with Mr Cele of Sun campus, Mrs Ngcobo of Rain campus and lastly Miss Ndlovu of Thunder campus.

#### 4.1.1 Profiles of participating campus managers

##### 4.1.1.1 A Profile of Mr Cele of Sun campus

The first participant is known as Mr Cele and the name of his campus is Sun campus. He was born in 1967 in Eldorado park but grew up in an area called Chesterville. Mr Cele is from a family of 10, the eldest. He had four sisters and four brothers. He comes from a very mixed family. His father is black and his mother is coloured. Mr Cele has quite a mixed culture. Unfortunately, due to circumstances, only three Sibusiso, Njabulo and Happiness are remaining. He grew up in a very organised family. Even though they experienced challenges like any other family but they managed to survive. It was hard for him in the beginning as there was only one person working. But this taught him to learn at an early stage to be independent. He started working at an age of 15 years, doing small businesses to survive as an eldest boy in the house and also taking leadership positions in politics just like most people did back in the days.

As a result, for his teaching qualification he contributed towards his own studies because he could see that his father was struggling to provide for everyone in the family. So that led him to learn a lot of things to survive on his own. Mr Cele was not the brightest at school, but managed to pull through up until he got an honours degree at a university, thereafter, he did a post graduate while he was working. For him, it was hard to study but managed to keep himself organised and focused, coming from work and to study until 12 at night.

Mr Cele comes from a teaching background as a PL1 lecturer which he occupied from 1992 January. He lectured over 13 years at the TVET College. During his lecturing time, he was promoted to a PL2 (HOD) post. Mr Cele was later promoted as campus manager in the year 2003 in the same college but in a different campus up until today. He has served in his current position as campus manager for over 18 years now. Some of the skills that Mr Cele has are believed to have been learned at an early age, shaping him in terms of being compassionate and being sympathetic to the people that he leads. At home, he has taught his kids to be able to organise themselves and to learn to focus. He believes it is the hardships during his upbringing that has helped him to be strong, focused and taking leadership roles in all areas of his life. Mr Cele is very passionate about sports in the college and his community. He mostly enjoys training and to participate in fun runs.

#### **4.1.1.2 A profile of Mrs Ngcobo of Rain campus**

Mrs Ngcobo was born in 1971 at Umlazi township. She comes from a family of three siblings. She is the elders out of the three. Mrs Ngcobo was born of a married couple. Her father was an ordinary man who was working in a metal industry. Her mother was not fortunate enough to get an opportunity to study further so she became a street vendor selling meat. Her mother always had the desire for her children to be well educated. Out of the three sisters, unfortunately one passed on and the two are well educated professionals. This is where she got her entrepreneurial spirit and leadership quality from her mother. The spirit of not giving up easily in life.

Mrs Ngcobo has been growing in her career within the sector. She started in 1996, as a PL1 lecturer, and then in 1998 she was promoted to being Senior Lecturer in the same collage. In

2000 she became the head of department (HOD). In 2004 she was appointed as the head of unit. Mrs Ngcobo has been in this college for about 15 years prior to her departure as she left in 2011. In 2019 Mrs Ngcobo applied back to the college as lecturer. It was during this time that the campus management post presented itself to her. Mrs Ngcobo is a member and a leader in her community. She leads her family businesses and she is married to a pastor, someone who has quite a huge responsibility in the church. This means that as leadership Mrs Ngcobo serves in the church that her husband leads.

#### **4.1.1.3 A profile of Miss Ndlovu of Thunder campus**

The third participant is known as Miss Ndlovu and the name of the campus is Thunder campus. Born from a very poor family in 12 January 1971, her only drive that kept her motivated and ambitious as a child was always being among top five positions at school. Miss Ndlovu has always dreamt of a better life for her family and herself. Her other hope was to believe in God's Miracles from a very young age. She is the first born child of two siblings at her home. Her brother was born five years after she was born.

The situation got tougher and tougher when she started high school. Miss Ndlovu felt that she needed to do commerce at school. The only high school by then which was offering commercial subjects to learners was Umlazi Commercial High School, far away from her home which is Z Section of Umlazi. With her faith in miracles she got a bursary from BP company to progress with her studies starting from Standard Seven until she reached Matric.

After Matric, Miss Ndlovu's uncle loaned her money to go and train as a teacher in Adams College of Education. This was about a quarter of the required college fees. She then wrote to the same BP Company that had granted her a bursary in high school and requested further assistance for her tuition. They gladly accepted her request which assisted her to become a boarder in the college as opposed to be a day scholar, which was the case during the first year

of her study. That is how she achieved her Teaching diploma in education as her first tertiary education. From then she has never looked back regarding God's Miracles.

Miss Ndlovu started as PL1 lecturer in a college and later promoted in that same college to a senior lecturer and acting HOD. It was in this very same college that in 2010, Miss Ndlovu took over campus management position. She has occupied this position for over 10 years now. Outside the college Miss Ndlovu holds other leadership positions. Being a mother, leader at home, a leader in her church and leader in the community.

## **4.2 Mr Cele**

### **4.2.1 Planning! planning! and planning!**

For me, the most critical thing about leading a college campus is planning. The infrastructure for the campus needs careful planning. Next, the human resources, the staff that is going to work at the campus, requires much thought. The programmes that are going to be run at the campus have to be planned. And all these processes need a meticulously planned budget. So, planning plays the main role in my life as a campus manager.

### **4.2.2 The loneliness of the TVET Campus manager**

When I first started out as a campus manager, I was entirely alone. The management task started with the basics. I had to organise the offices and classrooms, making sure that every place is safe for people to work in. In my planning, I had to ensure that there was uniformity with all the other college campuses. I wanted my programmes to be new and fresh and useful to the community. But registering these programmes with the department proved challenging; it seemed that the campus was bound to follow the ordinary programmes. And then, I had to set up the culture of working with people; new students and new staff in a new environment.

At that time, I was a lecturer myself. I was teaching four programmes while managing the office. My previous experience as a lecturer for over 13 years at a TVET College did help to ease me into my role of a manager. However, adjusting to this new role of managing the campus

while lecturing proved to be challenging. I wanted to make sure that things were done in an orderly way.

Financial management was a new experience for me; it was not part of my training as a lecturer. As a manager, you need to know how to plan and run the finances of the campus. At that time, we were paying the lecturers from the fees that we received from the students. We needed to balance the number of students we accepted to ensure that we had sufficient funds. There was a time when our campus made more money than the central office did. And then there was a time when the central office had to borrow money from our campus in order to pay the central administrative staff. They promised to pay us back but we knew it was not going to happen. We always had extra classes on Saturdays to make sure that we had petty cash to buy small things like tea for the staff and toilet paper. We were actually managing the whole budget for the campus on our own. I don't think we need to market the college anymore, because we always have more students than we plan for. This is because of our academic performance.

#### **4.2.3 A seamless move from lecturer to campus manager**

I had been a senior lecturer for eight years when I was appointed as campus manager. I was involved in the budget planning for the college. And, fortunately for me, I was a member of the interviewing committee for the whole college so I worked with all the counsellors that were part of the college before we merged with other campuses. Because I have always been a manager, it wasn't difficult for me to adjust to the new role. It was a case of tipping the balance more towards management duties, but I did not find this too difficult.

#### **4.2.4 Managers have more people to talk to**

I used to do the budget for the skills classes in the college. This entailed ensuring that there was enough budget for consumables and equipment to run programmes. That wasn't really a challenge but I think it opened my eyes to the fact that I am no longer a senior lecturer, I'm a manager, which means I needed to communicate more with people from outside. I used to do that on a smaller scale but now, from the perspective of manager, I have more understanding of the outside world, and how it links with the college.

#### **4.2.5 Making peace in the community**

I used to live very close to the college. Before I became a lecturer at the college, I worked in one of the high schools nearby. I have an understanding of the local community. It was easy for me to travel around the township in order to inform the political structures about the new programmes in the college. It was like coming back home. At that time there was discord between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC). I needed to ensure that the political affiliations of the general assistants we employed were balanced. I held a very strange meeting with both the IFP and the ANC people in one room, but I managed to make peace by employing half of the ANC and half of the IFP candidates.

#### **4.2.6 Management is everyone's responsibility**

I believe in collaboration with the lecturers in deciding on their needs for their programmes to run effectively. For example, they need to be involved in decisions about textbooks, publishers and choices of additional learning materials. In that way, they have a say in what's going to happen in the classroom; it is not a top-down manager's decision. I tackle the budget in a similar way. Each department is tasked with planning their needs and then we come together and consolidate. That always works for me. I feel it avoids critical comments such as: "this should have been budgeted for but it was not included." Budgetary decisions must come from the people who are involved in the programme. I make sure that my staff understands the work delegated to them. For example, if I delegate a budget for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) lecturers, I let them do it on their own, and then I sit with them to check they cover everything. If they miss things that I think are important, then I give them my input.

One of the leadership practices that seems to work is to develop people to be able to manage themselves. When you allow someone to manage him- or herself, it makes your duty lighter. You need to indicate to them how they should act. You need to make sure that they understand so that they don't have to come to you for almost every decision. They should make and implement their own decisions; you are there to help them meet challenges. We have allowed lecturers to manage their classes using WhatsApp. They are encouraged to develop their own strategies. Some have adopted that approach but others relax when they think that management is not around. I cannot teach their classes. I can't go to their students if they are sick. People need to develop critical thinking skills.

I am a firm believer in a systems approach, a term that I have learned about in our current leadership course. This is where you don't have one person responsible for everything because when that person is not around, it means everything stops. For example, if one person is doing the timetable, when that person is sick, the whole college will stop. I believe that at least two or three people should be assigned to one function. I believe in teamwork. So, there is a team that does the timetables, a team that does the events, etc. This has helped me in my management and leadership studies.

#### **4.2.7 Everything has changed**

I wish I could go back to managing an institution where everybody is excited. I think we have lost the feeling of being excited about waking up and going to work without being followed. People don't seem to have that spirit of working together. It's as if everybody's scared. People are now just focusing on what they have to do then they go home, they don't do anything more. There was a time where this college was the best in the country. And at that time, I was part of the lecturing staff. We were the best in terms of the academic results; we were the best in terms of administration. I think we were the best in the province and number two in the whole country. All that has disappeared. I don't think it's because of COVID-19 but because of conflict between different people from different cultures coming together. Even the working environment has changed slightly, possibly because of the changes in our senior management. I started working for the college on January 15, 1992; I think I am a grandfather for the college. As I say, I have seen it all, since the college was celebrated as one of the best colleges in the country to the point now where, well, I prefer not to say much. But I think I have made my mark. I hold a record for producing the best results for one of the N6 National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) subjects. I used to produce a pass rate in excess of 98%, almost every semester.

I think that the lecturers that we have now need motivation. I'm not saying they are not motivated, but perhaps, the environment is so challenging that sometimes we focus on the job at hand and forget about other things, for example, we have neglected college sports. We seem to forget that they contribute to the well-being of the college. This college used to be very good at sports. We had a team affiliated with the South African Football Association that progressed to the premier levels. Suddenly that all died. Those are some of the highlights of what this

college used to be. People used to be proud of working for the college and I'm one of them. I used to be proud of this college until COVID-19 came.

#### 4.2.8 COVID-19 has changed our daily practice



When I think of 2020 and COVID-19, sanitiser and a mask come to mind. These represent weapons introduced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to fight this war in which we find ourselves. In my leadership role, I needed to adapt to the changes brought by COVID-19. As 'commander-in-chief', safety for all was important. I was the first person here to prepare for the return of the staff. And when I did that, my safety was not guaranteed. I had to carry a permit that allowed me to go to work. Working with my team, I had to organise social distancing and the provision of sanitizers, screening and thermometers in the classes. I had to supervise the putting up of posters outside the classrooms and the training of all returning staff. The worst part was that I could see the fear in the eyes of the people being trained on COVID-19 protocol. They were really scared of what they thought might happen. Leading during a pandemic is totally different from working in a normal environment. Leadership priorities become about being sensitive to health issues; about making sure people are following the protocols and about ensuring that the PPEs, such as face masks and sanitizers are available all the time.

This campus is a marking centre. People don't understand the pressure that we were under. We had 800 markers from all over the country; we needed to make sure that nobody became infected by the virus, because if one person became ill, we would have to shut down the whole marking centre. This meant checking each marking venue for sanitizers and social distancing. I needed to know that everybody was well. We have had no cases of COVID-19 recorded

within the campus. That is a result of managing the well-being of people, rather than focusing on the processes. For example, people need to be alerted about the importance of screening. There are people who avoid being screened. It's not only about protecting yourself, but about protecting the people that you work with. Sometimes it is distressing because you have to work like a police officer to check that people are actually screening. We have people, including staff-members, who refuse to be screened at the gate. It becomes a management responsibility to decide whether students may enter the campus or not. If someone becomes ill on the campus, the college must take responsibility. So, every student who presents at the gate with an above-normal temperature has to be advised not to enter the college but to go to the nearest clinic. I think we had about four people last year who were turned away at the gate, because their temperatures were too high. Some of them refused to leave. I had to be called in because someone tried to come in by force.

#### **4.2.9 Sadness comes with the challenges**

We have lost friends and colleagues. And when you can't even go to the funeral it changes the whole ethos of working together and supporting people; you cannot visit bereaved families or those who are ill in hospital. For us, as black people, this is abnormal. When someone is sick, you support him or her.

The HR processes present similar challenges. Whenever we are conducting interviews, we need to be wearing masks. Sometimes a potential candidate has to be turned away at the gate because of a high temperature. You could potentially lose the best candidate for the job because you can't allow that person in. We have had to cancel interviews, because five of the six candidates tested positive. You cannot plan for tomorrow, because the role players in your plan might not be around tomorrow. Right now, we are dealing with the implementation of Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) where people on the college payroll are allocated to the personnel and salary system (persal). It's a nightmare.



Our proposed meeting was cancelled because the president said gatherings were not to be allowed. The implementation of the PPN manual cannot be achieved through a virtual meeting as you need to engage with people, so there's nothing we can do. In fact, PPN was supposed to start in 2019 but was delayed by the outbreak of COVID-19. We need to manage the process within the bounds of COVID-19 restrictions; otherwise PPN will not be completed.

#### **4.2.10 COVID-19 and those who teach**

Managing sick leave has been a nightmare. Those on sick leave need to sign a leave form. Some people have been working from home since COVID-19 first started. Because they've got other sicknesses such as hypertension and other chronic diseases, you cannot allow them onto the campus but they are still employed by the college. Their absence needs to be managed, for example, they need to submit sick notes from their doctors. Some do, some don't, but it is really a risk to bring them to the workplace. When a person falls ill, he or she may be able to work from home. But lecturers have students and there is office work to be done so a replacement needs to be found for the fourteen days that the person is at home. Finding a replacement does not mean simply going out and announcing that you have a position. The procedure just to find one person could take up to three weeks. By that time, the other person may have recovered. So, it is a challenge. We looked at how we could speed up the HR processes but this was impossible because protocol needs to be followed; you need to advise the unions, conduct interviews, and then recommend the candidate. The recommendations need to be sent to the senior management, which is not available at all times.



Yet another challenge. Right now, we are sitting in a position where lecturers that we appointed in January are not here because they have not yet been approved. We conducted the interviews two months ago. We don't know if they are going to be approved but there are classes that need to be taught. Even though the person passed the interview, we need to wait for the senior management to confirm the appointment.

#### **4.2.11 COVID-19 and those who learn**

We were hoping to have a learning platform to livestream lessons for students who are ill and cannot attend classes. Unfortunately, we are not a private college. Five companies came and presented platforms where you can do a lesson in the classroom and livestream to students. Unfortunately, management has not decided which company to take. Also, in order to access a livestream, a student must have a laptop or a tablet with data. Some students come from rural areas where networks are limited. So, we have not been successful in managing this. Some lecturers have been communicating with the students through WhatsApp. They have created WhatsApp groups with their students so that whenever there's going to be a lesson, at least students are informed. But if they are sick, they need to isolate. There was a case where we had two infected students in the student hostel. For them to isolate, they needed to go back home. One was from the Eastern Cape and the other was from Nkandla. If we transport these students by taxi, we are taking a risk that everybody in the taxi is exposed to COVID. So, we advise that whenever a student is ill, it's the responsibility of the family. But if family cannot even afford to pay rent for the student, how can we expect them to come and fetch the student and take him/her back to the Eastern Cape? So, these are the situations that we face almost every day. This makes it a priority for us to ensure that people don't become infected at the college.

#### **4.2.12 Those who manage and support**

Students need to perform in terms of academic results. I am confident that it will happen because I am involved in teaching them. Recently, I have been conducting unexpected visits to the NATED classes. I don't go to inspect what is happening, but just to get involved in the interaction between the students and the staff. I want them to understand that my role is not to sit in the office but to know what is happening in each classroom. Sometimes I go around with the team that is monitoring whether people are doing their files or their lesson plans correctly. However, the most critical thing for me is that the students understand the purpose of being here. I always preach the maintenance of a humble relationship between the staff and the students.

You either sink or swim. Every situation is different, and you need to be smart in terms of how you manage it. Reporting a crisis does not always work, because the people to whom you report are not necessarily available. It is difficult to deal with a situation which needs immediate action because this usually requires consultation with somebody who may not be around. I deal with these problems by being in the college almost every day, so that I see the problem first hand, deal with it and advise if necessary.

#### **4.2.13 We need help in adapting to curriculum changes**

I am a firm believer in doing the work thoroughly. But it is difficult when you don't see your students. They have different capabilities. Some learn better when they can engage with the lecturer, face to face. Some work better in groups where they can engage with other students. COVID-19 has forced people have to study on their own. This has drastically affected the curriculum. You can't gauge the ongoing performance of your students because you only see them on assessment. And often you can't support them before you assess them, because they may not have data. Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) becomes almost impossible. The Integrative Summative Assessment Task (ISAT) which often requires students to make presentations, are not possible for many. Practical work becomes a challenge without a physical venue. For example, how would you assess practical work for Hospitality Studies online? We need to adapt, but unfortunately very few universities and tertiary institutions, offer online assessments. The Department of Higher Education (DHET) has nothing to offer. The planning

must come from the top. Our college needs to make a decision about online streaming. The platform chosen needs to be flexible enough for students and lecturers to interact.

I'm sure my staff is capable of adapting to online teaching and learning. Most of the lecturers are still young. Some are in their mid 30s. Very few are over 40, but even those, I know, are capable of adapting. The students are used to smart phones and social media. I'm positive it can be managed.

#### **4.2.14 Lecturing is my passion and my responsibility**

What motivates me most is seeing a black human being succeeding, no matter how small the success. But what pushes me every day is that I have responsibility. It's not about being in my office, it is about being aware of what is happening on campus. I need to know how human resources are managing staff leave. I am responsible for the well-being of staff and students. I need to know if people are ill and cannot attend classes. I am responsible for the learning material.

I started working in industry in 1982 and was in the industrial private sector for ten years. When I decided that I wanted to be a university lecturer, I didn't want to go back to industry because that is where I suffered the most. I studied part time for my first diploma towards being a lecturer at university. I was living in Umlazi, but working in Westmead, Pinetown. I used to go there by train at four o'clock in the morning and finish at six, then I would go to the Steve Biko campus at the Durban University of Technology. I would study there until 10 pm. It took me almost two years to complete my diploma. When I graduated, I told myself that this was my last day at work. I had this vision of changing people's lives. I think I've done that, because almost half of the students that I taught are working at Telkom. I see them every day. It is very motivating to know that there are people who won't forget me over the years, because I helped them to change their lives. Some of them are lecturers now. I think I'm still bringing about positive change.

#### **4.2.15 Networking**

During COVID-19 pandemic, networking has been a challenging aspect because we are not allowed to meet and have meetings. The only way you communicate is to use the WhatsApp group for campus managers and also to communicate through the virtual meetings, and it's hard

to plan the strategic meetings, Currently, we are planning the strategic meeting for next year and there's a lot of things that you need to share with people face to face but I think we have adapted in terms of knowing how to communicate. But I think the biggest challenge is the availability of the network, and also to share the ideas in terms of the way forward. So, I think the biggest challenge for us is to not being able to sit together and strategise as managers. I think the virtual networks which are available for us are currently useful to help us shape the future of the college.

#### **4.2.16 Managers in the future**

I think the managers in the 22nd century will have even more challenges, but I'm sure they'll be prepared. Not like us. When COVID-19 came, we were not ready. The start of lockdown was on 18 March 2020. We were told that the country was at a standstill. We did not understand what that meant. Our mindset had to change to deal with a new animal. Fortunately, this campus has not lost anybody to COVID-19. We are entering a new era of being managers in a COVID-19 environment. And it's not nice.

### **4.3 Mrs Ngcobo**

#### **4.3.1 Leading a campus through difficult times**

A leader of a large campus with as many divisions as this one needs to be an all-rounded person. You can imagine the responsibility of managing a staff of almost 200 people, especially with COVID-19. This requires a balance between quality teaching and learning, and saving lives. COVID-19 has affected many people, so, apart from focusing on the core business, I had to provide emotional support to my staff members who were losing loved ones. We lost one of our own, a diligent lecturer, on this campus. A sad loss and a learning curve for us all.

As the leader of this institution, I have to manage other stakeholders, for example, community leadership, and partnerships in our industry. Procurement of supplies was not easy as the manufacturing industry was affected as well. It has been a lesson to all of us in all sectors. We had to come out of our comfort zone, and begin to live under the 'new normal', for example, moving away from the traditional contact method of teaching and learning virtual and remote methods.

We had to come up with a platoon system in which students alternate, with some attending lectures on campus and others working at home. Lecturers and students needed data and laptops. Lecturers made sacrifices by buying data at their personal expense in order to communicate with students via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. I must commend the senior management of our college for their efforts to assist with data provision, conversion of classrooms to meet the new standards of virtual teaching, linking up with other platforms and using other sources in order to allow students to download training material.

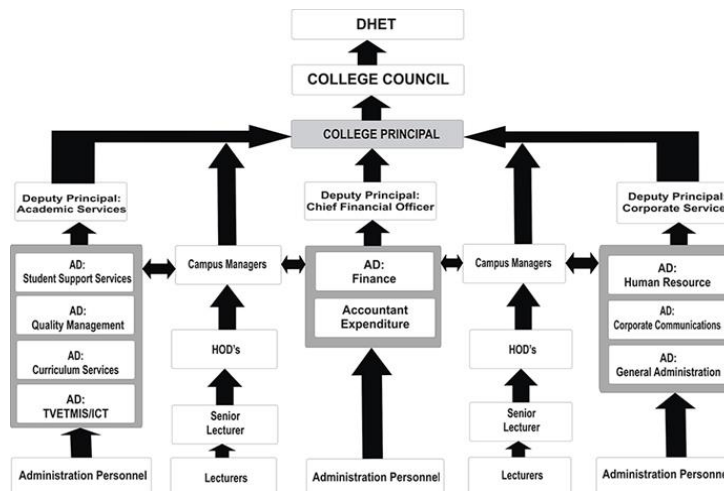
Being a TVET, fifty percent of our learning is practical. That critical, practical component which differentiates us from other learning institutions was affected. Now that we are in 2021 we have realised that we need to change our delivery and not rely on contact sessions. We are now in the third wave of COVID-19. We don't know how long this virus will be with us. Every year we will have these interruptions, so we need to be proactive now and come up with new methods.

#### **4.3.2 Changing with the times**

I have been growing in my career within the sector. I started in 1996, as a Post Level 1 (PL1) lecturer, then in 1998 I was promoted to senior lecturer. In 2000 I became head of department. In 2004 I was appointed head of unit. I was employed in this college for about 15 years prior to my departure in 2011. Before my departure I was the head of the Enterprise Development Unit, in which the main focus was on Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) and cooperative development. We wrote a proposal that was approved by the then Minister of Economic Development, Dr Zweli Mkhize. He was still the MEC of economic development in the province of training of cooperatives. We focused on both youth and elderly people. We were one of the business units of Weather College, so our mandate was to generate income for the college. My role was to solicit funds for the college. We specialised in soliciting funds, writing solicited and unsolicited proposals and establishing international and local partnerships, We, had a number of contracts and received funding from different stakeholders, for example the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Labour. We worked with the Department of Correctional Services, municipalities and private sector companies like Juta publishers, the Flemish government of Belgium, India and Chicago State. We had to make sure that we provided the deliverables for all those partnerships. It was

challenging, because of the various projects. Some of those projects were incubators in which we would train small and medium entrepreneurs and then monitor them and help them to grow their businesses. We assisted them with their business plans and linked them with financial institutions and various departments.

Managing a campus is not that different from managing a unit. The difference is that I now have to deal with the Student Representative Council (SRC). As the campus manager, I need to recognise that they play a critical role. I need to meet with them often to ensure that the campus is running smoothly and that I understand the needs of the students. I have to bring the unions on board. There are four that are recognised, namely, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the National Educational, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) and the Public Servants' Association of South Africa (PSA.) I need to meet with them often to make sure that my employees are well taken of. It is very important for the campus manager to understand their needs in order to make sure that there is stability within the campus.



Other stakeholders comprise campus management, and different department supervisors, for example the finance and procurement supervisor and the examinations supervisor. There is the librarian and then the support staff, for example, the general assistants (GAs), and the head of administration and the human resources team (HR). There are various departments, for example National Certificate-Vocational (NCV) in engineering in different fields such as electrical, fitting, auto and boiler. The National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) is divided into similar engineering streams. There is business and general studies

offered by both NCV and NATED. Business and general studies include tourism, hospitality and education. So, there is a very diverse offering. All these departments need to be understood and supported.

I need to plan for the examinations, and make sure that I am adhering to all the regulations; the campus manager needs to be on the ground all the time, making sure that teaching and learning is continuing. I am required to give input as part of the college management team. I pray for the wisdom to meet my commitments to this enormous task and to the people involved every day.

#### **4.3.3 Keeping in touch with stakeholders**

I have learned that when you occupy a position, you must be willing to listen and learn. I think that has been of great help to me. I invite people to give input. I think about what they say, refine their ideas, if necessary, and then give them back. I work very well with my team. I often have briefings. I know that large gatherings are not allowed at this time. Since last year we've not had a full complement staff meeting, except for the PPN meeting. I have overcome this by meeting with different departments separately. At these meetings we report on any COVID-19 cases among students and staff. We encourage all staff to abide by the protocols. We comply with all the regulations, for example, demarcating the classrooms and workshops and ensuring social distancing. We provide sanitizers. We discuss these and other matters that are related to teaching and learning. We often have virtual meetings and we have a WhatsApp group for updates. We are expected to submit weekly reports. At the gates there are health workers checking temperatures and screening people. They supply us with information which we report to the central office who, in turn, will report to the department.

#### **4.3.4 The good side**

There have been a number of good moments on campus. The one that is foremost in my mind is the opening of our new enterprise development unit. We didn't have a facility so we worked very hard to generate income for the construction of the unit which was launched by the former MEC of education, Mrs Ina Cronje, in 2005. We held an awards ceremony. Our enterprise development unit managed to scoop many of those awards, including 'the best managed unit: diverse', because we were doing a number of projects. We had an exhibition here at Rain

campus, opened by our former mayor, Obed Mlaba, where our entrepreneurs showcased different products. It was a big event, and we managed to link the exhibitors with international partnerships. Another exciting moment was when we received about R16 million from the Department of Labour as a result of a proposal.

At another award ceremony one of our co-operatives won the award for the highest turnover. They started a hardware store at Isipingo and they managed to turn a profit of R1 million. This was a big milestone for the college as we had trained them, taking them from nothing to R1 million. So those were the moments.

#### **4.3.5 The new normal on campus**

Currently we are working with a skeleton staff. For a while we have allowed fifty percent of our employees and fifty percent of the students on campus at any one time. From July 2021, we will be fully online. Under the new normal we have had to come up with the plan of staggering the registrations. We had to set up for the registrations and manage the coming and going of students and employees on campus. The health workers take temperatures every day at the gate. Staff members are no longer signing registers. Recently the administrator, made an announcement for us to resume signing the time books, but within a week we could not proceed with that because of the third wave. We used to share pens but now we cannot do that. The issues of compliance are critical. We were to meet with people from Japan on Tuesday, but they could not come because of the third wave in the province. The PPM meeting was planned for the 1<sup>st</sup> July, but because of the third wave, that was cancelled or rescheduled. You plan, but you need to be prepared for anything. So COVID -19 has brought about many changes and much uncertainty to our daily lives.

#### **4.3.6 Expecting the unexpected**

We run tests and examinations but we are not sure who will report for duty. We plan invigilation timetables, only to find that in the morning, one of the employees has woken up with COVID-19 symptoms and cannot come to college. We always make sure that we have external invigilators from local communities on standby to step in as and when needed. There are runners on standby in case some of them don't come. We've had a number of cases of students arriving at examination venues with symptoms. He or she will not be allowed into the

examination venue and we write a report to the department and then reschedule the exam for the next trimester or semester.

#### **4.3.7 The new 'normal' curriculum**

Having to go out of the office to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protocol, has strengthened relationships between staff members and with students. I go out regularly for this purpose as I am responsible for every soul on campus.

Sometimes lecturers and students are here on campus, and sometimes they are not because we are working with the platoon system. We have to adjust to the platoon system, with fifty percent of the work done on campus and the other fifty percent carried out at home. The college is currently installing a new IT system. The students will be able to log in and receive tuition on various platforms. However, this will depend on staff members and students having the tools of trade. We cannot do it without laptops. We don't know if the National Student Financial Aid Scheme fund will provide students with these devices. All fifty colleges in South Africa have expresses a need for these tools for managers, staff and students.



The laptop provides a reminder of how we were forced to change. This reminds me, with physical contact discouraged, of how I had to lead behind this laptop. I am reminded of how we started connecting and meeting through Zoom. I had to learn to hold Zoom meetings and invite people to those meetings.

So, the new normal is telling us that the IT system is the way to go. Most of our meetings are held virtually, which does save costs. We recently had a virtual workshop with all fifty campus managers. Under normal circumstances, we would have travelled to Cape Town. We saved the cost of travelling and accommodation. The only expense was data.

#### **4.3.8 From face-to-face to online**

It was difficult last year, but this year I think it's settling down. Our deputy principal - academic (DPA) visited Toyota recently because we are negotiating a partnership with them. The auto workshop will be redesigned to model the industry and teaching facility. There will not be a lecturer but it will be equipped with a monitor, computers, and models or small engines that are similar to the actual engines for the auto students. Students log in and take the tutorial. They receive a virtual explanation of how to disassemble and reassemble the engine. Students will be assessed online and they can redo the tutorial if necessary. It would be great if we could have those facilities for all programmes. It would be a matter of arranging timetables for students to attend these workshops. The CEO was part of this meeting to see how they will assist this college. It's an old partnership that we are hoping to revive.

#### **4.3.9 COVID-19 got me too!**

On the closing day of college in December, I developed COVID-19 symptoms. I was very ill. My doctor refused to test me but I had all the symptoms, I slept through Christmas Day. This has affected everybody. There is that fear of the unknown, fear of death. But it has taught us to prepare. People are losing jobs because of COVID-19, especially in the private sector. One will wake up with a job today but the following day there is no job. So, it is stressful. My spiritual life has helped me. I believe in God. I'm a born-again Christian. I depend on prayer. Some of my colleagues, who have tested positive, thanked and commended me for that. My advice to them was to make sure their spiritual being is strong, to meditate on the Word and to think positively. You have to maintain a positive attitude to fight this pandemic. Some colleagues have said that this helped a lot when they felt discouraged and thought they were dying.

#### **4.3.10 Holding one another up**

We have a steering committee at the college. We often communicate on our WhatsApp group. We have a national campus manager's group, where we share information and support one another. We often have virtual meetings and workshops where we discuss our experiences as campus managers, nationwide. We share some of the good practices, among other things. All this helps. Friends and relatives give support. In the business community, we discuss our issues and encourage one another. I am married to a pastor and gain support from both local and national branches of our church. There are radio and television programmes that offer support as well.

#### **4.4 Miss Ndlovu**

##### **4.4.1 A woman at the helm**

When I am leading, my maternal instinct kicks in. The fact that I am a mother, I am female, is part and parcel of any decision that I make. I am not sure whether it's my personality but my femininity has played a large role in influencing my leadership style.

##### **4.4.2 The leap from senior lecturer to campus manager**

As campus manager, I am expected to manage a large staff. Previously, I was a senior lecturer and acting HOD, but as campus manager all staff members on campus fall under my leadership. As HOD and senior lecturer I was responsible for the academic section. As soon as I was appointed campus manager, I had to look into anything and everything pertaining to the campus, starting from the gate, right up to student activities, strikes, etc. In essence, anything campus-related is my responsibility. This includes academic staff, non-academic staff, students, different departments, examinations, finance, procurement and human resources. I became the mini principal of the college with everything at my fingertips. That was new to me and I had to learn very quickly.

##### **4.4.3 Working with the extended college family**

I interact with student leaders and have come to understand them. They are leaders in their own right. I need to understand and adjust to their point of view. I have made sacrifices at times, within the bounds of the college principles and DHET. The National Student Financial Aid

Scheme (NSFAS) is forever changing and students are forever resisting those changes. Just as I think I have learned to manage NSFAS matters this year, next year, there will be drastic changes and it will be like a new thing altogether. It is not easy. If there is one thing I don't like about managing students, it is strikes.

Interaction with employees is much easier because they are so welcoming. We work together. Middle management (senior lecturers and HODs) is very understaffed. Sometimes I need to play the role of HOD or senior lecturer, and grab whoever is willing to work with me to get the tasks done.

In 2015 we had the difficult task of migrating to DHET. There was a mountain of paperwork and many audits to ensure that things were done in a specific manner. This meant we had to be on top of our game. Things had to be done from scratch, which required sacrifices. At some point, the people I was working with would say: "I'm now tired of doing this. What's in it for me? I'm not getting paid for it". I needed to recognise that they were working voluntarily, so I would take over and do it myself. There are many gaps in staffing of the middle management at campus level. It's only now, with PPN, that we think things are going to be done according to the correct staff: student ratios. We should see more senior lecturers and HODs.

In the non-academic area there was good cooperation, but with the migration to DHET in 2015, the DHET posts were put on hold. The general assistants became fewer and fewer. People who resigned, retired or passed away were not replaced. Two finance people resigned, leaving that office vacant. I needed to sacrifice my personal assistant because she had financial qualifications. She did the work of three people, supported by me and the head of administration, who is very hardworking. Up until 2013, there was no support manager so I had to manage everything. Things ran smoothly up to a point, but there was something missing, because I couldn't be with students, lecturers and support staff, all at once.

Although we at Thunder campus are dedicated to our core business, red tape hindered our progress. For example, the roof of our hall was so badly damaged that the hall could not be used for examinations or student functions. The college couldn't afford the maintenance. This led to students striking. We ended up having functions and writing exams in the community hall. This meant that many students had further to travel and more to pay for transport.

There were many challenges but these led to significant growth. I had to seek assistance from the local municipality because the community hall compliance with health and safety regulations was not up to date, for example, fire extinguishers had not been serviced. So, there were many adjustments until the College Infrastructure Efficiency Grant (CIEG) was made available. Now the hall has been repaired, and we have a three-year plan for other maintenance.

We don't know, in the current COVID-19 economic conditions, whether the plan will materialise.

#### **4.4.4 Proud moments!**

When academic results come out, what we are about becomes clear. Students and lecturers have achieved miraculous results. When I see the distinctions, I find it hard to believe that this campus is experiencing difficulty and deprivation. There is unity. There is light in people's faces. Teachers have taught and students have passed. They've done the best they can with the little they have. It's in those moments that we say, "you are doing well, keep going" .

When I see my plans coming together, despite all the red tape I see the unity.

I had the valuable opportunity of visiting campuses and colleges in other provinces to observe how they do things. We went to Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Shepstone. The idea was to get out of our comfort zone and compare management strategies with others, especially rural campuses which are worse off and still managing. It strengthened my resolve to do better.

#### **4.4.5 COVID-19 rears its ugly head**



This watch triggers my memory of how COVID-19 has changed my leadership practices in a short space of time. It seems unbelievable, but these are things that we should have been doing already. Although there has been heartache, because many have succumbed to the pandemic, it has forced some changes for the better. For example, the awareness of the need for regular hand washing will be in our minds forever.

We are at last talking about changes to bring us in line with technological advances, for example online learning and teaching, which should have been introduced a long time ago. I was one of the people asking for a research department in the college to plan for the future, for example replacing textbooks with electronic devices. This pandemic is forcing us to improve. We have to think differently. Previously I was exposed to computers but I wasn't able to register on my phone for an application that I really need for my work. I wasn't able to pay my accounts using an electronic application. I saw those things as being suitable for young people. Students are benefiting because this technology is the language that they know best. I think as soon as we are settled, they will begin to blossom.

#### **4.4.6 Can you teach an old dog new tricks?**

The focus of my campus is Business Studies. I have a vision of students graduating, not only with a diploma, but with business skills. The pandemic has forced the economy down to such a low level, that it will only come up through the passion of people who are learning business skills. As a business studies campus, we have much to contribute there. We are pushing all boundaries to develop these skills and especially building them into our assessment instruments, ISAT and ICASS. Currently, Cisco is providing training for life orientation

lecturers and students to write their assessments through computers. This is already in place in some developed countries and we are forced by the pandemic to keep up.

#### **4.4.7 COVID-19 has been our teacher**

Since 2010 I have worked for ten principals. Just when I think I know what my principal wants and how he wants it, that principal has left. From each of these people, I take the best that I can, embrace it and move on. Right now, we don't even have sanitizer on the campus but we are here. We beg until we are heard. We need to be humble and patient and make things work for the benefit of the students and employees. The pandemic has taught us much. It has not been even been two years and we are doing things in a very different way. One day we will be categorised as a developed country because of some of the changes that were brought about by the pandemic.

HR has its own challenges. People with comorbidity are expected to work from home, without electronic devices. They end up being home and not doing anything. We have people over 60 years of age who are afraid to be on campus. There are jobs that cannot be carried out at home for example, cleaning.

Our college is in the process of moving from a COLTECH management system to ITS, which involves yet more learning for us. For example, leave application will be done electronically. Employees will simply log on to request leave. I and others on my team will approve or reject the application online. We are making progress, but not as quickly as we would like.

#### **4.4.8 Managing curriculum during COVID-19**

Much has been done to acquire electronic devices for students. This will change their lives for the better. TVET colleges are far behind in the implementation of online learning, but we are getting there. Our campus has the advantage of Student Hub, an internet platform that allows online teaching and learning. Lecturers spend a few hours carrying out online contact sessions with the students. The only area that has not been addressed is lecturer placement. Our lecturers need to be placed into industry, to see the latest trends, and to see the latest changes that have brought about by COVID-19. Currently students who are being placed in these fields become

more advanced than the lecturers because they learn things differently from the way in which they were taught. The reality of the pandemic really hits home.

Time management is key here. We have learnt that we need to prioritise practical computer related subjects in which students need to practice in computer labs. We should allocate less time to theoretical subjects because students can address this through home study. We have many computer subjects, so whenever we are in a COVID-19 lockdown level that doesn't allow physical attendance, our curriculum suffers. Lecturers don't yet have electronic devices or WiFi but we are doing the best that we can.

#### **4.4.9 We need someone to lean on**

I have received support; I cannot say it is enough as the pandemic is life threatening; it challenges your personality and your mental health. My best strategy has been prayer. I have very strong Christian beliefs. I believe that there is a reason for everything that happens. We do have support from the health department that has been very helpful in informing us about managing COVID-19. It's now up to us employees, students and the communities to take it further. Daily radio and television programmes keep us updated on managing situations that might arise. We have support from one another's shared experiences and ways of coping with them.

I am grateful for the support from central office. Sometimes officials from central office come to campus and address students or staff. This calms me and helps me to learn instead of feeling responsible for the entire load. Sometimes they are there to audit but after the first and second audit I have learned and after the third one, I have got it right. I've improved with each audit.

In 2020 we received significant support from the college. I am not going to say anything about 2021 as it is different. Things that we had been praying for years began to take shape as a result of the pandemic. We received a number of casual workers and cleaners. We were allocated two masks per person. We were able to have meetings where we shared best practices among campuses. We were able to examine our own college and report on its status. It was sad to include in our reports that so many have succumbed to COVID-19. That has made us more cautious, which is a good thing. This is an era in which we are being forced to think outside of the box.

#### **4.5 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I presented the first level of analysis referred to as narrative analysis of campus managers' lived experiences, generated through narrative interviews and artefacts. The campus managers' stories were presented individually as they shared their lived experiences during COVID-19 pandemic. In the next chapter I present the next level of analysis referred to as analysis of narratives. The next chapter presents themes which emerged from campus managers re storied narratives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to gain insights into the lives of the campus managers by analysing the narratives of their lived experiences. I intended to identify themes which would respond to the three critical puzzles generated in chapter one. A discussion of the findings will highlight campus managers' stories, and the assumptions that underpin them. The three puzzles that constitute my research puzzle are listed below. These research puzzles were addressed throughout the presentation of the themes:

1. What are campus managers' lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What leadership challenges do campus managers in a TVET college encounter during COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How do campus managers in a TVET college mitigate the challenges encountered during COVID-19 pandemic?

This chapter uses the research puzzles as an organising framework, namely campus managers lived experiences of leading TVET colleges, leadership challenges and how these challenges are mitigated. Under each heading, themes were extracted that address the research puzzles of the study. In addition, I present a discussion of the data by infusing the literature and theoretical framework that was discussed in Chapter Two.

#### **5.2 What are campus managers' lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses?**

##### **5.2.1 Enactment of leadership during COVID-19 pandemic on a day-to-day basis**

The participants presented different perspectives on their day-to-day leadership challenges and strategies. The following key practices were found: working with internal and external stakeholders; marketing and networking; implementing governing processes; financial

management during COVID-19 pandemic; managing campus physical infrastructure and balancing traditional and online teaching and learning.

### **5.2.1.1 Working with internal and external stakeholders**

Campus managers need to involve internal and external stakeholders to lead colleges successfully. I draw from the theoretical framework by Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory which explains how adaptive leaders recognise complex situations and mobilise people to look at possible solutions and work collectively to achieve an organisational vision. The findings of the present study revealed that all three campus managers acknowledged the importance of the involvement of stakeholders. Mr Cele describes working with lecturers to make decisions and working with community as a strategy to maintain peace. Mrs Ngcobo notes the importance of listening and learning from all stakeholders while Miss Ndlovu describes how she has grown to understand and deal with students.

This is what Mr Cele expressed about his involvement of stakeholders on a day-to-day basis:

*I believe in collaboration with the lecturers in deciding on their needs for their programmes to run effectively. For example, they need to be involved in decisions about textbooks, publishers and choices of additional learning materials. In that way they have a say in what's going to happen in the classroom...I needed to communicate more with people from outside. I held a very strange meeting with both IFP and ANC people in one room, but I managed to make peace by employing half of the ANC and half of the IFP candidates.*

Similarly, when Mrs Ngcobo was asked about her day-to-day experiences, she narrated:

*I have learned that when you occupy a position, you must be willing to listen and learn. I think that has been of great help to me during Covid. I invite people to give input. I think about what they say, refine their ideas, if necessary, and then give them back response. I work very well with all the stakeholders involved in the campus.*

Miss Ndlovu had this to say about her involvement of stakeholders on a day-to-day basis:

*I interact with student leaders and have come to understand them. They are leaders in their own right. I need to understand and adjust to their point of view. I have made sacrifices at times, within the bounds of the college principles and DHET.*

The participants' stories above suggest that campus managers understand the importance of collaboration by involving and working with relevant stakeholders. Participants' reasons for collaboration included deciding on offered programmes; choices of learning materials; recruitment of staff and so forth. It is for these reason that Heifetz et al., (2009) assert that adaptive leadership takes into consideration the diversity of inputs to solve the problem as the emphasis is not on individual from the top but group collaboration at the bottom. Practices which are democratic, involving the use of internal and external stakeholders, characterise good administration of higher institutions (Babalola, 2014). It is for this reason that the three campus managers created a collaborative environment where stakeholders' inputs are considered.

Politics in South Africa plays a major role in terms of TVET campus managers' attempts at engaging with external stakeholders such as the community (Lebakeng, 2018). As can be inferred from the three extracts, Mr Cele involved political parties for decision-making in his employment of general assistants because of the power they hold in the community. Adaptive leadership allows leaders and followers to work collectively focusing on the specific problem and take into consideration everyone's input to solve the problem (Heifetz et al., 2009). It may be for this reason that Mrs Ngcobo believed in the inputs of other people. Leaders are often aware of the diversity of ideas from stakeholders and need to consider these ideas and refine them. Robertson and Frick (2018) note that campus managers need to learn new skills as they now have to consult with important stakeholders such as student representatives, workers' unions, and external stakeholders such as parents and community, all of which is time-consuming. Perhaps this is why Miss Ndlovu developed an understanding of students and an ability to relate to them. In adaptive leadership, campus managers can engage all stakeholders to find workable solutions to the problems caused by COVID-19 pandemic (Nelson & Squires 2017).

#### **5.2.1.2 Impact of COVID-19 on marketing and networking**

Campus managers use different strategies for marketing and networking. While marketing is considered important for campus growth, it may have been taken for granted in the study. Making connections with managers from different campuses and colleges during COVID-19 pandemic has been beneficial, according to the participants in the study. Knowledge gained from networking is used to enact leadership during this challenging time. Different perspectives emerged on college marketing and networking. Mr Cele mentioned the irrelevance of

marketing the campus because of its popularity and mentioned how he has kept in contact with other campus managers through WhatsApp and virtual meetings while Mrs Ngcobo and Miss Ndlovu recall networking activities before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When it comes to marketing and networking events, Mr Cele expressed the following:

*I don't think we need to market the college anymore, because we always have more students than we plan for... During COVID-19 networking has been achieved through a WhatsApp group for campus managers. We are now adapting our communication with other leaders by holding virtual meetings*

Mrs Ngcobo expressed how networking has become a cost-saving process. This is what she articulated:

*COVID-19 dictates that most of our meetings are held virtually, which does save costs. We recently had a virtual workshop with all fifty campus managers. Under normal circumstances, we would have travelled to Cape Town. We saved the cost of travelling and accommodation. The only expense was data.*

Miss Ndlovu recalled networking by campus managers and shared the following:

*Prior Covid-19, I had the valuable opportunity of visiting campuses and colleges in other provinces to observe how they do things. We went to Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Shepstone. The idea was to get out of our comfort zone and compare management strategies with others, especially rural campuses which are worse off and still managing. It strengthened my resolve to do better. Because of COVID-19, we are supported by colleagues and superiors in our online meetings. We are able to have meetings where we share best practices among campuses.*

From the above extracts, it is evident that marketing is not prioritised as a leadership practice in this study while networking is seen as a contributor to the enactment of leadership on a day-to-day basis. Even though physical contact is discouraged for networking events due to COVID-19, according to Mr Cele, Mrs Ngcobo and Miss Ndlovu, virtual networking is active. According to Harris (2020), educational leaders are responding to COVID-19 with proliferation of new networks and networks practices. The campus managers' response to leadership practice impact of COVID-19 to marketing and networking can be viewed using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive theory. It is for this reason that campus managers are now adapting the use of virtual meetings as means of communication with other leaders. Gonzalez-Sancho

and Vincent-Lancrin (2016) and Marzano and Toth (2013) concur that virtual networking functionalities such as mailing lists, blogs, and social media groups can enable campus managers to interact with other leaders across provinces, and even countries, to prevent leaders from physically attending events. Mrs Ngcobo is of the opinion that being exposed to virtual networks is cost effective and saves time. Miss Ndlovu recalls travelling to different provinces for the purpose of networking prior to COVID-19 pandemic. Balkrishen (2019) states that campus managers can adapt the use of technology to be part of and enhance networking events.

### **5.2.1.3 Complying with and implementing the COVID-19 protocols**

The narratives presented by participants indicate that they deemed it imperative to comply with and implement COVID-19 protocols to reduce the spread of the virus and to save lives. This was used as a tool for directing and controlling safety on their campuses. Mr Cele reflected on the implementation of COVID-19 rules and regulations during a busy period when his campus was a marking centre. He referred to this by saying:

*This campus is a marking centre. People don't understand the pressure that we were under. We had 800 markers from all over the country; we needed to make sure that nobody became infected by COVID-19, because if one person became ill, we would have to shut down the whole marking centre.*

In the same way, when it came to managing registration and the number of people on campus, COVID-19 rules had to be implemented. Mrs Ngcobo expressed:

*Under the new normal we have had to come up with the plan of staggering the registrations. We had to set up for the registrations and manage the coming and going of students and employees on campus. Since last year we've not had a full complement of staff meeting, except for the PPN meeting. I have overcome this by meeting with different departments separately. At these meetings we report on any COVID-19 cases among students and staff. We encourage all staff to abide by the protocols. We comply with all the regulations, for example, demarcating the classrooms and workshops and ensuring social distancing. We provide sanitizers.*

Miss Ndlovu mentioned how she and her team needed to comply with COVID-19 rules and regulations. She said:

*We do have support from the health department that has been very helpful in informing us about managing COVID-19. We received a number of casual workers and cleaners. We were allocated two masks per person. We were able to examine our own campus and report on its status. It was sad to include in our reports that so many have succumbed to COVID-19. That has made us more cautious.*

It emerged from the extracts that campus managers complied with processes of governance and procedures of COVID-19 on their campuses. According to Kraak, Paterson and Boka (2016), college campuses require policies, procedures, systems, and capacity in order to successfully accomplish their assigned responsibilities. The campus managers compliance with processes and procedures of COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed using Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 1994) theory. As problems are presented in a technical challenge, leaders are expected to provide implementable solutions to the problem as guidelines in a form of policies are there (Heifetz, 1994). Mr Cele noted how it was important to follow procedures when the campus had a large group of visiting lecturers as markers. It may be for this reason also that Mrs Ngcobo needed to monitor the number of people in the campus. Campus managers were determined to make every effort possible to ensure safety of students and staff members and forced everyone to comply with campus procedures to combat COVID-19. Horta and Postiglione (2021) confirms that leaders in higher institutions relied on external experts when it came to decision making for adaptive challenges as there were no previous experiences or clear guidelines as noted by Heifetz and Linsky (2011) to follow regarding COVID-19 regulations. This is evident in a manner in which Miss Ndlovu relied on recommendations from government and health experts to manage COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **5.2.1.4 Experiences of financial management during the pandemic**

The study has found that campus managers have developed skills of managing campus finances and generating funds for their campuses. Participants echoed similar experiences of generating

funds for their colleges. For instance, Mr Cele mentioned that financial management during COVID-19 was made easier through monitoring administration and generating funds for the campus. Mrs Ngcobo stated how she had contributed to the college financially by leading a business unit in her previous post and now being able to apply her financial experience to the current COVID-19 pandemic. This has given her the capacity to think of creative ways to bring in funds during COVID-19 pandemic. Miss Ndlovu mentioned how it was difficult to get things done because of financial constraints but has developed strategies of generating funds during COVID-19. Below is the discussion of campus managers' experiences in managing campus finances. From the interview, Mr Cele said:

*With COVID-19, I have continued to monitor administration and generate funds for the campus through the Student Hub (distance learning for private paying students). Using the campus as a marking centre during 2020 and 2021 and monitoring all financial aspects of administration.*

Mrs Ngcobo had the following to say:

*We were one of the business units in the College, so our mandate was to generate income for the college. My role was to solicit funds for the college. During COVID-19 we were able to revive old partnerships, internationally, and locally. We had a number of contracts and received funding from different stakeholders.*

This is how Miss Ndlovu commented:

*Although on our campus, we are dedicated to our core business, red tape hindered our progress. For example, the roof of our hall was so badly damaged that the hall could not be used for examinations or student functions. The college couldn't afford the maintenance. I had to seek assistance from the local municipality.*

The discussions with the participants indicated their experience in financial management and how they have made contributions to the college. Sithole (2019) contends that South Africa FETCA (Act No. 16 of 2006) prescribes that all campuses are to prepare their own budgets that suit their needs and expenses every financial year and that campus managers are accountable for all managerial functions. The practice of financial management on campuses can be analysed using Heifetz (1994) Theory. As campuses move to new environment brought by COVID-19 pandemic, new strategies and abilities are required for one to succeed (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). For example, Mr Cele identified how he was able to make money for his

campus and the college through distance learning and how the administration for a marking centre during the pandemic was executed well. Another example was expressed by Mrs Ngcobo who felt that the college has benefited from the contracts that she was able to bring into the college and still more companies are willing to invest because of the relationships she has preserved over the years. Miss Ndlovu maintained that the municipality had come through for the campus as many urgent maintenance requirements could not be achieved through the central office. Humada-Ludeke (2013) concur with the above statement that campus managers should develop entrepreneurial skills and form strong partnerships as an additional funding stream in order to generate funds for their campuses. It is evident that campus managers have developed over the years and are accountable for managing their finances as per FETCA, Act No. 16 of 2006, (Republic of South Africa, 2006).

#### **5.2.1.5 Campus physical infrastructure**

TVET physical infrastructure includes school buildings, libraries, toilets, student accommodation and college vehicles, to name a few. Mr Cele stated that physical infrastructure such as student residences could not comfortably accommodate students who had to isolate when tested positive for COVID-19. This suggests that students are sharing rooms. While Mrs Ngcobo felt that the college tried by all means to provide solutions to physical infrastructure challenges, Miss Ndlovu felt there were backlogs in terms of the maintenance of infrastructure. She maintained that there were many procedures that needed to be followed such as filling of documentation, waiting for signatures and approval from central office to allocate funds to a campus to maintain physical infrastructure.

This is what Mr Cele said:

*There was a case where we had two infected students in the student hostel. For them to isolate, they needed to go back home because of the limited room at their accommodation. One was from the Eastern Cape and the other was from Nkandla.*

Mrs Ngcobo stated:

*I must commend the senior management of our college for their efforts during the disruptions of COVID-19. They assisted with data provision, conversion of classrooms to meet the new standards of virtual teaching, linking up with other*

*platforms and using other sources in order to allow students to download training material. Being a TVET, fifty percent of our learning is practical*

This is what Miss Ndlovu had to say:

*...there were many adjustments until the College Infrastructure Efficiency Grant (CIEG) was made available. Now the hall has been repaired, and we have a three-year plan for other maintenance.*

The narratives clearly show that campus managers are not only dealing with COVID-19 issues but are also faced with challenges related to inadequate infrastructure on their campuses. According to Sithole (2019), managers at campus level in South Africa find it difficult to maintain college infrastructure such as student accommodation as well as provide adequate toilet facilities for the total number of students who are registered at the campus. Using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory, challenges in the campus of inadequate infrastructure are known, what is needed are implementable solutions to respond to this challenge. According to Mr Cele, it may be for this reason that students could not be accommodated to self-isolate as there were limited functional rooms and the case of sharing rooms proved to be problematic during COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 requires high standards of hygiene practices to be maintained. Khakau (2019) maintains that quality infrastructure improves a learner's academic performance. It may be for this reason that Mrs Ngcobo decided on converting some classrooms to meet the standards of virtual teaching so as to prevent compromising students' academic performance. According to Sithole (2019), campus managers have very limited decision-making power and this causes challenges in matters that require immediate attention. It may be for this reason that the maintenance of the campus led by Miss Ndlovu could not be carried out; the majority of the decisions comes from the central office.

#### **5.2.1.6 Experiences of balancing traditional and online teaching and learning**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, campus managers have been compelled to adapt to the use of a mix of traditional and online teaching. Findings from the participants' stories show that

resources are needed for online teaching and learning as well as training. Participants had to make provision for safe learning environments and suitable electronic devices for both the teachers and the students. Training needed to be provided for online teaching and learning. Mr Cele felt that online teaching and learning has affected the curriculum as most of the programmes and assessment instruments (ICASS and ISAT) require practical work. Mrs Ngcobo and Miss Ndlovu believe that their campuses are moving forward and adapting to this new environment. Lecturers are already teaching online and are currently receiving the necessary training to facilitate lessons and assessments. Mr Cele explained how online teaching had disadvantaged his learners. This is what he had to say:

*Some learn better when they can engage with the lecturer, face to face. Some work better in groups where they can engage with other students. COVID-19 has forced people to study on their own. This has drastically affected the curriculum. You can't gauge the ongoing performance of your students because you only see them on assessment. And often you can't support them before you assess them, because they may not have data. Although some lecturers have started training for virtual teaching and learning, students are not currently accommodated to learn online.*

Mrs Ngcobo explained how the campus had adopted the use of Information Communication Technology:

*The college is currently installing a new IT system. The students will be able to log in and receive tuition on various platforms...So the new normal is telling us that the IT system is the way to go.*

This is what Miss Ndlovu shared in relation to this notion:

*COVID-19 has got us talking about changes to bring us in line with technological advances, for example online learning and teaching, which should have been introduced a long time ago. I was one of the people asking for a research department in the college to plan for the future, for example replacing textbooks with electronic devices... Students are benefiting because this technology is the language that they know best. I think as soon as we are settled, they will begin to blossom... Currently, Cisco is providing training for life orientation lecturers and students to write their assessments through computers.*

The above extracts show the role that campus managers played in making sure that the lecturers and the students balanced traditional and online teaching and learning. Campus managers need to be technologically savvy and well-informed to be able to lead and manage students and lecturers as they work together to apply technology to pedagogy (Harris, & Jones, 2020). Mr Cele found the quality of the curriculum to be compromised as COVID-19 had disrupted traditional teaching and learning. Mr Cele may still be unfamiliar with how practical work can be successfully achieved online. “The ongoing pandemic provides school leaders with the opportunity to reassess how technology integration through distance learning can be delivered equitably for all students” (Bagwell, 2020, p. 32). This statement is understood using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. Campus managers need to rethink how their campus can adapt and thrive in this new environment that requires technology. Mrs Ngcobo has used COVID-19 as an opportunity to encourage the use of distance learning. Balkrishen (2019) maintains that the primary task of campus managers is to ensure that leadership activities support teaching and learning as the core business of TVET colleges. It may be for this reason that Miss Ndlovu has provided the necessary training for lecturers and students to be ready for online assessments.

### **5.3 What leadership challenges do campus managers in a TVET college encounter during COVID-19 pandemic?**

I will now discuss the challenges that campus managers encounter in their day-to-day leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges are grouped as follows: losing staff members; managing people with comorbidity; managing absenteeism; lack of suitable tools for online teaching and learning; and keeping everyone safe and well during COVID-19 pandemic

#### **5.3.1 Losing staff members to death**

The issue of losing staff members arises as one of the challenges encountered by campus managers. All three participants noted that during COVID-19, they lost staff members. Some of these losses were caused by COVID-19. Campus managers are generally leaders within and beyond their campuses. They have to deal with emotions such as frustration, loss and anger of staff members. Mr Cele talks about how COVID-19 restrictions have made it difficult for him

to show support to families of members who have passed on or who are sick. Mrs Ngcobo mentioned how painful it was losing dedicated staff members due to COVID-19. Miss Ndlovu felt that with all the changes brought by COVID-19, the lives of people were taken away which has had impact on shortage of staff. Mr Cele spoke about the challenges he experienced when he wanted to offer his support to staff and families.

*We have lost friends and colleagues. And when you can't even go to the funeral it changes the whole ethos of working together and supporting people; you cannot visit bereaved families or those who are ill in hospital. For us, as black people, this is abnormal. When someone is sick, you support him or her.*

Similarly, Mrs Ngcobo noted:

*I had to provide emotional support to my staff members who were losing loved ones. We lost one of our own, a diligent lecturer, on this campus. A sad loss and a learning curve for us all.*

Miss Ndlovu stated:

*... there has been heartache, because many have succumbed to the pandemic...*

The above evidence indicates the losses and the pain that campus managers suffered during COVID-19. Harris and Jones (2020) state that school leaders have increasingly had to manage emotional responses of others during COVID-19 pandemic, including anxiety, frustration, loss and anger. This is applicable to all three participants as many people under their leadership have lost loved ones or have become ill, and were finding it difficult to cope during this time. Gurr (2020) notes how emotional consequences of the pandemic vary as staff faces health issues related to the virus. This challenge is understood using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. Mr Cele is challenged and stressed in leading and managing his campus because of the psychological impact COVID-19 has had on his staff and his wellness. According to Moto and Smit (2017), the pandemic has caused sadness, depression and anxiety from people and as school leadership the expectation is to support affected teachers without the support structure from the government. As Mrs Ngcobo and Miss Ndlovu are also experiencing the hardships and the pain caused by the pandemic, as campus managers they were still expected to support staff members.

### **5.3.2 Monitoring and supervision of people with comorbidities and people who are absent**

Campus managers have had to monitor sick leave and supervise the signing of time books on their campuses. Mr Cele described how the processes that were followed made it difficult to find immediate replacements for staff that were on leave. Mrs Ngcobo explained how COVID-19 has brought confusion and chaos when it came to using the college time book. As much as it has been said that people with comorbidity were expected to work from home, Miss Ndlovu mentioned how this had not been well monitored because of the lack of suitable tools to conduct lessons from home. Mr Cele told us how it has been challenging to monitor sick leave; He said:

*Managing sick leave has been a nightmare...Finding a replacement does not mean simply going out and announcing that you have a position. The procedure, just to find one person, could take up to three weeks. By that time, the other person may have recovered...Right now we are sitting in a position where lecturers that we appointed in January are not here because they have not yet been approved. We conducted the interviews two months ago.*

Mrs Ngcobo expressed these sentiments:

*Recently, the administrator made an announcement for us to resume signing the time books, but within a week we could not proceed with that because of the third wave.*

Miss Ndlovu noted:

*HR has its own challenges. People with comorbidity are expected to work from home, without electronic devices. They end up being home and not doing anything. We have people over 60 years of age who are afraid to be on campus. There are jobs that cannot be carried out at home for example, cleaning.*

The participants described challenges of monitoring people with comorbidity and managing absenteeism of staff members. According to Moyo and Smith (2017), effective teaching and learning in South Africa is affected when teachers are sick, which in turn impacts negatively on campus leadership. Campus managers act on the directives given by top management based at central office. When I viewed Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory, I noted it allows leaders and followers to collectively work together towards a common goal by focusing on the problem. Mr Cele has experienced difficulties in finding immediate replacements for lecturers, as decision approved by top management which sometimes delay. According to Heifetz and Linsky (2011), new strategies and abilities are required from college for urgent replacement of

staff. Centralisation of the management system has a negative impact on the administration of a campus (Sithole, 2019). It may be for this reason that confusion is created with the signing of the time book, as Mrs Ngcobo noted. The findings from the study of Kedir and Geleta (2017) were that leaders at the central level failed to effectively lead innovation and change, not being able to offer support to TVET leaders at the lower level. It may be for this reason that Miss Ndlovu expressed frustration with the DHET expecting people to be working from home, yet there are no proper plans in place, including supporting resources on how these duties will be carried out.

### **5.3.3 Lack of provision of suitable tools for online teaching and learning**

Campus managers acknowledged the lack of provision of suitable tools for online teaching and learning. Mr Cele regarded the lack of a suitable learning platform for live streaming of lessons as a challenge to teaching and learning on his campus. Mrs Ngcobo emphasised how lecturers and students in most colleges have not received necessary tools for online teaching and learning. Miss Ndlovu noted how her campus was challenged to do any work whenever the country was put on lockdown because of the nature of programmes that are offered. Mr Cele noted how his expectations were not met. He articulated:

*We were hoping to have a learning platform to livestream lessons for students who are ill and cannot attend classes. Unfortunately, we are not a private college. Five companies came and presented platforms where you can present a lesson in the classroom, and livestream it to students. Unfortunately, management has not decided which company to take.*

Mrs Ngcobo highlighted how electronic devices were not available:

*Teachers and students still do not have WiFi or laptops. We don't know if the National Student fund will provide students with these devices. All fifty colleges in South Africa have need of these tools for managers, staff and students.*

Miss Ndlovu expressed:

*We have many computer subjects so whenever we are in a COVID-19 lockdown level that doesn't allow physical attendance, our curriculum suffers. Lecturers don't yet have electronic devices or WiFi but we are doing the best that we can.*

These responses raise the problem that the lack of suitable tools for teaching and learning presents an obstacle to the implementation of online teaching and learning. According to Tamrat (2020), higher education institutions in Ethiopia could not make available the large budget and infrastructure required to transition to online programmes and courses. It may be for similar reasons that campus managers could not provide their staff and learners with suitable tools for teaching and learning. Funds and suitable infrastructure may not have been available to transform classrooms into centres for online learning. The Lack of provision of suitable tools for online teaching and learning could be understood using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive leadership Theory. Adaptive leadership theory allows leaders to work with all stakeholders and finding best solutions using creative thinking. According to Sithole (2019), campus managers have very limited decision-making power and this causes challenges on matters that require immediate attention. The centralisation of the management system may have contributed to the lack of provision of suitable tools.

#### **5.3.4 Keeping everyone safe and well during COVID-19 pandemic**

One of the tasks entrusted to campus managers is the supervision of health and safety of staff and learners. The participants were in agreement that COVID-19 protocols and procedures were being implemented on their campuses. Mr Cele indicated that there were people who refused to have their temperatures checked by health workers at his campus entrance gate. He also described how interviews were compromised as potential candidates may be turned away at the gate because of high temperatures. Mrs Ngcobo described some of the setbacks caused by COVID-19 when planning for the examinations. Lecturers were included in the invigilation timetable only to find that they have COVID-19 symptoms. Miss Ndlovu mentioned how positive symptoms of COVID-19 affected students and staff during the examination period. Mr Cele reflected that:

*We have people, including staff-members, who refuse to be screened at the gate.....Some of them refused to leave. I had to be called in because someone tried to come in by force...The HR processes present similar challenges. Whenever we are conducting interviews, we need to be wearing masks. Sometimes a potential candidate has to be turned away at the gate because of a high temperature. You could potentially lose the best candidate for the job because you can't allow that person in.*

Mrs Ngcobo mentioned that:

*We run tests and examinations but we are not sure who will report for duty. We plan invigilation timetables, only to find that in the morning, one of the employees has woken up with COVID-19 symptoms and cannot come to college*

Miss Ndlovu made the following comment:

*Right now, we don't even have sanitizer on the campus but we are here. We beg until we are heard.*

The data above reveals that campus managers experienced challenges of health and safety while leading campuses during COVID-19. The study of Balkrishen (2019) noted that instructional time should be protected by providing instruction in a safe, orderly and supportive environment for both staff and students. It is for this reason that Mr Cele had to intervene when people refused to abide by the rules regarding safety measures for COVID-19. The findings in this study resonate with the study by Gurr (2020) that campus managers' duties include legal responsibility for the health and safety of all students. Challenges of health and safety are viewed using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. In this study with regards health and safety challenges, it is shown that campus managers understood the importance to alter people's habits and values to be able to implement health and safety measures. The government instructed schools to give the necessary COVID-19 awareness as recommended by government to students and do follow up (Tamrat, 2021) and put management measures in place to efficiently manage the school such as safety in campus and postponing examination (Mncube et al., 2021). It is for this reason that Mrs Ngcobo cannot compromise safety of other students by allowing students and staff members on campus with positive symptoms. It is also for this reason that Miss Ndlovu making noise to top management to make them understand the importance for the provision of sanitizer as this is an expectation from the government.

#### **5.4 How do campus managers in a TVET college mitigate the challenges encountered during COVID-19 pandemic?**

Strategies employed by campus managers to mitigate some of these challenges included engagement of stakeholders, online network practices, keeping everyone safe and professional development.

#### 5.4.1 Engagement of stakeholders

The three campus managers emphasised the importance of engaging college stakeholders to mitigate challenges presented by COVID-19. They mentioned that they engaged internal and external stakeholders for decision making, maintaining relationships and for support. Mr Cele highlighted the importance of having an understanding of the community and maintaining a positive relationship between his staff and students. Mrs Ngcobo expressed how she has continuously engaged different departments on different occasions and stressed the importance of interacting with her SRC and different unions at a campus level. Miss Ndlovu saw the need to request the help of the municipality in order to enlist support from the community. This is what Mr Cele said about engagement of stakeholders:

*I have an understanding of the local political groups from the community. It was easy for me to travel around this community in order to inform the political structures about new programmes in the college. I always preach the maintenance of a humble relationship between the internal stakeholders, such as the staff and the students.*

Mrs Ngcobo expressed the following:

*Managing a campus is not that different from managing a unit. The difference is that I now have to deal with the Student Representative Council (SRC). As the campus manager, I need to recognise that they play a critical role. I need to meet with them often to ensure that the campus is running smoothly and that I understand the needs of the students. I have to bring the unions on board... I need to meet with them often to make sure that my employees are well taken off.*

Miss Ndlovu articulated that:

*I had to seek assistance from the local municipality so we ended up having functions and writing exams in the community hall.*

From the above extracts, it is evident that campus managers mitigated the challenges by engaging with different stakeholders. In Nigeria, democratic practices involving internal and external stakeholders characterised good administration of higher institutions (Babalola, 2014). Mr Cele involved community members, namely, parents and local political parties when deciding on the programmes that were to be offered on campus and maintained positive relationships between lecturers and students. Leadership is the ability to influence others

through communication (Delia, 2018). COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for individuals and stakeholders to work concurrently and collaboratively in order to achieve leadership goals (Bolden, 2020). It is for this reason that Mrs Ngcobo has formed stronger relationships by continuously engaging with different departments, the SRC and different trade unions as they play a critical role in decision making. School management within the Province of Bulacan in the Philippines, believes that COVID-19 has created a stronger community and external partnerships (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020). Miss Ndlovu has forged partnerships with companies within the community to mitigate infrastructure challenges on her campus. These strategies can be analysed using Heifetz and Linsky's (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. Using Adaptive Leadership Theory, one can argue that campus managers in this study demonstrated awareness that everyone's input is important in finding solutions to the leadership challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009).

#### **5.4.2 Utilising online network platforms and practices**

The campus managers expressed how online networking had helped in overcoming the challenges experienced during COVID-19 pandemic. All three campus managers expressed different positive influences of online practices. Mr Cele highlighted how he had encouraged lecturers to create WhatsApp groups for easy communication with students. Mrs Ngcobo mentioned that virtual meetings have been the best solution for the campus as well as for the development of campus managers, nationwide. Miss Ndlovu embraced online teaching as lecturers and students are now getting long overdue internet exposure. She mentioned how she had pushed for the adoption of online learning in the College, and she was happy that her vision was finally happening. Mr Cele highlighted the following:

*I have encouraged lecturers to create WhatsApp groups with their students so that whenever there's going to be a lesson, at least students are informed.*

Mrs Ngcobo had this to say about virtual meetings:

*We have a steering committee at the college. We often communicate on our WhatsApp group. We have a national campus manager's group, where we share information and support one another. We often have virtual meetings and workshops where we discuss our experiences as campus managers, nationwide. We share some of the good practices, among other things.*

The issue of online teaching and learning was highlighted by Miss Ndlovu. This is what she had to say:

*Covid-19 has got us talking about changes to bring us in line with technological advances, for example, online learning and teaching, which should have been introduced a long time ago. I was one of the people asking for a research department in the college to plan for the future, for example replacing textbooks with electronic devices... Our campus has the advantage of Student Hub, an internet platform that allows online teaching and learning. Lecturers spend a few hours carrying out online contact sessions with the students.*

Campus managers have been using online networking for easy communication. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) note that people are unable to communicate face-to-face due to the new practices of social distancing. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) add that leadership may also keep staff updated through the use of e-mails, while students may prefer to receive their updates through the available social medium platforms. Campus managers' online network practices may be viewed using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. As campus managers lead during COVID-19 pandemic, they are aware of the challenges brought by lack of communication due to limited physical contact. Using creative thinking (Heifetz, 2009) to solve communication challenges between lecturers and students, Mr Cele encouraged lecturers to communicate with students via WhatsApp groups, as this is the social media platform most available to students.

COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a shift from the usual contact-based conferences to online meetings. This has resulted in cost cutting measures; higher education institutions no longer need to pay for international travel and accommodation for its academics (Mncube et al. 2021). Mrs Ngcobo connected with other campus managers at virtual workshops where experiences were shared and possible solutions mooted. Campus managers using Adaptive Leadership Theory do not just take decisions but carefully recognise external environment and collaborate with other leaders to consider the best solution (Khan, 2017). Higher institutions have opted for online teaching and learning. Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Blackboard platforms have been very helpful in ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment continue without putting staff and students at risk (Mncube et al., 2021). Miss Ndlovu has made a point of planning for replacing textbooks with the use of electronic devices and ensuring that her lecturers and students are exposed to online teaching and learning to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

### 5.4.3 Keeping everyone safe

According to the data generated, all three campus managers followed COVID-19 safety procedures. Campus managers highlighted the many safety measures they employed, including social distancing, use of sanitisers, screening temperatures, information posters, replacement of people with COVID-19 symptoms and management of shifts. Mr Cele mentioned the importance of training staff on the awareness of and protection against COVID-19. Mrs Ngcobo mentioned the importance of isolating people with symptoms and arranging for replacements, especially during the time of examinations. For Miss Ndlovu, the best solution was to have shifts to control the number of students on the campus at any one time. Mr Cele had this to say:

*Working with my team, I had to organise social distancing and the provision of sanitizers, screening and thermometers in the classes. I had to supervise the putting up of posters outside the classrooms and the training of all returning staff.*

Mrs Ngcobo explained how she had planned to have external invigilators on standby:

*We always make sure that we have external invigilators from local communities on standby to step in as and when needed. There are runners on standby in case some of them don't come.*

Miss Ndlovu had this to say:

*During COVID-19 we have had to manage and monitor the numbers of students attending morning and afternoon shifts. We have done this successfully, minimising the spread of COVID-19 and keeping everyone safe.*

From the above extracts, we are learning that the safety of the employees and the students were prioritised by campus managers. According to Moyo and Smit (2017), effective teaching and learning in South Africa is negatively affected when teachers fall sick, and this in turn, impacts negatively on campus leadership. Campus managers' actions can be viewed using Heifetz (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. Mr Cele made sure that all staff members and students had to be trained on COVID-19 when they had returned to work and safety measures were applied to prevent the spread of the virus. Balkrishen (2019) presents literature indicating that instructional time should be protected by providing instruction in a safe, orderly and supportive

environment for both staff and students and ensuring that lessons begin and end on time. Mrs Ngcobo made sure that examinations took place in a safe environment. Standby invigilators were provided in order to minimise wasting time when people did not show up because of COVID-19 symptoms. Miss Ndlovu managed and monitored the number of people that were on the campus to ensure safety. Campus managers in the study understood how to address health and safety challenges and used implementable solutions such as providing health and safety training, having standby invigilators and managing the number of people on campus (Heifetz, 1994).

#### **5.4.4 Development of people**

The views expressed by campus managers showed that all the leaders on these different campuses supported the development of people. For instance, Mr Cele revealed that lecturers needed to become managers and leaders in order to make autonomous decisions. Mrs Ngcobo indicated that she was currently in talks with sponsors to keep up with what the rest of the world was doing. This called for the training of both the lecturers and the students. Miss Ndlovu spoke about how lecturers and students were currently being trained so that they were able to write assessments online. Mr Cele believed in allowing people to manage themselves in order to be developed:

*A leadership practice that seems to work is to develop people to be able to manage themselves. When you allow someone to manage him- or herself, it makes your duty lighter...I am a firm believer in a systems approach, a term that I have learned about in our current leadership course. This is where you don't have one person responsible for everything because when that person is not around, it means everything stops.*

Mrs Ngcobo stated that:

*The auto workshop will be redesigned to model the industry and teaching facility. There will not be a lecturer but it will be equipped with a monitor, computers, and models or small engines that are similar to the actual engines for the auto students. Students log in and take the tutorial. They receive a virtual explanation of how to disassemble and reassemble the engine. Students will be assessed online...*

Miss Ndlovu stated how her campus was making steady progress in terms of training of staff and students:

*Currently, Cisco is providing training for life orientation lecturers and students to write their assessments through computers. This is already in place in some developed countries and we are forced by the pandemic to keep up.*

The above evidence suggests that all the campus managers encouraged the investment in human capital. “Leaders who believe in self-development will be ideal in encouraging and empowering their own teachers, especially in time of transformation” (Kraft, 2015, p. 80). It is for this reason that Mr Cele encouraged people to manage themselves and their classrooms. Mothapo (2019) suggests that TVET principals and all SMT managers can improve their capabilities when solving problems through undergoing training and development programmes. Campus managers practices can be viewed using Heifetz and Linsky’s (1994) Adaptive Leadership Theory. Robertson and Frick (2018) presented findings in which respondents recognised the need for campus managers to be visionary leaders; to be able to identify opportunities for the college and their campuses and to solve problems. Mrs Ngcobo used COVID-19 as an opportunity to develop people to be able to do practical work differently by meeting the standards of what the rest of the world is doing using online teaching and learning. As campuses move to new environment created by COVID-19, new opportunities and strategies are required from campus managers to thrive (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011). It is for this reason that Miss Ndlovu pushed hard for lecturers and students to be trained to do their assessments online.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter focused on the analysis of narratives of the lived experiences of campus managers in response to the three research puzzles of my study. The chapter commenced with my response to the first research puzzle on what are campus managers' lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during COVID-19 pandemic. In order to answer this puzzle, I looked at the narrative analysis where the participants presented different perspectives on their day-to-day leadership experiences. I then looked at leadership challenges that campus managers in a TVET college encountered during COVID-19 pandemic and how these challenges were mitigated. I used the Adaptive Leadership Theory by Heifetz and Linsky (2011) to examine how campus managers move to new environment brought by COVID-19 pandemic and strategies and abilities they used to thrive during this time.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter Five dealt with the interpretation and analysis of the participants' narratives which are presented in Chapter Four. This final chapter attempts to highlight the lessons that may be learnt from the study. The chapter begins with a summary of the study, followed by the presentation of conclusions. The conclusions drawn from the findings, and these conclusions address the research puzzles of the study are presented next. I then present a reflection on my research journey and this is followed by the recommendations.

#### **6.2 Summary of the study**

##### **Chapter One**

In Chapter One, I introduced the study, described the background to the problem, and presented the statement of the problem. I then presented the purpose and rationale, as well as, the significance of the study. The objectives and the research questions followed. Clarification of the key concepts followed and the delimitations of the study concluded the chapter.

##### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two focused on the research literature around the research questions and captured current debates on leadership in times of crisis. The chapter examined literature around the lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college in South Africa and internationally. It linked the review of literature about leadership in times of crisis with adaptive leadership theory as a theoretical framework of the study. This framework was discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

##### **Chapter Three**

Chapter Three provided a detailed discussion of the interpretive paradigm, the research design as well as the methodology that was applied in this study. This study adopted a narrative inquiry as a methodology that was deemed the most appropriate to gather data on the lived experiences of the three campus managers from different campuses of a TVET college.

## **Chapter Four**

The chapter described the first level of analysis, called, narrative analysis. The narrative accounts of the participants (field texts) were configured into research texts. I began this chapter by introducing individual participants by providing their respective profiles. The narratives of the three campus managers generated through interviews and artefacts were re-told to make the narratives meaningful. This chapter responds to the three research puzzles which focused on the lived experiences of campus managers, challenges that they experienced and how they responded to these challenges as leaders.

## **Chapter Five**

Chapter Five presented the second level of analysis, referred to as analysis of narratives. This is where I attempted to make sense of the narratives that participants had given and were presented in Chapter Four. I discussed the research text and themes which emerged from the analysis. As part of the analysis of narratives, I presented perspectives from literature, and also related the narratives with the theory that underpinned this study.

### **6.3 Conclusions drawn from findings**

This study attempted to understand the lived leadership experiences of campus managers in selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. Below I present conclusions drawn from the narrative analysis and analysis of the narratives. The conclusions presented are consistent with the research puzzles presented in Chapter One and also in Chapter Five.

#### **6.3.1 Leadership experiences of campus managers during COVID-19 pandemic**

Drawing from the findings, I can conclude with confidence that there are different perspectives about the enactment of day-to-day leadership by the three campus managers that emerged. Drawing from the findings presented in Chapter Five, it is evident that the three campus managers had similar understandings regarding their involvement of different stakeholders when making decisions as part of their leadership practice. They shared, for instance, how they collaborated with staff members, communities, students and workers' unions in making decisions. From the analysis of the narratives, it is evident that networking during COVID-19 was seen as a contributor to the enactment of leadership. Campus managers supported one another through virtual networking events. From the perspective of Adaptive Leadership Theory by Heifetz (1994), I can conclude that the three campus managers found new ways of leading their TVET college campuses and colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of them was to interact with other leaders using social media groups across provinces and even countries.

The second conclusion is the primacy of the law in their exercise of leadership during such a crisis period. In this regard, the three campus managers deemed it imperative to comply with and implement COVID-19 protocols as a leadership strategy of reducing the spread of the virus and to save lives. The narratives clearly show that campus managers are faced with challenges related to inadequate infrastructure on their campuses including shortage of student residences, poorly maintained campus buildings and a lack of suitable classrooms for virtual teaching and learning. Nevertheless, drawing these findings, I can conclude that the three campus managers adapted to the financial demands and restraints resulting from COVID-19, and the teaching and learning processes that were dominated by the use of online platforms. While a number of challenges were encountered in the process of facilitating effective teaching and learning, conclusions show that the strategies that the three campus managers adopted addressed such challenges.

### **6.3.2 Challenges experienced by campus managers during COVID-19 were not insurmountable**

My reading of empirical studies and the findings of this study all indicate that during the times of crises, challenges do occur as it was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the study indicates that some of these challenges were similar while others were different, the conclusions I can draw is that such challenges were not insurmountable. Most of the challenges

were presented and discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Four before it. The narratives presented in the two chapters I have mentioned clearly indicate how campus managers managed to resolve the challenges encountered.

This section briefly outlines how the three campus managers managed to address the challenges they encountered. The three campus managers emphasised the importance of engaging college stakeholders as a strategy to mitigate challenges in the campus. They mentioned that they engaged internal and external stakeholders for various reasons such as decision making, maintaining relationships and for support. Campus managers have been using online networks for easy communication. They are realising the importance of encouraging lecturers to create groups using social media for easy communication with students as a measure of minimising confusion. They have praised the practice of virtual networking with campus managers nationwide as they gain support from one another to succeed in their campuses. Campus managers highlighted safety measures they followed to keep everyone safe. Such measures included social distancing, use of sanitisers, screening thermometers, posters, replacement of people with COVID-19 symptoms, and management of shifts minimising the number of people in the campus.

#### **6.4 Reflections of my journey**

I embarked on my journey in 2020, fully aware of the demands of the master's course. It has not been an easy road especially as I had started during the time when the world was faced with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. It was difficult and challenging having to cope with my studies while facing the deadly disease and even losing my loved ones. Being a wife and a mother comes with many responsibilities and complexities. It has been challenging to take care of my family especially as my three children are small and my husband is mostly away from home for work related responsibilities. Juggling work and studies has been a strain as both demand my full and undivided attention. This forms of the complexity of this journey. Along my journey, I have met amazing people. I have worked with wonderful colleagues; professors, doctors and masters students. I have worked with great participants and lastly, I do not think I would have survived my journey without my incredible supervisor, Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize.

I recall deciding that I would not go to bed without writing at least one paragraph. Sometimes, I achieved this; sometimes more, and sometimes, nothing. The day I started writing my very

first page, it seemed impossible to complete the whole dissertation, but here I am. I can recall how some chapters were more challenging to construct than others. Chapter Two and Chapter Five were the most difficult for me. Thanks to my supervisor for his encouraging words, time and motivation; I managed to pull through. I believe only God is able to give strength that I had during my academic journey. As challenging as it has been, not even once did I feel like I should quit.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

There are four recommendations that have been made drawing from the conclusions made. The first conclusion made relates to the finding which suggested that TVET colleges in the study walked a tightrope between traditional and online teaching and learning. While it has become clear that it is impossible to teach the old ways, migration to online and remote teaching and learning had its own challenges. Based on this conclusion, it is therefore, recommended that campus managers need to find a balance between traditional schooling in class and schooling at home outside of class. Campus managers need to monitor the tuition of students during class time on campus and encourage lecturers to give students worksheets to complete at home that will not require internet connections or the use of computers. Such worksheets could have dates which stipulate the time allocation for that activity. This could work even if there is a national lockdown; students would have work to complete while they are off-campus.

Another recommendation directly linked to the first one is that lecturers need to consider video-recording lessons and post them on social media for students to have access to whenever they have data. And those lessons could be available anytime, whether students are on campus or at home. Campus managers could provide few tools which lecturers could circulate for that purpose. As adaptive leaders, campus managers could make provision for google classes, where lecturers can record full lessons. Students could download these while on campus and then watch them and go over them without using any data. WiFi should be made available on all campuses for easy access to information. It is a known fact that students have smartphones. Students can access relevant lessons from the modules set in google.

The other conclusion made is that campus managers and lecturers lacked certain leadership skills to handle crises such as COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore, recommended that campus managers working together with top management need to offer proper training and resources for staff to teach online. Students must be provided with resources and must also be trained for

online learning. Leaders need to plan for the lecturers and the students residing in areas where there are limited networks. A computer laboratory could be made available so that no students get left behind. This will require careful time planning for travelling to and from campus.

Another conclusion made is that COVID-19 has necessitated a situation where both staff and students work remotely as a way of preventing infecting one another if they were to operate from campus. Challenges of managing attendances and leave applications have been highlighted. It is therefore, recommended that leaders, working together with the IT department need to consider install systems designed for staff to sign in and out remotely. This system would be able to monitor staff when they have logged. They would log in at a certain time and upload their work and timetable for the day. Alternatively, those with comorbidity could assist the lecturers who are physically teaching on campus by doing paperwork such as marking and recording of marks manually. Staff with comorbidity could be instructed to report to work once or twice a week just to show face and report on their progress. They could hold one-on-one contact sessions with immediate supervisors at a scheduled venue.

The narratives of the participants have shown that there are challenges of infrastructure and maintenance on campuses which negatively affected various aspects of staff and students' lives. Teaching and accommodation is negatively affected. It is therefore, recommended that campus managers, working closely with senior management at central office, need to start planning for more buildings, renovations and proper maintenance of infrastructure on their campuses to accommodate lecturers and students, with consideration given to social distancing. I acknowledge that these issues require a lot of financial resources that TVET colleges may not have. I also note that with the advent of blended learning, building more physical resources might not be viable. Nonetheless, careful planning that ensures that both staff and students have reliable facilities that will support even remote teaching and learning platforms is urgently required.

## **6.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter started by giving a summary of all the chapters that constitute the study. Secondly, the three research puzzles were presented followed by the presentation of conclusions drawn from the findings. Lastly, I presented a reflection of my research journey before putting forward few recommendations drawn from the conclusions of the study.



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## LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO DHET

3 Arum Place  
Pinetown, Ashley  
3610  
05 February 2021

The .....  
..... college

Dear Sir

#### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR COLLEGE**

I am **Nonkululeko Sithole** and I am conducting a research as a requirement of the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Degree of **Master of Education (Educational Leadership, Management and Policy)**. The title of the research study is **“Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college”**.

I would like to use your college as one of the research sites, and this letter intends to request your permission. The study will focus on exploring campus managers lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during COVID 19 pandemic, therefore I would like to request your campus managers to participate in the study. Should permission be granted, the interviews with the campus managers will be scheduled for dates and times that are convenient for him or her. Care will be taken that no disruption is caused during such interviews. COVID 19 regulations will be adhered to in terms of safety of other people and myself. Please also note that the participation in this study is voluntary, and the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. In addition, you are assured that details of the school and the participant will be kept confidential, and your identity will never be disclosed to anyone.

For more information and questions about the study, you may contact the researcher or the research supervisor on the following details:

Name of researcher: Nonkululeko Sithole [REDACTED] Email: petnku@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize; Tel No. 031 260 1398; Email: Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through:

**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

Thanking you in advance.

Yours in Education

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## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO CAMPUS MANAGERS

3 Arum place  
Pinetown, Ashley  
3610  
05 February 2021

Attention: Campus Manager

### **PERMISSION LETTER TO THE CAMPUS MANAGER**

I am **Nonkululeko Sithole** and I am conducting a research as a requirement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Degree of **Master of Education (Educational Leadership, Management and Policy)**. The title of the research study is “**Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college**”. I would like to use your campus as one of the research sites, and this letter intends to request your permission. The study will focus on exploring campus managers lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during COVID 19 pandemic. Should permission be granted, the interviews with the campus managers will be scheduled for dates and times that are convenient for the participant. Care will be taken that COVID 19 regulations are adhered to by ensuring safety of other people.

The objectives of the study are:


1. To explore campus managers’ lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore leadership challenges that the campus managers experience during the COVID-19 pandemic
3. To explore how campus managers in a TVET college mitigate leadership challenges they encountered during COVID 19 pandemic

The study will focus on exploring campus managers lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during COVID 19 pandemic. This letter intends to request your permission to use your campus as one of research site.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split into two parts depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

For more information and questions about the study, you may contact the researcher or the research supervisor on the following details:

Researcher: Email: [petnku@gmail.com](mailto:petnku@gmail.com) 

My supervisor is Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize who is located at the School of Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He can be contacted at:

Email: [Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za) Phone: 031 260 1398

You may also contact the Research Office through:

**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 hope this letter will find your positive consideration, thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

---

Mrs N. P. Sithole

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

3 Arum place  
Pinetown, Ashley  
3610  
05 February 2021

Dear Participant

### **REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH**

I am **Nonkululeko Sithole** and I am conducting a research as a requirement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Degree of **Master of Education (Educational Leadership, Management and Policy)**. The title of the research study is **“Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college”**. The objectives of the study are:

1. To explore campus managers’ lived experiences of leading TVET college campuses during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore leadership challenges that the campus managers experience during the COVID-19 pandemic
3. To explore how campus managers in a TVET college mitigate leadership challenges they encountered during COVID 19 pandemic

The study will focus on exploring campus managers lived experiences of leadership in times of crisis, particularly during COVID 19 pandemic. This letter intends to elucidate the purpose of the study and to request your participation in the study.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split into two parts depending on your preference.

- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I can be contacted at:

Email: [petnku@gmail.com](mailto:petnku@gmail.com) 

My supervisor is Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize who is located at the School of Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He can be contacted at:

Email: [Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za)

Phone: 031 260 1398

You may also contact the Research Office through:

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4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

I hope this letter will find your positive consideration, thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

---

Name and surname

-----  
**PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION FOR CONSENT OF PARTICIPATION:**  
-----

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the nature and purpose of the study entitled: **Leadership in times of crisis: Lived experiences of campus managers in a TVET college.** I agree to participate in the study. I am also fully aware that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any point should I wish to do so, without any negative or undesirable consequence. I am also aware that there are neither any foreseeable direct benefits nor direct risks associated with my participation in this study. I therefore understand the contents of this letter fully and I do **GIVE CONSENT / DO NOT GIVE CONSENT** for the interviews to be digitally recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

School stamp

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### APPENDIX ONE

#### **Interview guide**

Field texts (data) will be generated using two methods, namely, narrative interviews and artefact inquiry. Two data generation sessions over two days will be scheduled for each participant.

#### **Narrative interview**

##### **Day one**

##### **Session one**

Participants will be expected to speak freely, narrating stories on their lived experiences as leaders

Guiding questions will include:

- Description of campus manager's early schooling days
- Campus manager's memories in the first years as part of management
- favourite moments leading as campus manager during COVID 19
- Least favourite moment leading as campus manager during COVID 19
- Responsibilities that campus managers enjoyed the most during COVID 19
- Responsibilities that campus managers enjoyed the least during COVID 19

##### **Session two**

Participants will be requested relate their stories of lived experience as leaders of campuses.

- What role does the participant play within the college campus?
- What were the participant's major challenges during COVID 19?

- How did the participant overcome these challenges?
- What motivates the participant to continue leadership practices as a campus manager during times of crisis?
- Do the experiences of campus managers influence the way they mitigate challenges brought by COVID 19?

## **Artefact Inquiry**

### **Day two**

#### **Session three**

Participants will be requested to bring an artefact to relate their stories of lived experiences and leadership practices in college campuses during times of crisis. These may be objects of any kind, including old pictures, documents, etc.

- Participants will be asked to bring artefact which may include objects.
- Participants will be required to relate stories triggered by the artefacts.

## APPENDIX E: TURNITIN CERTIFICATE

Dissertation			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
8%	8%	2%	0%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	<a href="http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za">researchspace.ukzn.ac.za</a> Internet Source	2%	
2	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net">hdl.handle.net</a> Internet Source	2%	
3	<a href="http://www.cpsctech.org">www.cpsctech.org</a> Internet Source	1%	
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5	<a href="http://www.nationalskillsnetwork.in">www.nationalskillsnetwork.in</a> Internet Source	<1%	
6	<a href="http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za">alternation.ukzn.ac.za</a> Internet Source	<1%	
7	<a href="http://www.tandfonline.com">www.tandfonline.com</a> Internet Source	<1%	
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