EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS AT

MAJUBA TVET COLLEGE, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

by

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DECLARATION

I Munyaradzi Muchineripi (Student No: 45018715), declare that **Exploring the effectiveness of psychological support services provided to students at Majuba TVET College, KwaZulu-Natal Province** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE   DATE

DEDICATION

To my late parents for the important role they played in my life but never lived to see this day, my wife Florence and daughter Anesu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET) in South Africa face a number of challenges including psychological problems. These challenges have a strong bearing on the academic success of the students. The aim of the study was to examine the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College. Interviews were recorded verbatim and transcribed. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data. The themes used were derived from the research objectives and these were further divided into categories and sub-categories. The study found that the institution does provide psychological support services to the learner. The forms of psychological support include career counselling, pre-counselling, referral system, on-going counselling and peer counselling and mentoring. Improved academic performance, improved student attendance student retention and improved college certification rate are some of the benefits that can be realised from the effective utilisation of psychological support by the students. Various challenges hinder the effective utilisation of these psychological support services including, lack of qualified personnel, being understaffed, poor referral system, conflicting roles of staff, inadequate on-site counselling, low-prioritisation of psychological support by college management and limited access time. The participants highlighted the need for the institution to establish linkages with key stakeholders such as other TVET Colleges so as to have a platform for sharing vital information on psychological support. The participants were of the view that more qualified and registered staff should be hired to bolster the provision of psychological support to students. The referral system should be improved and the participants advocated for the services to be accessible around the clock. College management should show commitment to students' welfare by prioritising and recognising student psychological support as pivotal to students' academic success.

Key words: Counselling, Diversified, First-Generation, Linkages, Mental, Post traumatic stress, Psychosocial, Referral, Systems Theory, Vulnerable Groups.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APA	American Psychological Association
BPS	British Psychological Society
CAP	Career Analysis and Profiling
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoH	Department of Health
FET	Further Education and Training
HEAIDS	Higher Education Aids
HOD	Head of Department
HPCSA	Health Professional Council of South Africa
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PsySSA	Psychological Society of South Africa
SCCD	Student Counselling and Career Development Services in Southern Africa
SDP	Student Development Practitioner
SRC	Students Representative Council
SSS	Student Support Services
SSSCM	Student Support Services Committee Member
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO-UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The government has turned to Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVETs) in its quest to address the skills deficit in South Africa. There are 50 registered and accredited public TVETs in South Africa with an enrolment of more than 700 000 (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2016). Professional Student Support Services (SSS) are available at most of the TVET colleges and are focussed on both academic and broader psychological needs of the students. In view of the above government drive and statistics, it can be noted that the government has prioritised TVET colleges to bridge the skills gap. This chapter provides the background of the study, discusses the significance of the study, provides a statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study and gives a definition of key terms.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Institutions of higher learning have an obligation to ensure that a conducive learning environment is provided to allow students to fulfil their academic goals. A conducive learning environment should cater for the students' academic and non-academic support. It is imperative to establish a comprehensive Student Support Services (SSS) that caters for the diversified population of students. Laima and Sajiene (2012) affirms this notion by indicating that the SSS is divided into academic and non-academic dimensions. The need for a SSS that addresses challenges faced by students in tertiary education is also supported by Mc-Donnel, Pleasents, Soricone and Lisa (2014) who stress that institutions of higher learning require a comprehensive student support structure which incorporates academic advising and non- academic advising as well as social services and counselling. Mc-Donnel et al. (2014) further explain that social services and counselling involves managing personal lives, provision of referrals, mental health counselling, life skills training, identifying students' social needs and addressing them.

The students support services should incorporate all the important aspects that will assist the students to integrate into the learning environment with minimum obstacles. Mc-Donnel et al. (2014) present the most important components found within the SSS which includes career designing services, academic student information and counselling services, foreign language centres, library services and open learning centres.

The non-academic support forms an integral part of institutions of which psychological support services is one of its key performance areas. Sajiene and Tamuliene (2012:121) indicate that "non-academic

component constitutes psychological counselling services, accommodation service, financial aid, health services and services that support students with disabilities." They further assert that the SSS allows the development of student-centred curriculum and fulfilment of students' emotional, academic, social needs and acts as a precondition for successful academic performance.

As students enter tertiary education they are entering a foreign environment and as a result they encounter many challenges as they try to settle in. This calls for interventions to be put in place to assist the learners during the integration process. Bridges (2008) asserts that institutions enrol large numbers of unprepared students who require psychological support services to assist in the process of integration into the college setting. He further asserts that research conducted in universities in the United States of America showed bias on academic deficiency without encompassing other factors such as psychosocial support that are also vital for successful completion of programs by students. Psychological support services are meant to facilitate student transition into institutions and to enhance student retention. Coates (2014) posits that psychological support services improve learner retention and academic performance. The importance of comprehensive support services also have the backing of Richburg-Hayes (2015) who indicates that research conducted in American Universities emphasised the significance of student support services such as academic advising and psychological support services as worthwhile strategies for improving students' performance.

It is essential that a student support system does exist and is readily accessible to students when needed. Mc-Donnel et al. (2014:9) point out that "a comprehensive student support is enabled through: reducing barriers to access, strengthening non-academic support, enhancing social relationships through concerted efforts, classifying student aspirations and improving commitments by institutions and supporting activities that create a student's life". There are obstacles that interfere with the utilisation of psychosocial support services. Hoyne and McNaught (2013) identifies: fear, self-conviction that their challenges cannot be addressed, previous bad experiences when they sought help and self-denial that the emotional needs do exists as some of the barriers to effective use of psychological support services. Roberts and Dunworth (2012) also point out that research indicated that students' lack of awareness of the specific psychological support services, staff and student culture differences, student vulnerability due to inadequate social skills and language skills as well as racial prejudice as some of the obstacles.

Benefits can be derived from the utilisation of psychological support services but the existing challenges need to be acknowledged. Hoyne and McNaught (2013) assert that increasing engagements within institutions' academic and psychological support is an existing challenge. They further reiterate that engagement support is positively attributed to successful retention of students while non-engagement

promotes attrition. It has also been noted that the most vulnerable students are reluctant to engage. This vulnerable group of students rarely exhibit self-help seeking behaviour. Furthermore, reiterated that some students, in particular, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, are absorbed into institutions of higher learning with inadequate pre-requisite integration skills, support structures and role models, components which are very crucial to successful completion of programmes. Students who opt not to engage in support programmes are more likely to be unsuccessful in their pursuit of academic excellence. Research has shown that students who need support most are the least likely to engage with psychosocial services (Hoyne & McNaught 2013).

Information on the available student support services should be accessible to the students. Institutions should have systems in place that will allow students to use the available support services. Roberts and Dunworth (2012) express concern that institutions of higher learning cannot merely enrol large numbers of students from different backgrounds and expect them to adjust automatically. If fruition is to be achieved, institutions should provide them with information, services and a contextually conducive environment that adjusts to students' circumstances through social inclusion.

It is not the sole mandate of universities to address the skills shortage in South Africa. Other tertiary institutions such as TVET colleges are also required to commit and produce skilled graduates. UNESCO _UNEVOC (2016) magnifies the role of TVET colleges by pointing out that the South African government utilises TVET, formerly known as the Further Education and Training Colleges (FET) system, to facilitate the integration of education and training and the enhancement of learner mobility and progression to address skills shortage. The TVET sector operates under the prescriptions of the Further Education and Training FET Colleges Act No. 16 (2006). The TVET system is aimed at providing individuals with intermediate to high level skills and as a stepping stone to higher education. In his budget speech the Minister of Higher Education and Training indicated that the government had allocated R2.205 billion for TVET Colleges for the year 2015/16 (TVET Colleges South Africa (2016). The number of students enrolled at TVET Colleges is in excess of 725 000. The government created frameworks, enacted legislation and consolidated the departments of Education and Labour under the DHET. The capitalisation of the human resources is not solely the responsibility of the government. Partnerships have been forged with businesses, organisations, trade unions, constituency bodies and delivery agents such as Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2016).

It is imperative that TVET colleges have a common standing on legislation and policies on how to establish and run the student support services structure. The structure's operations should be based on the same principles that will allow learners to realise their full potential. The SSS framework was developed

and published in April 2008. The SSS provide guidelines to support students in achieving academic success (Students Support Services Framewotk, 2009). The National Education Policy Act of 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1996) state that the basis of the SSS should be based on the following quote:

"Contribute to the full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes".

(Students Support Services Framewotk, 2009) outlines that there are several barriers to the provision of student support services in TVET Colleges. There was no uniform conceptualisation of the requirements and implications of implementing student support services. Policies and procedures are developed within colleges but there is little coordination within the TVET sector. There is lack of human and physical resources to support the provision of student support services. A handful of colleges provide student support services at all their campuses but the monitoring and reporting system is poor. The White Paper as outlined (Students Support Services Framewotk, 2009) advocate for a new framework for TVETs that includes a SSS that provides learner counselling and support services to assist students to succeed in their studies.

Majuba TVET College is one of the institutions mandated by the government to assist in this drive and it has a total of five campuses offering engineering and business programmes in Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal. In order to fulfil the government initiative the learning environment should be conducive to diversified students.

If properly implemented psychological support services will assist in improving student retention. As an employee within the TVET sector, the researcher has observed that the majority of the students come from poor backgrounds and they quit college because of the many psychosocial challenges they encounter. Coates (2014) confirms this by indicating that most students from low income backgrounds indicated psychosocial problems as the main reason for dropping out. The majority of these students are government-funded and have limited access to counselling services because of affordability.

Psychological support is an essential part of the SSS structure and contributes in assisting the students to settle in the new environment through provision of counselling services which should cater for all students with their different backgrounds. White (2011) purports that psychological support is premised on academic performance, equity, social justice and access and responding to the diversity of the enrolled

students. The current research focusses on the on-course support of the SSS framework that advocates for the provision and utilization of psychological support services to diversified learners in need.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A psychological support service is an important component of the SSS framework. Its core business is to ensure that students from different backgrounds faced with varied social challenges are not alienated within the college's environment. The majority of students enrolled at Majuba TVET College come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and rely on government funding. This was evidenced by Dr Blade Nzimande, The Minister of Higher Education and Training, who indicated that the National Aid Financial Scheme (NSFAS) has assisted a large number of students in public TVET Colleges who display academic ability but come from poor backgrounds (TVET Colleges South Africa, 2016). To cushion the challenges go hand in hand with the financial strain, academic pressure and mental health issues students may encounter, requires the establishment of a viable, accessible and feasible psychological support services. It is unclear whether psychological support services are accessible and being utilised by the students. The nature of psychological services should be clearly outlined. There are also questions on the availability of competent and qualified personnel and their role in the provision of psychological support services. There is a need to determine the role of management in supporting the core activities of the student psychological support services structure.

In view of the above the problem statement can be formulated as follows:
How effective are the psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College?

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to explore the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to and utilised by students at Majuba TVET College.
The study was designed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- To explore the nature of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College
- To ascertain the factors that compel students to seek psychological support at Majuba TVET College
- To examine the accessibility of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College
- To identify students' perception on the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College

- To explore various strategies that could be utilised to improve the provision of psychological support to students at Majuba TVET College

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were posed by the study:

- What is the nature of psychological support services provided to students at Majuba TVET College?
- What are the factors that compel students to seek psychological support?
- How accessible are the psychological support services rendered at Majuba TVET College to students?
- What are the students' perceptions on the effective provision of psychological support services at Majuba TVET College?
- What strategies can be used to improve the provision of psychological support services to students?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to ascertain the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College. In order to fulfil the government mandate of producing skilled graduates, psychological support services are required to cater for the academic and emotional needs of the students enrolled. The study will assist institutions of higher learning to enact a feasible psychological support services structure that is focussed on meeting the psychosocial needs of the learners. The study will seek to identify the nature of psychological support services rendered to students in tertiary institutions and suggest improvements. The study will further assist institutions to the need of hiring competent staff, by assisting in aligning job requirements with those outlined by the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Clearly defined guidelines to be adhered to when utilizing psychological support services will also be ascertained from the study. Relevant theories that are appropriate for effective counselling of students in a college context for use by staff will also be analysed by the study. The study will contribute to the creation of a learning environment that accommodates diversity and improves the academic performance of students. The students' academic success hinges on their emotional stability and academic support provided by the SSS.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College. As such the qualitative research approach was employed, where case study research was used as design for the study. The total number of participants was 42. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Acting Director Student Support Services, the Student Development Practitioner (SDP) and 10 Committee Members of the SSS. Convenience sampling was used to select 30 students from the college's five campuses. Semi-structured interviews were held with staff members. Focus group interviews were conducted with 30 students divided into 5 focus groups. Interviews were recorded verbatim and transcribed. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data. The themes used were derived from the research objectives and these were further divided into categories and sub-categories.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Conducive Learning Environment** - a balanced learning environment that is inclusive, comfortable, that promote personal growth and academic achievement.
- **Counselling** - a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, groups, families to accomplish mental health, wellness, education and career goals.
- **Counsellor** - an individual trained to assist other people on psychosocial advice and provide them with advice to cope with challenges they are facing.
- **Ethics** - the branch of philosophy that involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right or wrong conduct.
- **First generation students** - a student with neither parent having any education beyond high school.
- **Mental Health** - includes an individual's emotional and psychological well-being and coping mechanisms when the individual is faced with stress.
- **Practitioner -** a qualified and registered individual who practices a specific occupation or profession
- **Psychological support services** - supports the psychological and emotional wellbeing of the campus community by providing counselling and crisis interventions.
- **Session** - the contact period between a counsellor and a client where they seek to find a solution to enable the individual to function optimally.

- **Social challenge** - refers to an issue that influence and interferes with the individual's well-being that hinders the individual from operating optimally and is opposed by a considerable number of individuals within a society.
- **Student** - refers to an individual enrolled at an institution for the sole purpose of attaining a profession.

1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapter division will be as follows:

Chapter 1
This chapter contains an introduction/background of the study, the rational for the study, problem formulation, aim and objectives of the study, description of the methods used and explanation of the concepts.

Chapter 2
This chapter includes a critical review of the literature and theoretical framework from secondary sources such as books, journals, periodicals and government publication.

Chapter 3
This includes the description of and justification of the research methodology used. The research design, data collection tools, population and sample size, a description of the sampling design and ethical considerations are covered in this chapter.

Chapter 4
This section presents the findings of the study. Themes are used to analyse the data are based on the objectives of the study.

Chapter 5
This chapter covers the discussion of the results. The discussion of the results is done in comparison with the existing literature review.

Chapter 6
This covers the conclusions drawn from the study. A summary of the research and recommendations are also presented in this chapter.

1.10 SUMMARY

Chapter one covered the background to the study, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, problem statement, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of terms, abbreviations related to the study, and the study's chapter outline.

The next chapter focuses on the existing literature review.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on collating published information that is relevant to the study. The researcher aimed at identifying existing gaps on the provision of psychological support services to students in TVET Colleges. The researcher's knowledge on the study was also enhanced as the literature review comprised information from overseas journals, regional journals and the South African context. This chapter is composed of two sections: a theoretical framework and a review of related literature.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by the systems theory of psychology. The theory was propounded by von Bertalanffy in 1937 and further developed by a group of scholars such as Boulding, Rapoport and Gerard in 1954 at the Polo Alto Center for Advanced Study in Behavioural Sciences (Krippner & Lazslo, 1998). Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008) describes a systems theory as being comprised of smaller elements which are also referred to as subsytems and which are components that make up the larger supra-system. The above notion clearly indicates that individuals are part of a subsystem of the larger family system and that systems form a hierachy of related systems.

In alluding to the preceding assertions on systems theory, Arthur and McMahon (2005) describe the systems theory framework as an approach that has significant influence on individuals' career development and includes the individual, social and the societal context. Systemic psychology has allowed for further development of the study of interpersonal features of human behaviour and provides an interpretation of these processes with the intra-psychic dynamics and the personal history of individuals. Keys and Lockhart (1999) are of the notion that the systems theory expands our comprehension of the individual's psychological development to a view that positions the individual within the context of relationships and interactions with other people. Arthur and McMahon (2005) further indicate that the system is greater than the sum of its parts. The client-seeking behaviour modifications are regarded as agents of their own transformation. The systems theory challenges counsellors to expand their role and levels of interaction in multicultural counselling. Nicoll (1993) affirms that clients' concerns are conceptualised from their own cultural perspective and when there is congruence with the organisational perspectives in which they thrive, contentedness and positive adjustments occur. A system constitutes established roles, relationships and patterns of behaviour that the system may wish to maintain. The interconnectedness suggests that change in one part of the system results in change in other parts of the same system (Keys & Lockhart 1999).

The assumption is that an effective system underscores the role of each component. Stichweh (2011:1) describes the relationship within as constituting,

"Interdependency of the parts of the system, the reference of any structure and process in a system to the environments of the system, equilibrium and adaptedness and continuous re-adaptations to environmental demands as core elements of understanding the system and self-organisation of as system as the principal way it responds to external intervention."

The above quote can also be regarded as relevant to the provision of psychological support services. Students are part of a large system that constitute policies enacted by the government, which college management, staff, parents, financial institutions and regulatory bodies and fellow students must then follow. The systems theory embraces the role of all these stakeholders in the provision of psychological support services and other learning activities. There must be congruence between the stakeholders and structures that are in existence if the psychological needs of the students are to be met. Adjustments are bound to take place in order to accommodate any change in any issues affecting how the institutions are run. However these should not be at the expense of the students' needs.

Stichweh (2011) maintains that there are four possible formations of systems. The formations are identified as adaptive systems, goal attainment, and integration of systems elements and maintenance of long-term patterns. The most important fact to note is that system should adapt to any environmental changes. The system should aim at attaining specific goals by integrating the parts of the system and sustaining pressure from the environment.

The provision of psychological support services should not be rigid, but rather adapt to the dynamic changes in the field attributed to policy changes and changes in students' psychological needs. These changes could be a result of economic, political and social transformations that impact student's successful integration into tertiary institutions. Systems theory does not alienate but focuses on synergy.

Important relationships exist between the system and the environment. Krippner and Laszlo (1998:11) define the term environment as "the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affects the system as well as those objects whose attributes are changed by the behaviour of the systems." The above statement signifies the role of the environment on the provision of psychological support services. The institution's structures should be aware of its key environs and effect relevant changes when the need arises. It is essential that individuals responsible continually scan the environment to avoid lagging behind changes in student counselling.

2.3 STUDENTS SUPPORT SERVICES: AN OVERVIEW

Higher institutions comprise of private and public institutions. Most students who enrol in private institutions are responsible for funding their own studies. Public institutions of higher learning are government-funded and they enrol the majority of students.

There are still major concerns with students' achievements because of the challenges they encounter in the learning environment. This was alluded to by Brock (2010) who indicates that access to higher education by individuals has increased significantly over the last few years but students' achievement is still a concern. He further states that government-funded instituitions accomodate the majority of the students. The researcher noted with concern that a minimal number of public institutions of higher learning and TVET colleges have the capacity to foster students' intellectual and individual growth.

The diversified student populace enroled in public institutions is faced with varying challenges and which require concerted efforts from the various key stakeholders to intervene in enacting a comprehensive SSS. The student support services should foster academic achievement through the provision of a support system that counter the students' challenges. This is supported by Young (2009) who bemoans the challenges faced by students in tertiary institutions in their pursuit of academic success and further emphasised the need for the government and other key stakeholders to establish comprehensive SSS, which should cater for psychological and emotional needs of the students.

Students enrolled at institutions of higher learning have diverse backgrounds and they differ in age and socio-economic status. These differences in demographic factors have a significat impact on their academic success. The majority of TVET college students come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. A SSS that is non-discriminatory and caters for the students' academic, and psychological needs is vital if students are to succeed. Tamuliene (2014) conveys the need for student psychological support services more specifically for non-traditional age students. It can be noted from the above assertions that if institutions of higher learning are to produce successful graduates there is the need to establish student support services.

Tamuliene (2014) describes student support as a system that is made available by institutions of higher learning, which caters for the students' academic and emotional needs and it is regarded as a requirement for enhancing the students' academic success. The National Education Act (Ministry of Education, 1996) outlines the significance of the student support services as a tool that should fully contribute to students' development in specific areas that encourage individual growth, moral, social, political and economic development based on principles of democracy, human rights and resolution of disputes in a

peaceful manner. It is essential for government institutions, TVET Colleges included, to establish comprehensive support services that constitute academic and non-academic support services.

The student support services should cover the whole spectrum of student needs as this is regarded as a precondition for student achievement. The focus should not be confined to the academic part only but should include non-academic issues such as the learner's psychological well-being. Tamuliene (2014) identifies two categories: academic support and non-academic support. The academic support function is aimed at fulfilling the student's emotional and social needs that are directly linked to the learning process. Non-academic support provides support for the student's emotional and social needs. These are not directly linked to their learning process but have a strong bearing on how they perform academically. Miller, Smith and Nichols (2011) distinquish between academic advising and non academic advising by pointing out that academic advising includes assisting of students in attaining educational goals through the exploitation of the institution's resources. Miller et al. (2011) further explain that academic success is measured through persistence on the part of the student. Non-academic advising includes psychological support services, focussing on improving study skills and alleviating problems that interfere with the student's performance. It encompasses the application of mental health and psycholological techniques that address the student's emotional stability and their personal growth to ensure they yield positive academic results (Miller et al. 2011). Brock (2010) also mentions that SSS include provision of financial assistance to improve students' comprehension of basic skills instruction, career counselling and the mentoring of students on campus who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is imperative that a balance should exist and be maintained when enacting and implementing student support services. The services should encompass all the important components that promote student success. Richburg-Hayes (2015) asserts that student support services involve: academic advising, student access centres and technology-based support. It is aimed at helping students choose careers, assisting students to find a balance between studies and responsibilities and on how to interact with their lecturers. The provision of an inclusive student support services is also backed by Russo-Glercher (2013:5) who states that "student support services is vital in assisting students and it encompasses orientation, student registration, recruitment, tutoring, personal and career counselling and student retention".

It can be noted that a comprehensive SSS covers a number of aspects which are crucial to the students' academic success. The student support services packages include academic support, financial support and most importantly psychological support. Failure to provide comprehensive support services impacts adversely on the students' quest to fulfil their academic dreams. SSS should be provided from the day students enrol until they leave college.

Institutions are faced with quite a number of challenges in their attempt to establish comprehensive SSS. The implementation of such services requires input from the key stakeholders. In the TVET sector input is needed from the DHET, college management, students welfare boards, student support services practitioners, health institutions and from other colleges. It is imperative that the crafting of such a crucial student support system be guided by existing legislation and policies.

The SSS Framework (DoE, 2009) asserts that in South Africa the development of comprehensive support services has not been consistently and uniformly implemented in the 50 public TVET Colleges. The South African governemnt enacted the Student Support Services Framework in 2008 with input from key stakeholders such as Provincial and College Student Support Services practitioners using policy documents published under the tutelage of the Department of Basic Education. The framework emphasised recognition of the diversity of the student population. The student support services should be accessible to the diversified student population to allow for the provision of quality education.

The White Paper as stated in the SSS Framework (DoE, 2009) advocates for a new comprehensive student support services framework that focusses on learner counseling, provides better advice on career options and ensures that previously disadvantaged groups are catered for to fulfill their academic dreams (Student Support Services Framework 2009)

Students who have access to SSS tend to yield better results compared to their counterparts who are deprived of such services. It is imperative that institutions are aware of their students' needs before designing student support programmes. The students' needs vary from individual to individual. Most students enrolled at public institutions and more particularly in TVET colleges come from low socio-economic backgrounds. The students' background determines the nature of support they require. This notion is supported by Miller et al. (2011) who accentuate the need to approach student support services as a customer service. Research conducted at De Vry University points out that the best performing institutions of higher learning attribute their success to the tailor-making of low-income and first generation students' educational experiences. The components that should be encompassed in the service stress the need for early interventions by the institution's student support services on areas that interfere with students' learning. Brock (2010) is of the notion that institutions that have the best-prepared students also have the best guidance whereas instituions that enrol the least-prepared students also provide less psychological guidance. This challenges institutions to establish effective student support services that cater for different students' needs more especially in publicly-funded institutions where the majority from low-income families enrol.

The FET Colleges Act (South Africa - 2006) advocates for student support based on the following points:

- The establishment of Student Representative Councils (SRC) in the governing bodies that constitutes the Council and the Academic Board of the College.
- Student Admission policy, the TVET Council should facilitate the development of a College Admission Policy. The policy will determine entry requirements for the different programmes.
- Student Code of Conduct (DoE. 2009:2).

The Act includes the above points as core to the operations of the student support services but provides little guidance on how these key points will assist in the provision of comprehensive student support services. It requires considerable effort to align the students' requirements with the institution set-up and the role of other key stakeholders such college management, other colleges, the DHET and policy makers. Challenges are always faced in attempting to commit the establishment of a comprehensive student support unit. Some of the barriers are highlighted in the publication Student Support Services Framework under Thutong (2009:3) and are on an audit conducted in February 2006 at the 50 TVET Colleges in South Africa The following are identified as barriers to the provision of student support services:

- "It is the sole mandate of the institution to develop policies and procedures and this renders the student support services inconsistent and hinders coordination of such services in the TVET sector.
- There are limited financial resources for the development, operating and maintenance of a comprehensive and effective student support service.
- The student support services structures are marred by inadequate physical resources as well as qualified personnel committed to the provision of student support services.
- Different key stakeholders regard student support services as a peripheral service that does not have a significant role in the college's operations.
- At the time of the audit it was noted that only a few under-resourced campuses were offering the service".

The student support structure should empower learners to to be responsible for their learning experience and the learning should go beyond the institution's parameters. This is supported by Miller et al. (2011) who advocate for the establishment and sustanance of a shared sense of community with regard to the provision of student support services. A sense of shared community allows the development of a campus culture that encourages diversity through non-discrimination. This allows students to take ownership of their learning experience and to utilize their academic experiences to improve their lives and that of the communities in which they live.

Miller at al. (2011) emphasise on the main duties of the student support services in tertiary institutions. It can be noted that student support services is the main organ and psychological support services are a branch. The core business of the SSS structure is to cater for the various needs of the students from the day they are enrolled at these institutions. The main categories are academic support and non-academic support. Academic support focuses on structures or a system that allows the learner to perform academically and is directly linked to academic issues. The institutions need to provide facilities such as resource centres and guidance on how to study effectively.

The academic performance of learners does not solely rely on this form of support. It is imperative to note that students come from different socio-economic backgrounds and that they are also faced with social and emotional problems that interfere with their learning. Psychological support is an essential part of the SSS. It assists in addressing the emotional needs of the students by provision of counselling services by non-academic staff.

2.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

Tertiary institutions should open doors to all deserving students regardless of their race, religion, creed and socio-economic status. The institutions should cultivate student empowerment non-discriminately. This is supported by Young (2009) who affirms that South Africa has witnessed a surge in student numbers enrolling at institutions of higher learning. These enrolments are becoming more representative of the general population which was previously disadvantaged by the apartheid regime. The democratically-elected governmnet has the mandate to re-author the racial segregation effected by the previous regime, that deprived the majority of quality education. Resources are being allocated to redress the past injustices. Many other challenges still exist in these tertiary institutions as they battle to provide adequate student support services to cater for the psychological needs of students Young (2009) further highlights that new legislation advocates admission policies that promote access to tertiary institutions, but African students, the black majority, are still faced with a number challenges in their quest for academic success.

Equal opportunities are a necessity in any democratic society for the benefit of all. Students should be enrolled on merit not on their socio-economic standing. Students' backgrounds have significant influence on their integration and successful completion of their studies. Tamuliene (2014:89) asserts that "non-university higher education are chosen by students from poor-academic backgrounds, lower socio-economic status and are attended students who are first generation. These students from lower academic achievement, poor economic background have a high drop out risk". Young (2009) bemoans the limited research in South Africa with regard to students' mental health issues despite its significant role in

interfering with the academic success of the students. Students at tertiary institutions are burdened by poverty and rising unemployment in South Africa. Young (2009:480) further asserts that "The chance to study at tertiary is viewed as a lifetime opportunity to improve one's economic status and in the wake of all this many black students experience intense pressure as they try to fulfil their academic goals". These experiences coupled with financial difficulties and academic demands experienced by these students, make anxiety and mental health problems inevitable. These students could utilize and derive benefits from comprehensive psychological support services.

Miller et al. (2011) note that first-generation students from low-income families have shown greater anxieties, psychological and college problems compared to their counterparts during the process of adjustment to college life. This is compounded by deprivation of social and financial support. It is imperative to expose them, as early as possible to SSS availabe in campuses and on how to access them. However at public TVET colleges, which are government-funded, where access to external services is restricted

It can be noted that first generation students of low-income status are faced with many challenges as they enter tertiary education. Stebbleton and Soria (2013) regard the following as some of the characteristics of first generation students:

- The chances are that they are more likely to be older and come from minority backgrounds and have a disability. In view of this statement it is the position of the researcher that this does not apply in the South African context as most first generation students are from the impoverished black majority.
- Single parents and financially independent from their parents. This also contradicts the African context where the majority are financially dependent on government funding and grants.
- First generation students tend to have a lower academic preparation and frequently need to subsidise their income by working.
- They have multiple barriers to tertiary education success related to family, social, cultural and academic challenges.
- They tend to be alienated and these feelings of isolation result in depression and loneliness.
- As a result of family and work demands, first generation students tend to be less academically engaged compared to their counterparts.

There are a number of challenges faced especially by first-generation students. Akhurst and Liebenberg (2010:576), point out that "as first generation students enter into the fray, the environment is totally

different especially in the first semester. Sharing the same residence, being apart from family support, sharing college resources with students of higher economic status may evoke self-doubt and affect their confidence." These difficulties have a greater input on the student's social integration. Akhurst and Liebenberg (2010) also state that the South African community cannot ignore the impact of HIV/AIDS in families where the students have to deal with grief and bereavement.

Challenges experienced by students during their tenure at learning institutions vary. The problems maybe academic, social or psychological and may have a negative impact on the student' academic performance. Young (2009) conducted research that indicated that mental health issues are common among students attending institutions of higher learning. This is supported by large numbers of students who approach institutions' psychological support services, seeking assistance regarding their social and personal issues. These mental health problems include depression, suicidal ideation as well as post trauma stress from sexual assault.

Student support, with particular emphasis on the provision of psychological support services, is key to academic success and it serves as a pre-condition for integration of students into higher institutions. Tamuliene (2014) stresses the provision of conditions that allow students to complete their programmes regardless of their social class and financial status. This is supported byAkhurst and Liebenberg (2010) who conducted research at University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research indicates that first year students more particularly those from low socio-economic status are faced with a number of difficulties that interfere with their learning experience. The challenges constitute academic, psychological and financial problems. Academic problems are a result of work overload, time management and anxiety relating to exams. Psychological difficulties include loneliness, family problems, home-sickness and most notably relationships. Julal (2013) also affirms that individuals studying in institutions of higher learning are more likely to experience a number of significant stressors. The stressors have a strong bearing on the student's academic performance, students' decisions to remain at the institution and their psychological well being. Cilliers, Pretorius and van der Westhuizen (2010) maintain that students are faced with challenges that interfere with their pursuit of academic success and these constitute social and mental challenges.

These students struggle to adapt during their first year at institutions of higher learning, they struggle to cope with examination demands. They need assistance in the form of emotional support and study skills.

The diversified student population makes it difficult for some groups to fully integrate in the learning set-up. These challenges require different psychological programmes that are tailor-made to solve individual

students' needs. Tamuliene (2014) is of the belief that non-traditional age students (older students) are faced with many adverse experiences during their tenure at institutions of higher learning. The notable challenges they face include trying to strike an equillibrium between family and academic demands culminating in the students skipping lectures and facing the eventuality of dropping out. Tamuliene (2014) further asserts that older students feel alienated from the life experiences at institutions of higher learning and struggle to fit in groups because of their age differences. He also opines that traditional age students with lower academic achievement are faced with non-attendance issues and they also lack motivation to pursue their studies. This also renders them as another vulnerable group that is at the risk of quitting if psychological interventions are not administered.

During the provision of psychological support services, issues affecting the students should be identified. The psychological programmes should be more specific on the issues facing a particular student. Institutional policies should be put in place to ensure that the services are used effectively. Stebleton and Soria (2013) suggest that students, with low self-efficacy are likely to perform poorly and such individuals tend not to seek psychological help. Self-efficacy also determines whether a student will integrate well enough at an institution of higher learning. Bandura (1971) describes self-efficacy as learners confidence and their capability to execute academic tasks, studying for the exams and completion of their programs. The assumption is that self-efficacy also determines the extent of the students peserverence when faced with obstacles and their coping strategies. Petcu, Chezan, and Lee (2015) declare that a change in policies and awareness has resulted in a more feasible approach for students who are intellectually challenged.

Psychological support sevices should be made available by institutions of higher learning to those students in need if these challenges being faced by students are to be adequately addressed. Shiluabane, Ruiter, Bos, van den Borne, James and Reddy (2012) point out that there are quite number of psychological challenges that face students in South Africa. These challenges include lack of knowledge on availability of psychological support services practitioners, interpersonal conflict and perceived accusations of negative behavior. In addition Shiluabane et al. (2012:180) attribute the challenges to psychological factors such as "disturbed family, relationships with parents, lack of social support, lack of trust in peers, anger, frustrations and hopelessness".

The above views indicate the diversity of students attending TVET colleges. At Majuba TVET College there are no selection criterions as long as the students meet the basic requirements for the preferred programme. The goal is equip the students with vocational skills that render them employable. This

further illustrates the challenges in providing psychological support services that cater for the different students.

It can be noted that there are benefits that can be derived from the use of psychological support services by students at institutions of higher learning. Russo-Glercher (2013) is of the notion that psychological support services play a crucial role in decreasing attrition. Russo-Glercher (2013:6) tables statistics that show there is a high increase in the number of students reporting psychological challenges. The main problems reported were anxiety and depression. His study also indicated that mental health issues were coercing students to withdraw from college.

Psychological support services should not be confined to first-generation and non-traditional students only but other students cohorts. This is supported by Tamuliene (2014) who points out that that traditional age, fulltime students who had no work, no family responsibilities and lacked intrinsic motivation to study were in dire need of counselling. Tamuliene (2014) further asserts that non-university tertiary education was normally chosen by students with poor academic background, students with lower socio-economic status and first generation students. These groups are regarded as having a higher drop out risk.

This refers to the different groups enrolled at TVET colleges who are in need of psychological support services. The researcher, contrary to Tamuliene (2014) whose assertion that students who attend vocational college would have performed poorly, is of the view this is not entirely true in the South African context. South African Universities do not have the capacity to accommodate all students who would have performed well. Psychological support services are central in ascertaining students' experiences in TVETs. Tamuliene (2014:90) reiterates that "SSS in its entirety allows students to successfully integrate into tertiary institutions, fosters accumulating positive experience during their tenure and facilitates transition from higher education into the labour market". Student support in the form of psychological support is vital in alleviating challenges faced by these vulnerable groups.

The fact that TVET colleges enrol students with varying challenges means psychological support services are essential. Mental health issues interfere with the learners' well-being and their academic performance. This is supported by Alexander and Martin (2002) who indicate that South Africa's seventeen institutions, including universities and technikons, originally provided counselling services focussed on alleviating the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic. This has since changed with all most all the institutions offering the services. The study also highlights the wide scope of counselling that tertiary institutions should cover.

These social ills may also hinder the integration process of students in tertiary institutions. This emphasises the need to provide psychological support services if the students are to perform academically. Akhurst and Liebenberg (2010) affirm that first year students with lower socio-economic status are more likely to experience and report numerous mental problems. Challenges they face include academic problems, worrying about exams, psychological issues and challenges in getting financial assistance. The fact that these tertiary institutions are foreign territory to them may lead to students developing self-doubt and low self-esteem.

Student diversity should be considered when enacting student support services if these services are to be utilised effectively by the students. Chong (2011:10) is of the notion that comprehensive understanding of all the aspects affecting the wellbeing of students with diverse cultural, language, different backgrounds and class is essential for the provision of psychosocial services. Students' emotional and psychosocial wellbeing has a positive impact on their learning experience. The individual student's capacity to adapt and manage changes in culture and the environment and his/her social engagements has a strong bearing on how he/she performs academically.

2.5 CHALLENGES IN ADMINISTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Institutions of higher learning particularly TVET colleges, are faced with quite a number of challenges in their drive to render psychological support services. The challenges may include the context in which the services are being administered. The challenges may emanate from the legislation and policies in place, institutional structure and the role of key stakeholders. These obstacles to provision of psychological support services is backed by Roberts, Boldly and Dunsworth (2015) who conducted research conducted in Australia on the appropriateness of the psychological support services available. The researchers posit that students could be made more functional by provision of a more student-centred service structure and delivery. However the research results also indicate low levels of students' satisfaction even when institutions provide a wide range of resources and support. They concluded that providing a range of services would not automatically improve student experiences. The students' capacity to adapt and manage changes and the environment has a strong bearing on how they perform academically.

Barriers to successful utilization of the services include perceived level of assistance by the institutions, the underlying culture and context in which the psychological support services are offered. This indicates the need to have a support structure that addresses students' unique needs.

The effective use of psychological support services requires concerted efforts from the institutions to make the services available timeously. Psychological support services offered by institutions should accommodate the entire student cohort enrolled. Young (2009) referring to research conducted at Rhodes University, pointed out that some of the challenges faced during the provision of psychological support, were that the majority of counselling practitioners were whites yet mental health issues were rife among the black students. The institutional set up with white practitioners as dominant staff obstructed the black students from seeking and utilizing the psychological support services as they were uncomfortable. This was also the case with their white counterparts. Young (2009) purports that some African students view seeking psychological help as a western practice that does not exist in their African culture. This calls for drastic transformation of counselling services by contextualising it to the students' culture. As indicated in the research, South Africa students attending public institutions are in dire need of psychological support services.

Contrary to Tamuliene (2014), whose assertions that non-traditional age studens are in need of psychological support services as they pursue their studies, contemporary SSS, psychological support included, are more inclined to address the psychological needs of traditional age students despite the fact that the number of non-traditional age students is increasing. Research conducted by Darmody and Fleming (2009) indicates that part-time students received inadequate support services which emanates from such important services being offered during normal college hours.

Psychological counseling theories used in institutions should revolve around the students' background and contex. The students' context has to determine the psychological programmes to be used. Akhurst and Liebenberg (2010) explain that in the UK and USA, the trait factor and the decision making model have been employed when administering counselling services. The model views the individual seeking psychological help as an autonomous agent of their own change. These have been criticised for the wholesale application in the South African context which has been challenged many times. Mc Mahon and Watson (2010:450) point out that "South Africa has been against the continued over-reliance on the adoption of counselling models from abroad that do not suit the local context".

There is need for radical transformation to come up with indigenised approaches that will suit South Africa's context. Such practices cripple the provision psychological services application as they do not fit in with prevailing demands that are based on on-going transitions on issues such as the economy or, socio-political issues that determine an individual's psychological needs. Constructivist models of self and experience are regarded as more relevant and more helpful for the South African context. (Akhurst

and Liebenberg 2010:575) recommends "the use of the constructivism model which recognises the socially negotiated nature of the narrations and discourses that influence the individual. The model views the individual as an open system that is constantly interacting with the environment, seeking stability through on-going change and they describe the person's social-symbolic relatedness and the quest to take cognisance of the individual's life-time development".

Partnerships with relevant key stakeholders are crucial in establisihing and administering psychological support services. The practititoners responsible for administering psychological support services should have the necessary knowledge and expertise. Means to measure the effectiveness of psychological support services on learners should be established. Burkard, Gillem and Martinez (2012:137) declare that "it is difficult to have sufficient information on the level at which institutions implement the psychological services." Also of concern is that there is no clarity in the training required by these psychological support services practititoners on how to implement comprehensive support services for the diversified student population. Burkard et al. (2012), commenting on research conducted in the USA, indicate that no evaluation efforts have emerged to ascertain the effectiveness of psychological support services or to determine if any correlation exist between students and the intended student performance.

Institutions should take cognisance of the important role of psyhcological support staff. Their job description will assist in determining the core focus areas. (Burkard et al. 2012) further indicate that psychological support services staff spent more time on non-psychological issues and were deprived of an academic calendar with important dates for providing psychological support.

Ethical issues when discharging psychological support services cannot be ignored. Comprehensive psychological support services should adhere to clear guidelines that do not infringe the students' rights. These ethics are to be observed by both the practitioners and the students.

There are obstacles that coerce students to refrain from utilising psychological support services. (Stebleton and Soria, 2013:9) point out that "low self-esteem students' lack the confidence and they suffer academically as they are faced with so many challenges that include family responsibility, weak study behaviours and demands emanating from the study environment." These types of students are reluctant to seek psychological help. They further suggest that issues related to psychological disorders can be sensitive and some students may not, therefore seek help. They also highlight confidentiality, limited access to the services, location, myths with regard to the purpose and stereotypes on use of counselling as some of the major barriers to provision of this vital service.

Erguner-Tekinalp, Leuwerke and Terzi (2009:6) identify the following barriers to implementing counseling services based on studies conducted in the United States and Turkey. "

- Lack of comprehensive programmes

- Non-supportive colleagues and administrators

- Inappropriate counselor duties

- Insufficient attention to cultural concerns

- Scarce effective research

- Lack of developmental theory

- Little focus on prevention efforts

- Lack of coordinated efforts

- Poorly defined roles in legislation and mandates that create confusion".

There is no uniformity on the use of psychological support services by students. Ibrahimovic and Potter (2011) assert that there is a clear boundary with regard to academic achievement between low-income students and those from higher income families. Students from low-income families may not explore the full range of psychological support services available basing their judgements on false assumptions about their competence and their fear of outcomes on decisions. Maree and Maree (2010) conducted research that indicates that a lack of vision and a unified career counselling strategy are inherent in institutions. In the context of South Africa, career patterns favour previously privileged groups at the expense of the majority. This further highlights inadequate coordination, lack of information and the need for strategic policy leadership in this field. Christopher, Howell and Page (2014:1) note "the paradox that students from economically high status backgrounds have the least need for psychological support services and yet they enjoy the most access to psychology practitioners and at the same time they also supplement the institution's resources by engaging private practice". They further bemoan the restricted availability and

accessibility of college psychological support services, more especially to those from low-economic status which sums up the indeaquacy of psychological support services.

Lack of qualified personnel is one of the obstacles that interferes with the provision of psychological support services to students. The document, Student Support Services Framework (DoE, 2009) points out that most student support services in TVET Colleges suffer from inadequate capital and human resources for the provision of student support services, including psychological support services. Some of the staff members responsible for the provision of psychological support services do not have the necessary expertise and experience and hence their effectiveness is questionable. Key individuals and institutions regard the student support services as ancillary and not as a core service. The system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the student support services is clear and this facilitates key stakeholders to come up with plausible strategies to improve the provision of psychological support services.

Workload is one of the challenges that affects provision of psychosocial support to students. This is supported by Brock (2010) who asserts that there is major concern in public institutions on the counselor student ratio. The ratio is unfavorable with the practitioner having to attend to a large number of students which compromises the quality of srvices being offered.

Psychological support services should be easily accessible to students and the institutions should have a clear map on how this can be done. Russo- Glercher (2013) indicates that in tertiary institutions students are unaware of the availability of psychological support services. Golardi (2013) also states that although a number of support services are available to all students, they may not be accessible at the time and place convenient for students. Research conducted indicated the availability of counselling services but only a few students utilise them; learners were not aware on how to access them (Gewer, 2010:6). Bailey, Jaggers and Jenkins (2015:1) assert that "most students make their own choices about enrolments but inadequate career guidance being provided by institutions contributes significantly to indecisiveness and varied career pathways through college."

The above discussion highlights the obstacles that hinder the use of psychological support services. Institutions should do more to create awareness of this crucial service. Psychosocial services are not confined to emotional wellbeing of students but also in assisting in choosing their careers. Institutions should re-strategize on ways to interact with the students and in coming up with support services required by learners.

Institutions are expected to respect the job description of their personnel. Overloading the individual with other tasks that are not confined to their profession not only serves as a demotivator but impacts the individual's area of expertise. Mc-Donough (2005) asserts that counsellors' jobs have been compromised. Counsellors view resolving students' psychological issues as their core business, but they are forced to take up administrative duties. This indicates the need to respect and draw up a job description that focuses on provision of psychological support services.

2.6 BENEFITS OF USING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The utilisation of psychological support services not only serves the student but also benefits the institution and the nation at large. It is general knowledge that individuals who are healthy both mentally and physically perfom optimally. The students will make the grade and the institution's pass rate will also improve. This is supported by Miller et al. (2011) who indicate that pass rates are generally lower among low-income status students compared to their more affluent peers. Student support in the form of psychological support assists these disadvantaged students to attain higher pass rates. The use of trained student counselors assists in developing the student's roadmap to success.

Poor mental health interferes with the students' academic achievements. Young (2009) indicate that female students seeking counseling services exhibited greater distress than their male counterparts and this emphasises the significant role played by the provision of psychological support services. Tamuliene (2014) suggests that student support is the leeway to successful completion of studies and is regarded as a precondition for students to adapt to their learning environment. Student support and, psychological support services area key to successful integration of students into institutions of higher learning. Tamuliene (2014) further states that these services foster accumulation of positive experiences by students that are ideal for student success. Non-traditional students would significantly benefit from emotional support groups. (Tamuliene 2014) underscores that emotional support groups are an essential psychological support service technique that allows troubled students to share their experiences on how to strike a balance between family responsibilites, work and academic life. In order to promote smooth transition by students into tertiary institutions, it is imperative for these institutions to focus on the establishmnent of student support structures that provide effective psychological support services.

When students are faced with social challenges that require psychological support theyoften end up giving up their studies. McMahon (2008) emphasises that psychological support services are recognised as a core function of the student support services and it are correlated to issues such increased access and student retention. Variations on students performance are attributed more to the student's socio-economic

background than the student's cognitive factors. This clearly shows the need for psychological support services if the students are to perform academically (Akhurst & Liebenberg 2010).

Availability of counseling programmess that suit the students' context yields positive outcomes. According to Erguner-Tekinalp et al. (2009) research conducted in the USA and Turkey has shown that institutions with counseling programmess that are well-structured and thoroughly implemented are linked to positive resuts in the areas of personal, career, social and academic development. It is to the institution's detriment if it turns a blind eye to the significant role played by well-structured and vibrant pyschological support services. Burkard, et al. (2012) emphasise the role of psychological support services by highlighting that comprehensive counseling services facilitate career planning and personal growth. They further assert that total implementation of counseling programmes correlates with positive and acceptable behavior by the students. Kolenovic, Linderman and Karp (2013) suggest that structured and comprehensive support services improve college throughput.   A comprehensive support service includes the provision of psychological support services.   Institutional agents usually encourage students by providing interpersonal connections, advice and motivation. Students tend to fare well if they are given the opportunity to interact with professional psychological practitioners.   These practitiioners provide them with information and social support. In particular, psychological support services are more important for students from low socio-economic status. The same assumption applies to TVET Colleges.

If institutions are to achieve higher certification rates it is mandatory for them to establish a comprehensive support service that also offers psychosocial support to the learners. Cilliers et al. (2010) accentuate that psychological support services at tertiary institutions are mandated to provide valuable services to the students, to foster and allow them to optimise their academic potential. Mental and academic issues are often linked . It is important that the institution's psychological support service staff are aware that, in most cases, students who need and seek academic support could also be experiencing other personal difficulties. This renders psychological support services a vital instrument that has significant positive impact on student certification and rates. Cilliers et al. (2010) emphasise the importance of student counseling. Their study indicatea that students who approached and utilized the student centre for psychological help showed improved academic performance.

2.7 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

There are a number of strategies that can be put to use by insitutions in order to improve the rendering of psychological support services. The strategies should encompass the wide spectrum of the learning

context and range from the institutional approach, student support services practitioners and the students themselves. Miller et al. (2011) asserts that students should be involved in college pre-programmes such as orientation and as this assists in alleviating anxieties and accelerates the integration process. Miller et al. (2011), commenting on studies conducted at DeVry University indicates that while the university did not provide on-site counselors, it had a 24 hour facility. Students had access to this facility for their personal issues such as relationships and referrals for any kind of mental problems.

It is crucial that institutions of higher learning are committed to improving the provision of counseling services to students. It is not the sole mandate of the student psychological staff to ensure that such services are effectively rendered to students. Bailey et al. (2015) report that instituitions encounter a number of challenges in enacting a comprehensive support service that also values the importance of psychological support services. To avert these challenges, institutions require management that is committed to engaging student support services and staff across the college. On that note, it is important to learn how other similar institutions establish the services. This calls for partnership amongst all the stakeholders including the HPCSA.

In order to ensure that students benefit from the provision of psychological support services, it is imperative that institutions draw a clear line between academic and non-academic services. Tamuliene (2014) explains the need to have a clear distinction on theoretical design with regard to student support services. The core activities enshrined in the academic design should be totally different from the non-academic design. Academic design involves career designing, academic student information and career counseling services, student admission and integration into studies and library services. Non-academic design includes psychological counseling services, accomodation, financial support and legal counseling. A clear distinction between these two main services will capacitate tertiary institutions to focus on the role of each without creating any confusion.

Orientation plays a pivotal role in ensuring that students are aware of the existence of psychological support services and how to access them. This is emphasised by Britto and Rush (2013) who assert that in order to use psychological support services, it is necessary for the institution to conduct orientation with new students. Face-to-face orientation allows students to familiarise themselves with the institution's settings and different processes to be followed which facilitates the integration process. Orientation informs students of the availability of services available at the campus. Britto and Rush (2013) assert that greater emphasis shoud be placed on the training of staff members involved in the discharging of student support services. The training would allow the staff members to comprehend the unique context and

specific psychological needs of each student and how to use the available resources and channels for the benefit of the student. The staff members should be able to address students' needs by considering the student's cognitive, affective and psychological behaviors.

Psychological programmess should be designed with the student context in mind if positive results are to be reaped.

McMahon and Watson (2008) postulate that South Africa has been over-reliant on western individualistic theories and models which have been criticised for their application in the South African context. If the psychological support services are to be effectively used, it is essential that indigenised approaches or models that are culture-sensitive and embedded in the African culture be used as foundation. They further recommend that the constructivism theory is more relevant for student counseling. The constructivist approach promotes interaction and dynamic approaches to counseling and allows the individual students to construct their own context based on their experiences, values and beliefs. McMahon and Watson (2008) further recommend that national programmes should be developed and implemented. The provision of psychological support services should be a nationally coordinated effort and cascaded to tertiary institutions. There is also need to improve resourse allocation, both financial and, physical, and the student counselor ratio should be reduced.

Professional bodies govern how practitioners conduct themselves during the execution of their duties. A breach to sanctioned guidelines may result in institutions and practitioners facing legal action from the indiviudals. Maree and Maree (2012) convey the importance of adhering to the various bodies that govern how professionals should conduct themselves. All counselors should be registered with the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA). This association is affiliated to such bodies as the American Psychological Association (APA), British Psychological Society (BPS) and other societies. The counselors should also belong to the HPCSA, which also ensures that the practitioners do not breach the prescribed ethics.

Knowledge of the existing psychological theories in the South African context should be added through research. This will equip the relevant practitioners with knowledge and skills to suit the context from which the services are being provided. Maree and Maree (2012) advocate for all tertiary institutions to create more relevant theories and practices and to do more research in order to capacitate practitioners to discharge their duties adhering to the following principles:
- Equity - they should cater for all individuals without favouring a specific group:
- Redress - the counsellors should consider the previous imbalances: and

- Access – the counselling services should be freely available to all students in need and, if possible, the sessions should use the preferred language of the student and the practitioners should speak at least one indigenous language.

There is a great need to renew counsellor's practice and their training programmes should be revised continuously to accommodate the changing psychological landscape.

Institutions of higher learning play a significant role in ensuring that psychological support services are discharged non-discriminately. Cilliers et al. (2010) state that the tertiary education population comprise of students from different cultures, races and religion. Psychological support services should be accessible to the diverse student population in a non-discriminatory manner. They further state that availability of resources is essential and it is imperative that institutions conduct a benchmarking research that can be further used to evaluate the quality of psychological support services provided to the students. Cilliers et al. (2010) also put forward the need to conduct on-going evaluations in order to assess effectiveness of the services provided.

Practitioners are required to adhere to set guidelines when conducting their duties. It is important that they are under the guidance of supervisors who should be available to support them. Research conducted by Duncan, Brown-Rice and Bardhoshi (2014) emphasise the need for both administrative and clinical supervision for psychological support services practitioners. Administrative supervision focusses on the policies and procedures governing the institutions and is normally performed by the institution's administrators who posses adequate knowledge of psychological support services. Clinical supervision entails an intervention administered by senior members of the profession and they also provide training to improve practitioners'professional competency. Clinical supervision arms the practitioners through professional and personal gains, including enhanced counseling skills, sense of professional support and job enrichment. Supervision is regarded as an essential part that facilitates professional development and ethical decision-making that will benefit both the students that the key stakeholders.

Institutions of higher learning, TVET colleges included, should be aware of the important role played by the student support services structures if learners are to have a positive learning experience. The document Student Support Services Framework (DoE, 2009) advocates that student support services should be regarded as a core structure within TVETs contrary to being regarded as a peripheral service. The student support services should be premised on an inclusive system, which has the capacity to enhance participation of students who were victims of past exclusions. The Student Support Services Framework (DoE, 2009.4) quotes the White Paper as follows:

"Learner counseling and support services should be established to assist new students make significant options about their career and to ensure that previously disadvantaged students are granted the opportunity to fulfil their academic dreams".

In view of the above it is imperative that a comprehensive student support system that encompasses psychological support services is established in TVETs and if the system lacks the capacity to offer a particular service, a referral system should be put in place.

The document Student Support Services Framework (DoE, 2009) call for the institutionalisation of the student support services. In order to provide effective psychological support services, the student support services should include the following:

- The colleges should support the underlying principles of the student support services;
- Ethics and values underlying the manner in which the student support services operates should be stipulated;
- The expected outcomes should be spelt out;
- Strategic management decisions should be based on reliable and valid information;
- Key performance areas of the student support services should be identified; and
- Provision should be made for benchmarking services and programmess.

Human integrity and respect of the individual receiving the service is of paramount importance. Arredondo, Tova-Blank and Parham (2008:265) opine that if psychological support services are to be effectively utilized, counsellors should be able to apply principles which includes:

- Social justice and inclusion versus marginalisation;
- Equity, pluralism, integration and preservation versus counseling profession; and
- The substance of cultural and contextual paradigms in the counseling profession.

Counsellors need to aware of their own cultural values and biases that might impede the provision of counselling services. Counsellors should be aware that causes of mental illness are not only a result of a client's distress but are also a result of socio-cultural factors and the environment. Restricting interventions to intrapsychic and mental issues alone still renders the client vulnerable to the same social illness that made them seek help. During the administering of the intervention, counselors need to look at the institutions and their agencies as well as their own policies and practices when attending to cultural needs of the clients.

The focus of student wellness should not be limited to psychological welfare but should incorporate other facets that contibute to the students' success within institutions. Nelson, Tarabochia and Koltz (2015:5) explain that "in order to enrich a student's academic development, a counseling program should include the physical, affective, economic and social aspects". The authors further emphasise that during the execution of their duties, counsellors' roles should focus on the principles of leadership, advocacy, teamwork and collaboration, activities coordination, assessing and utilization of data derived from the sessions to improve the programmess. It should also be noted that profession principles allow psychological support staff to play a crucial role in assembling systemic policies that promote identification of a specific group of students.

It is also the mandate of the practitioners to commit themselves and engage key stakeholders in order to enhance how they render services to the students. Burkard et al. (2012) purport that college counselors should objectively evaluate their own deficits and engage their management to effectively implement psychological support services for the students. The practitioners should always consider validity of the programmess being used to address any psychogical challenges the students could be facing. It is also important that the specific programmess being used be evaluated and that counselors should be responsible for their own individual planning.

It is important that designers of student psychological support services are aware of the shifting role and design and recommend programs that are relevant to student development and growth. Grutzik and Ramos (2016) assert that the role of psychological support services is still evolving from being mostly procedural to being a more dynamic and comprehensive scaffolding for students' success. It used to be confined to the provision of mostly academic support but it is now evolving to the provision of psychological support service that fosters students' growth. It must be emphasised that staff to be engaged in psychological support services should be recruited after completion of programmes in the field of psychology.

There are various mental challenges that affect students in colleges. Cilliers et al. (2010) highlight the need for psychological support services training for staff in order to combat the increasing demands of psychological challenges facing students. The training should focus on areas such as suicide assessment and intervention, depression and anxiety, substance abuse and mood disorders. In order to alleviate the impact of these psychological challenges, it is of paramount importance that the psychological support services staff be equiped with the expertise and capacity that allows the building of students' self-efficacy. This can be adequately and appropriately addressed by well-trained psychological practitioners.

Psychological support services should focus on the students' strengths and positive social support which assists in alleviating the impact of perceived barriers and at the same time allow them to cope effectively. Estrada, Poulsen, Cannon and Wiggins (2013) also reaffirm that counselor training should emphasise the importance of culture, race, class issues and context. The training programmess should also focus on the importance of multi-culturalism in courses and commitment and should emphasise issues of non-exclusion, social justice, promoting tolerance, and to a great extent, to nurture diversity. If students are to benefit from the provision of psychological support services, the practitioners should be in a position to explore the long-term effects of cultural and political ideology on students for growth and their self-actualisation.

2.8 RELEVANCE OF PROFESSIONAL BOARDS THAT SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The profession of psychology services is governed by a number of boards in South Africa and these bodies are afFiliated to other international boards. Members who belong to such bodies have to meet certain criteria before they join. The criteria are based on the relevance of their profession to the board and they have to pay a joining fee and an annual subscription. Members do enjoy a number of benefits that include a guideline or framework that determines their job description, ethics they should adhere to and receiving up-to-date information on any changes within the profession. Psychological support services staff, more specifically psychologists and counsellors, should register with these various institutions if they are to carry out their duties adhering to the legal requirements and observation of ethics when dealing with students.

2.8.1 Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

Health Professional Council of South Africa (2008) the HPCSA drew guidelines that guide and direct the practice of health care practitioners. These guidelines serve as a professional serve as aconduct that should be adhered to by all members. Any complaint or misconduct will be evaluated against these guidelines. These psychologists and counsellors who serve as psychological support services staff in institutions of higher learning are individuals registered with the HPCSA. The guidelines outlines the following as the core ethical values and standards that health care practitioners should observe. This includes psychological support services staff such as psychologists and counselors:

- Respect for persons:- the practitioners should respect their clients or patients and acknowledge the individual's worth, his/her dignity and sense of value.
- Best interest or well being:- non-maleficence meaning the individuals receiving the service should not be subject to any harmful actions by the practitioner.

- Human rights:- the practitioners should observe the human rights of all persons utilizing their services as enshrined in the South African Constitution.

- Autonomy:- the practioners should honour the rights of patients to make their own informed consent.

- Truthfulness:- the practitioners should be truthful in their conduct and not falsify any information

- Confidentiality:- no information should be disclosed to unauthorised parties by the practitioner

- Professional competency and self-improvement by the practitioners in order to attain the highest level of knowledge and skills required in the field.

In view of the above ethical issues, it is imperative that all health practitioners, psychologists or counselors serving in the provision of psychological support services adhere to these guidelines. This will not only improve their effectiveness with regard to their core duties but will ensure that they also do not breach the stipulated ethics, as any violations not only compromise their job description but may also result in the lawsuits against them and the institution. TVET colleges enrol students from different cohorts with varied backgrounds and cultural beliefs. Adhering to the above-mentioned ethics would mean serving all without being discriminatory. This is also further supported by Health Professional Council of South Africa (2008) in that the practitioners have a duty to ensure that their personal beliefs do not prejudice their patients' health care and further outlines that these beliefs that can tantamount to prejudice, including the patient's race, culture, ethnicity, social status, life-style, spiritual belief or conditions of vulnerability.

2.8.2 STUDENT COUNSELLING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (SCCD)

The Society for Student Counseling in Southern Africa which isaffiliated to the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) (2007) was established in the late 1960s in South Africa and is currently represented at all universities and other tertiary instituitions. The board is regarded as a core support service that is aimed at increasing student retention and throughput in tertiary institutions. However, there is no uniformity in the composition of SCCD in these institutions. The board is aware of the need of collaboration between tertiary institutions with regard to SCCD services. Staff employed under the SCCD varies according the services on offer but include registered psychologists and counsellors, educationists, social workers, career counselors and counsellors for students with special needs. The core competencies of staff include counselling and therapy, career development, student development, academic and learning skills, assessment, community outreach and advocacy.

The institute SCCD is meant to support tertiary institutions in South Africa to increase retention and throughput rates. It is also essential that there has to be uniformity in the provision of psychological

support services by the various instituitions. There can not be collaboration if the services vary from institution to institution. In TVET Colleges uniformity is essential since these are government funded colleges that cater for more or less the same population groups.

2.8.4 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA (PsySSA)

The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) (2016) indicates that the organisation was formed in 1994. The organisation was structured as a transformed entity to deal with the fast changing dispensation and communicating authoritatively on behalf of the profession on issues with regard to the mental health and psychological well-being of all South Africans. It is continuously engaging key stakeholders such as the state, other legislative boards, the private and civil society on issues related to this discipline. It also protects the rights of its members who belong to the psychology profession. The members are privy to up-to-date information relating to their profession. They also monitor the conduct of their members. Development and further training of their membersis always high on the agenda.

It is important that professionals in the field of psychology subscribe to such an organisation as it keeps them abreast of any changes occuring in their field. The changes have an influence on how they do their work and also the guidelines and ethical considerations that should be followed by these practitioners. This includes psychological support staff employed by TVET Colleges. Such organisations view continuous professional development as mandatory for all their members.

2.8.5 SUMMARY

The literature review allowed the researcher to identify key areas that defined the provision of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College. The main areas included overview of the SSS, challenges faced by students at institutions of higher learning, challenges in administering psychological support services, benefits of using psychological support services, strategies to improve the implementation of psychological support services and the relevance of professional boards that support the provision of psychological support services in tertiary institutions.

The next chapter focuses on methodology of the study used.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and design. The rationale for employing the qualitative research approach is outlined in this chapter. The case study design was utilised by the researcher. The chapter also provides descriptions of the population, the site where the study was conducted, the sample size, sampling methods, data collection and data collection instruments used in the study. How the data were analysed and interpreted and ethical considerations form part of this chapter. The researcher illustrates how the study's important aspects namely: trustworthiness, dependability and transferability were ensured.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of psychological support services being rendered and USED by students at Majuba TVET College and, as such the researcher deemed the qualitative research approach as being appropriate for the study. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to collect raw data from the key individuals on the provision of psychological support services to students. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) assert that "qualitative research allows the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon and discover the problems that exist within a phenomenon". It was the researcher's view that qualitative research would allow a profound comprehension of the provision of psychological services to students. The challenges affecting the effective provision of psychological support would be highlighted through qualitative research. Qualitative research enhanced the credibility of results as it was conducted with minimum interference from the researcher. The participants were given the opportunity to express themselves during the semi-structured and focus group interviews.

The qualitative approach enabled the participants to give indepth information on the provision of psychological support services and the role of key stakeholders. This prompted the researcher to seek clarification of any misconceptions relating to the provision of psychological support services from the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further assert that the qualitative approach allows for rich narrative descriptions, thus enabling the researcher to comprehend the context in which the study is being conducted.

The qualitative approach granted the researcher the opportunity gain a clear understanding on the provision of psychological support services to student at Majuba TVET College. The researcher was able to get in-depth knowledge on how the psychological support services are being rendered and used by the students.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The case study approach was used in this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:135) point out that 'a case study involves an in-depth study of a program or event for a specific period. A case study is suitable for learning more about a phenomenon which is little known or when it is a poorly understood situation."

A case study was an ideal design as facilitated a profound understanding of the main components of the psychological support unit that are vital for improved academic performance.

The case study yielded important information from the narratives from individuals who shared their first-hand experiences. These rich narratives were obtained from individual students who needed the psychological support and staff responsible for providing the services. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:289) in supporting the researcher's on employing this design had this to say "case studies make provisions of real people in real situations, allow readers to comprehend ideas more succinctly in contrast to merely presenting the ideas with abstract theories. Case studies do have geographical parameters".

It was the researcher's view that the case study design would allow the study to be premised precisely on the provision of the psychological support services that obtained adequately rich information. There are 50 public TVET Colleges in South Africa, the case study design allowed the study to be confined to Majuba TVET College's five campuses in the Newcastle area. Confining the study on Majuba TVET College granted the researcher sufficient time to collect in-depth information on psychological support services from the participants.

3.4 POPULATION

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) indicate that a population constitutes a group of elements that are guided by a specific criterion and on which the research results can be generalized. The population for this study comprised of 700 Majuba TVET College staff and an enrolment of 22 665 students as of 2016. The personnel were made up of academic and non-academic staff. The SSS comprised of staff who fell directly under the SSS, and SSS committee members who had been co-opted from academic and administrative personnel. These individuals were co-opted because of their expertise and willingness to

be part of SSS activities. Although students are the beneficiaries of the SSS support services they fall under the College Student Representative Council (SRC).

3.4.2 Sampling

This section is devoted to a description of the sample size and sampling technique employed in arriving at the final sample for the study.

3.4.3.1 Sampling Size

A total of 42 participants were selected to take part in the study. These were derived from two main categories students and staff. The college has one Acting Direct Student Support Services and one Student Development Practitioner and these were automatically selected because of their key roles in the provision of psychological support. The sample size was made up as follows:

1 Acting Director Student Support Services;
1 Student Development Practitioner;
10 Student Support Services Committee Members; 2 from each of the five campuses; and
30 Students; 6 from each of the five campuses.

3.4.3.2 Sampling Technique

Sampling was done in two phases and comprised the use of two sampling techniques which were purposive to select key individuals from the SSS structure and convenience sampling to select the students from the college's five campuses.

3.4.3.3 Purposive Sampling

The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants for this study. Key individuals within the SSS structure were identified as key informants. Ten of the 30 personnel falling under the SSS structure were selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explain that purposeful sampling involves the selection of individuals who are in a position to provide sufficient information on the topic being discussed. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to identify information-rich individuals. According to Cohen et al. (2011), purposive sampling allows access to knowledgeable individuals, who have a thorough understanding of particular issues backed by their expertise and experience. Purposive sampling was used to select the following SSS staff categories:

- Acting Deputy Director of the SSS: the individual who is responsible for overseeing the college's SSS structure activities.

- Student Development Practitioners: these are key informants who are responsible for carrying out the core activities of the SSS structure which include the provision of psychological support services.
- SSS committee members: these are key individuals who are co-opted from academic and administrative staff because of their expertise and experience in dealing with student issues. They work in collaboration with the Student Development Practitioners and one of their man key areas is student counselling.

Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to identify the key individuals who serve in the SSS structure. The researcher was employed in the institution and was also a member of the SSS and this made it easier for the researcher to approach the key individuals in their offices.

3.4.3.4 Convenience Sampling

The researcher used convenience sampling to select students participants. Cohen et al. (2011) define convenience sampling as opportunity sampling that involves the selection of participants who are accessible to the researcher. The students were selected based on their availability and willingness to partake in the study. The researcher approached and continuously selected the participants until the projected sample of 30 students (six each from each of the five campuses) was obtained. Convenience sampling was ideal for a case study as the participants were found within the sites selected and these were easily accessible to the researcher by virtue of being an employee of the organisation.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTATIONS

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with SDPs and SSS Committee members. Cohen et al. (2011) is of the notion that researchers use semi-structured interviews to collect comprehensive information on the participants' beliefs about and perceptions of a particular subject. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to get in-depth information on the provision of psychological support services to students from information-rich individuals. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) reiterate that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to get rich information from individuals who are well-acquainted with the subject being studied and are in a position to share their views on the topic under study.

The researcher used an interview guide (Appendix F) as the research instrument during the interviewing process. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The researcher also made notes to complement the recording. Recording interviews ensured completeness of the data collected and allowed

for reliability check-ups. The researcher transcribed the audio-recorded interviews to ensure accuracy of the data collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.5.2 Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews were conducted with students. They allowed the researcher to collate information on the provision of psychological support services to learners from the various participants. Cohen et al. (2011) indicate that focus group interviews rely on the interaction between the participants on the topic provided by the researcher. They further indicate that focus group interviews allow the researcher to collect different opinions from the participants. They were confined to a specific sector of the population and were known to each other. The researcher steered the proceedings and used an interview guide (Appendix G) to avoid departure from the main research questions

The duration of the focus group interviews was between 30-45 minutes. The researcher conducted focus groups with students from the college's five campuses. The focus group interviews were recorded verbatim and additional notes were written down during the interviews. The researcher was afforded the opportunity to access data on the students' attitudes and opinions on the psychological support services provided by the college.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

De vos, Strydom and Delport (2011) describes qualitative data analysis as a process that involves collating and organising collected data so as to derive meaning. There are quite a number of qualitative data analysis techniques. The researcher opted for thematic analysis. Aronson (1995) describes thematic analysis as away of analysing qualitative data by identifying themes and patterns emanating from direct quotes from the participants. This can either be done inductively or deductively. The researcher used the deductive approach that allows moving from the general to the specific. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that the deductive approach is premised on the researcher's theoretical interest and is driven by the analysts' presumptions and that the coding can be based on a specific question that is already in existence. Deductive codes also referred to as prior codes are established before examining the data. The themes are then linked to the literature and the theoretical framework that the researcher describes in his or her study and are interpreted within the context of the specific study. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout. (2014) state that in conducting qualitative content analysis, the notion is to cluster similar data and assign them to broader categories of related meanings. The data are structured into codes and themes that can be applied to all texts. The research through the utilisation of qualitative content analysis identified

categories and sub-categories relating to the provision of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College.

The researcher adhered to the steps as outlined by Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) cited in Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014:235) which are listed below:

1. Prepare the data;

2. Define the coding unit to be analysed;

3. Develop categories and a coding scheme;

4. Test your coding scheme on a sample text;

5. Code all text;

6. Assess your coding consistency;

7. Interpret your data; and

8. Report your methods and findings.

The researcher utilised thematic coding which is also known as conceptual or concept coding. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) convey that thematic coding involves the identifying of themes derived from the literature review. It also allowed the researcher to identify new and unexpected codes which were added to the coding scheme.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The researcher ensured trustworthiness of the research results by consolidating the recorded responses from the participants with the notes made during the semi-structured and focus group interviews and additional notes taken during the interviews. McMillan and Schumacher, (2010:331) assert that "mechanically recorded data provides records that are accurate and complete". The researcher also conducted participant reviews, which allowed the participants to review their transcripts for accuracy and synthesis. The researcher collected data in his own institution, to ensure validity of the results, consent was obtained from the participants and stuck to the designed data collection tools.

3.8 DEPANDABILITY

To ensure dependability the researcher used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and notes taken during interviews as data collection methods. The results from using the interview guide and additional notes complemented each other rendering the research results authentic. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) define dependability as the quality of the research process that transpires between data collection, data analysis and the concepts emanating from the data. The literature relating to the topic

under study enhanced the dependability of the research results by pointing out gaps on which the researcher premised the study.

3.9 TRANSFERABILITY

Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al. (2014:259) describe transferability as "the ability of research results to be replicated when applied to a similar situation". The researcher ensured transferability of the research results to other public TVET colleges by basing the interview questions on the research problem, research questions and the literature review. The questions on the interview guide were peer-critiqued to ensure that areas to be covered were in line with the problem statement and research questions and this rendered the results trustworthy. The researcher also ensured that there was representativeness of the sample by identifying the key individuals that made up the population under study.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are defined by de Vos et al. (2011:114) "as a set of moral principles which is put forward by an individual group which is applied widely." It governs behavioural expectations about the most acceptable conduct when dealing with participants in research. The researcher observed the ethical considerations as set out below;

3.10.1 Gatekeeper Permission

The researcher applied for permission to conduct research at the institution (Appendix D) and permission was granted by the principal (Appendix E).

3.10.2 Informed Consent

The researcher ensured that the participants' permission was obtained in writing. A consent letter was sent to all participants (Appendix A and B).   Sufficient information with regard to the purpose of the study, the duration and the participants' rights were clearly spelt out to the participants.

3.10.3 Voluntary Participation

As per De Vos et. al. (2011), when conducting research, at all times individuals should not be coerced to partake in the study. The researcher ensured that all participants were voluntarily participating in the study. The participants were given consent forms that stipulated voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study.

3.10.4 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The privacy of the participants was not to be violated. The information from the participants was strictly used for the purpose of the study and no names of the respondents were published or mentioned.

3.10.5 Protection from Harm

The participants were not subjected to any harm. The researcher ensured that no physical or emotional harm was experienced by the participants.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The researcher utilised the qualitative research approach and the case study research design. The rationale behind the selection of the research design is that it allowed the researcher to collect in-depth information on the provision of psychological support services at Majuba TVET College. Purposive sampling was used to select staff participants and convenience sampling was employed to select student participants. Data collection procedures used were semi-structured interviews conducted with staff and focus group interviews conducted with students. Interview guides were used by the researcher during the interviews. The researcher employed the qualitative content analysis method when during the data analysis process. The method allowed the researcher to identify categories and subcategories and themes relating to the study.

The next chapter presents the data analysis and findings.

CHAPTER 4:

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on presentation of the findings on student psychological support services at Majuba TVET College. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The themes were derived from the research objectives and the core concepts covered in the literature review. The themes were further divided into categories and the categories were further broken down into sub-categories as shown in table 4.1.

Themes were derived from the following objectives:

- To explore the nature of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College

- To ascertain the factors that compel students to seek psychological support at Majuba TVET College

- To examine the accessibility of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College

- To identify students' perception on the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College

- To explore various strategies that could be utilised to improve the provision of psychological support to students at Majuba TVET College

Table 4. 1: Categories – Staff Responses

Category	Sub-Category
Nature of psychological support	• Pre-entry Support: Career guidance • Pre-Counselling • Short-term Counselling • Referral System • On-going Counselling • Peer and mentor Counselling
Factors compelling students to seek psychological Support	• Academic Pressure • Health Status (HIV positive) • Depression/Stress • Family issues • Bereavement • Trauma (sexual abuse, robbery, assault, witnessing a traumatic event)
Accessibility of psychological support	• Existence of Psychological Support Services • Referral System • Challenges: Poor referral system, Working hours, Students different cultural backgrounds, Staff shortage, SDP/Student Ratio, Inadequate on-site counselling, inadequate staff, Stigmatisation/ lack of trust, Inadequate staff training, Conflicting staff roles • Benefits: Improved certification rate, Improved students attendance, Reduction in student attrition, College reputation
Strategies of enhancing psychological support	• Enact linkages with key stakeholders (Other TVET Colleges, HPCSA, DoH, DHET, Trauma Centres) • Recruit qualified staff • Capacity building and staff development • Utilisation of peer counselling

4.2 RESULTS FROM SEMI-STRUCUTRED INTRVIEWS

4.2.1 Introduction

This section presents findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted with staff of a TVET college in the KZN province. During the interview process, an interview guide (Appendix F) was used and the interview questions were derived from the research questions and research objectives. The research objectives were used as themes which were further divided into categories and then sub-categories.

4.2.2 Nature of Psychological Support Services

The participants identified career counselling, pre-counselling, short-term counselling, external referrals, on- going counselling and peer counselling and mentoring as the psychological services provided to students. This is summed up by the following quote*:*

Participant 2: We have to view the SSS holistically. We do have a comprehensive student support and this means even in counselling students we have to cover all areas. This benefits the student because of the support, their issues are dealt with. We holistically cover all areas. Just to mention a few we do initial counselling, short-term, long-term, career counselling. Recently I had to motivate that we also send staff from all campuses and students for peer counselling and mentoring.

4.2.2.1 Career Counselling

This falls under pre-entry support services rendered to students. During the enrolment process placement tests were administered to all prospective students to assist in determining the suitable programme based on their intellectual capacity and personality for the students. The following quote supports the above notion:*Participant 1: Ok, with the pre-entry support, what we do is when the student comes in to register, we have eh career guidance, career advice that we do for them and then we have placement test that they write. After that we need to sit with the student and discuss issues around the results of the test, so it's around challenging the student towards mmm selecting a course that they like, that is in line with their personalities*

4.2.2.2 Pre-Counselling

Pre-counselling was done with students during the first appointment where the students explored their problems with the SSS member. Subsequently the SSS member would then decide whether to handle the

case internally or refer it to the SDP based at central office. The student was normally given an appointment for further exploration of the problem.

Participant 4: When students have a problem, they are referred to the SSS offices and if they don't find anyone to help them, they even come to your class. In some cases, they approach other lecturers and they are referred to SSS members. So, we make an appointment and the student opens up and what to do next is decided and the he has to come back.

4.2.2.3 Short-term Counselling

The participants explained that short term counselling was administered to individuals to assist them cope with immediate issues. This allowed the practitioner and the student to explore the underlying issues. The practitioner would then recommend techniques that were appropriate to solve the problem the student would be facing. It was noted that the SDP was aware of these techniques within the college.

Participant 9: When they walk in, we ask about their problem. They must explain and mmm if I think I can't handle it, we call the SDP. Sometimes if it's a minor problem, we sit and talk and find a solution.

When asked about duration of the counselling session and techniques that were normally used when counselling students, the participants indicated that they were not sure. One participant had this to say:

Participant 7: I have to be honest with you (chuckles) - mmm I think it depends on the problem, we just sit and talk and the SDP I think that one knows about those things.

4.2.2.4 External Referrals

The staff indicated that referrals are made to external services if it was beyond their expertise and in some instances if the SDP was overwhelmed. This is supported by the response below:

Participant 6: All I can say is at our campus we help students a lot but eeh some issues, they are too much. If that's the situation, we simply call the one in charge at central office. She helps a lot and sometimes networks with psychologists to come in and help the learner.

It was also noted that after the referrals the college did not make follow-up to ascertain whether the student was adhering to the prescribed treatment or coping strategies. The onus was left with the student to stick to the treatment plan. This is summed up in the following quote:

Participant 3: That one is difficult. Following up students is very tricky. Once the learner is referred it's really difficult to trace them. It's not like we are not concerned, the numbers are too much but as a department progress has been made to sort that.

4.2.2.5 On-going Counselling

This is a prolonged form of counselling that is administered on students whose issues do not require immediate fixing. This was conducted either internally or externally depending on the nature of the problem presented. The following respondent had this to say:

Participant 2: Sometimes but it will depend on the student problem. We can have as many sessions with one student. We can't say it's ok we have identified the problem and we had a chat with the student, no it doesn't work like that. Even though it's a lot of work we have to see the student through.

There are challenges that are associated with this form of counselling as some of the students aborted the process. This was highlighted by the response that follows:

Participant 10: You know with these things it's not easy. Of-course students when they begin the process the person should go all the way in order to heal but because of our schedule sometimes they just stop coming. Feels like they don't want to talk to you anymore but you can tell that this person still needs to talk.

One of the participants further pointed out that it is also difficult to set up appointments as the staff members' schedule was always packed as a result of their dual roles as lecturers:

Participant 7: I feel something should be done here. It's impossible to help all students. Where will l get the time here to slot the appointment? I got work to mark, lessons to prepare during my admin time. We have the same number of working hours as other lecturers. It is difficult for us and I feel for the student but sometimes I can't just help it.

4.2.2.6 Peer Counselling and Mentoring

This was a recently introduced service that involved training some members of the SSS members as peer mentors and a few identified students as peer educations. The training was a partnership between Department of Health (DoH) and DHET. This is confirmed by the following quote:

Participant 3: It's very fortunate that a gap was identified. This partnership will definitely help to ease the pressure on staff now that we have this programme for peer counselling and mentoring. Thanks to the DoH and DHET, sometimes students feel comfortable talking to each other.

4.2.3 Factors Compelling Students to Seek Psychological Support

The participants indicated that there are quite a number of issues that students present for psychological support. The issues encountered by students include bereavement, family issues, depression, low socio-economic status and trauma.

4.2.3.1 Bereavement

Grieving is one of the issues that students seek psychological support for. It was noted that death of loved ones will affect the mental state of individual students. The quote below shows the extent of psychological trauma the grieving individual faces:

Participant 1: ... so you can just imagine the type of psychological problems that they will come with and some students will be dealing with the death of a loved one, their guardian, things like those.

4.2.3.2 Family issues

Participants pointed out that students faced varying challenges and some came from child headed-families. Family problems were one of the issues that forced students to seek psychological support within the college. This is captured in the quote that follows:

Participant 2: Some students, they come from child headed families and they tend not to focus on their studies. They tend to lack concentration for the fact that all the problems that they have and bring them into the learning experience, which does not generally help during their studies.

4.2.3.3 Socio-economic factors

The participants noted that students that had low socio-economic status normally seek psychological support. This is supported by the response below:

Participant 8: Some students come for counselling because they will be facing problems when relating with other students because of their ... economic status. Those that struggle financially come for counselling.

4.2.3.4 Trauma

Traumatic experiences such as violent incidents such: as sexual abuse, assault and robberies compelled students to look for psychological help. This is captured in the following quote:

Participant 6: ... students come up with a lot of challenges that really need counselling, in some cases when they encounter a traumatic event such as sexual abuse, being involved or witnessing a violent incident such as robberies. They are quite common especially here in the location.

4.2.4 Accessibility of Psychological Support Services

The participants indicated that psychological support services were provided to students at the TVET College. These were accessible at the college's five campuses but in limited form according to the participants. The psychological support services were provided by members of the SSS within the campuses and are coordinated by the SDP based at the college's central office. Referrals were made to external services if the problems were beyond the college personnel's expertise.

4.2.4.1 Existence of Psychological Support Services

The college's five campuses do offer psychological support services. At campus level the services are offered by members of the SSS committee members more particularly the chairperson.
This is indicated by the following statement:

Participant 8: Our college has five campuses and I can safely say psychological support services are available even though we still in the processes of recruiting SDPs for each campus.

4.2.4.2 Referral system

Referrals were made to the only SDP based at central office if the problem was beyond the expertise of the SSS. Furthermore, the SDP made referrals to Psychologists and Doctors if the problem was beyond the SDP's ability.

Participant 2: once they identify certain traits that the student needs assistance, they refer to SDP and the SDP then assesses the situation and also use the referral system that we have in place to better assist the student. We have a database within the SSS of the external services that we use. So we have a database for psychologists.

The participant below indicated that students are normally referred to the psychologist who is based at central office.

Participant 3: … maybe a student encountered some big things in the past and they can't get over it that we normally refer them to psychologists based at central office at the moment. So, we normally try to get an appointment because we normally deal with such kind of problems.

4.2.4.3 Challenges Faced When Accessing Psychological Support Services

A poor referral system, working outside normal working hours, students' different cultural background, SDP/Student ratio, staff shortage, work overload and inadequate on-site counselling are some of the challenges identified by staff that hinder the effective accessing of psychological support by students.

4.2.4.3.1 Poor Referral System

A poor referral system was identified as one of the challenges that students faced when trying to make use of the available psychological support services. Students' psychological issues are not attended to promptly. This is supported by the response below.

Participant 1: Mmm, I will say most of the time students are referred on their very last stage of their problems. We, we normally get when the student really needs, is in dire need of assistance whereby we get in and assist. I think that's one of the challenges.

It was also found that the referral system hindered the smooth provision of psychological support services as the college staff have to plan around the availability of external stakeholders such as psychologists meant to attend to the mental issues of the students.

Participant 4: The second one is when we work with external stakeholders, we have to work around their schedule because they are doctors, and they are working. So, some they, we have an urgent matter that you need to attend to and you find, that there is no opening for us to take the student through.

4.2.4.3.2 Working Hours

The participants noted that working outside normal college hours was one of the main challenges that were encountered by SSS personnel when striving to assist the students. The quotes below explains that some staff members are not willing to work outside the college normal working hours.

Participant 5: Normally I work during college hours, that is from 0800hrs to 1700hrs but sometimes it goes beyond that depending on the problem at hand affecting the student and it sometimes become stressful. Yah.

4.2.4.3.3 Diversified students' cultural backgrounds

Student diversity was also put forward as a challenge by those responsible for attending to students' psychological needs. It was explained that the different student backgrounds and experiences made it

difficult to have a uniform prescription on how to address students' psychological issues. Cultural aspects also hindered the provision of psychological support services. This is explained below:

Participant 2: So when we deal with students from another background, then you, you need to do your background check, in order to see on how best to assist the student. Sometimes I will to go through, phone the parents, they will tell you, no, don't do anything, it's nothing medical, it will adjust, sort itself out and the moment they say that you cannot interfere with those things.

4.2.4.3.4 Staff Shortages

Staff shortages were also noted as one of the main obstacles to utilising psychological support services. It was found that the entire college with its five campuses had only one appointed SDP. The response that follows supports this assertion.

Participant 5: As a matter of fact, only one on the ground the SDP serves the SSS full time and the rest we are volunteering. The college should make appointments; more staff is needed as of yesterday

4.2.4.3.5 SDP/Student ratio

SDP student ratio was highlighted as a concern by one of the participants. There was a concern that the student numbers were overwhelming the existing psychological support services personnel.

Participant 5: We are not better equipped you know in terms of not having enough personnel to actually offer counselling. You will find out the college organogram has allocated one SDP per campus that has ... an average of around 2500-3000 students.

4.2.4.3.6 Inadequacy of onsite-based counselling

Counselling for traumatic events is not held on-site. Those in need of counselling are referred to external counsellors and psychologists. Students seeking help in such cases are deprived of immediate attention. The nature of psychological support services offered by the college is limited. The following response supports this:

Participant 9: Like what I said when we have like rape cases and we cannot be able to do counselling for students on site. That is why we use referral systems which we have at the college.

4.2.4.3.7 Unqualified Staff and lack of skills

It was noted that staff who served under SSS were not qualified to administer students' psychological issues and that they were fulltime lecturers working as voluntary staff under SSS.

Participant 8: You know this committee is voluntary, so we were asked by management to have a committee. Some guys came forward and I was elected as the chairperson, but not that I needed any qualification or what.

4.2.4.3.8 Stigmatisation/Lack of trust

Students were hesitant to seek psychological help because: they lacked trust in the existing system, feared stigmatisation and had confidentiality issues. This is supported by the following responses:

Participant 9:I think mostly its fear because now you find out that there are students who talk to other students but do not talk to us because they are afraid to come forward with their problem. So in that way you cannot notice if the student didn't come forward. I cannot hear from someone else that the student has got a problem.

4.2.4.3.9 Inadequate Staff Training

The voluntary staff offering the SSS, do not receive any training with regard to providing psychological support services. This is underscored in the quotation that follows:

Participant 5: At this point in time, we do not receive any training. Actually, we don't have any training. I don't know when they gonna or management going to sit and need to give us training. At this point in time we are just here as parents and we going to assist these learners as parents. If you are a parent, you don't get any training, you just help your child.

4.2.4.3.10 Work Overload

SSS personnel also serve as lecturers and they spend most of their time attending to academic issues and regard SSS duties as peripheral. The following quote support this:

Participant 9: As a lecturer my job description is mainly academic and that's were l have a contract, this SSS for me it's just helping out because l want to see the students grow.

4.2.4.4 Effectiveness of Psychological Support Services

An improved certification rate, improved attendance, reduced student attrition and enhancement of college reputation are some of the positives noted by participants derived from students accessing psychological support.

4.2.4.4.1 Improved Certification Rate

One participant, when asked about the benefits of accessibility of psychological support by students, had this to say:

Participant 10: I really think this will definitely increase our pass rate. When the students have little worries and they are socially or emotionally well they will focus and study. The result would mean more students finishing their courses.

4.2.4.4.2 Improved Student Attendance

Most of the participants were of the opinion that providing psychological support to students would reduce student absenteeism. The following quote is from one of the participants:

Participant 8: This is quite obvious the students will have less to worry about and they won't continue bunking classes.

4.2.4.4.2 Reduced Student Attrition

The participants underscored that if psychological support services were accessible to students it would reduce student attrition more specifically among NVC students. This is confirmed by the following quote:

Participant 5: It will mean students will try and stay in the system because they have support. Take for example NCV learners. They have to spend three years here at the college, some are high-school dropouts and don't expect miracles. They need continuous emotional support.

4.2.4.4.3 Improved College Reputation

The participants proclaimed that the college's image would improve if psychological support services were provided to the students:

Participant 3: From a holistic point of view, the college is bound to benefit if students pass and this will give the college a good name to a great extent, I believe and I'm talking from experience. If students are mentally healthy they perform and behave.

4.2.5 Ways of Enhancing Psychological Support Services

Various strategies and methods on how to improve the provision of psychological support services to the students at TVET colleges were obtained from the participants. The various strategies include linkages with other key stakeholders, peer counselling and mentoring, training and capacity building,

4.3.5.1 Linkages

The participants emphasised the need to enact linkages with other TVET colleges as they also faced the same issues affecting the well-being of the students. The rationale for establishing linkages with other colleges is to have a platform where colleges share best practices as illustrated by the quote below:

Participant 1: I think it's important that we form our own partnerships with people around. The only thing that we can do with other colleges will be to share best practices on how to deal with these matters. Yah, I think that will be the only thing that we need to do, because I feel there might be colleges that deal better with issues that we are. So, I feel, if we sit and share best.

4.3.5.2 Peer Counselling and Mentoring

Some of the participants underscored the significance of having peer mentors and educators on psychological support services. The college had just started facilitating training peer educators and mentors to assist in the effective utilisation of psychological support services to students. This is evident from the response that follows:

Participant 4: We have just started training peer educators and peer mentors. So, each campus has ten peer mentors and ten peer educators. So, we are hoping that through these people, students can get better services from us because then the student will move from the peer educator and peer mentor before I attend to the problem and some of the campuses have created committees. So, there are people, it's not all of them but some of them, we are just looking at those people to assist.

4.3.5.3 Staff Training

The participants reported that colleges are invited to attend these workshops organised by the key stakeholders on how to improve the SSS. This is supported by the following quote:

Participant 3: We attend, mm there is an organization that deals with, they call it Student Affairs because that what's it's called in Universities. So we normally attend those sessions they have. It's more of best practice sharing, and then sometimes during the year we have invitations from other stakeholders of training that will enhance SSS. So, we do attend such programmes if we see that it will assist.

4.3.5.4 Capacity Building and Staff Development

The participants highlighted the importance of staff development for psychological support staff. This is supported by the following response:

Participant 2: I believe in capacity building and I believe that there is on-going training because we evolve as society. So, we need to be updated on development trends.

4.3.5.5 Recruit more Staff

Most of the participants were of the notion that the college should recruit more staff to strike equilibrium between staff and student ratio. The following quote from one of the participants illustrates this:

Participant 8: I really feel though we have a referral system in place that we need to have more people in campuses working to make sure that assessment is done on campuses. If we can have more people in an ideal world having 5 counsellors per campus that would really make a huge difference.

4.3 RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

4.3.1 Introduction

This section presents the research findings from the focus group interviews. Five focus group interviews were conducted with students from each of the college's five campuses. A focus group interview guide was used during the focus group interview process (Appendix G). The research questions were also derived from the research question and the research objectives as stated below.

Themes were derived from the following four objectives:

- To ascertain the factors that compel students to seek psychological support at Majuba TVET College
- To examine the accessibility of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College
- To identify students' perceptions on the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College
- To explore various strategies that could be utilised to improve the provision of psychological support to students at Majuba TVET College

The categories which were further divided into sub-categories as indicated in the table below were derived from the above objectives.

Table 4. 2: Categories – Students   Responses

Category	Sub-Category
Factors compelling students to seek psychological Support	- Academic Pressure - Health Status (HIV positive) - Depression/Stress - Relationships - Anger issues
Student perceptions on psychological support	- Staff compliments - Professional staff - College management's role - Non-dissemination of information - Existence of psychological support
Accessibility of psychological support	- Role of Office bearers - Challenges: Conflicting Roles, SDP/Student Ratio, Operational Times, Poor Referral System - Effectiveness of psychological support services: Improved Certification rate, Improved academic Performance, Improved Student Attendance, Student Retention
Strategies of enhancing psychological support	- Enact linkages with key stakeholders (Other TVET Colleges, HPCSA, DoH, DHET, Trauma Centres) - Recruiting Professional Staff - Disseminate information (Student Induction/Orientation)

4.3.3 Factors Compelling Students to Seek Psychological Support

The students indicated that there are quite a number of issues that students present for psychological support. The issues encountered by students include Academic pressure workload, students' health status, relationships and depression and anger issues. These issues are highlighted in the responses from the various participants.

4.3.3.1 Academic Pressure

Participants indicated that students were often overwhelmed by academic pressure and that they sought psychological help in trying to cope. The response that follows highlights the need for students to seek psychological help when experiencing academic pressure:

Focus Group Participant: *I think it's to help students cope with the workload, yah in general, to teach them how to cope and strategize so as not to feel overwhelmed yah something like that.*

4.3.3.2 Student's health Status

The participants identified health status such as being HIV- positive as one of the issues that require psychological support. The participant further indicated that students are diversified and are faced with varying health challenges. This is underscored by the response below from one of the focus group participants:

Focus Group Participant: *No, you know, I do have some additions, as you are hearing, as we are here as diversified student. We are not the same, as students we are not the same. Some students suffer from HIV, such as HIV-positive, some have such problems.*

4.3.3.3 Relationships

Students seek psychological help when their relationships turn sour. The statement below shows the extent how devastated one can become when they break up.

Focus Group participant: *Yeah, as adult students we kind of get affected when we break up. It affects me personally, and I won't function at all. That's when I really need psychological help.*

4.3.3.4 Depression

Some students suffer from depression and are on medication. These individuals need psychological support to supplement their medication. This is illustrated by one of the students in one of the focus groups as follows:

Focus Group Participant: *Stress, what you call it depression, I suffer from depression and I can't rely on tablets. I need emotional support from the college.*

4.3.3.6 Anger Issues

An anger issue is one of the many issues that students present for psychological support. If not dealt with, it does interfere with the academic performance of the students. The following quote explains the anger issue and how it can affect the students:

Focus Group Participant: *I will give you as an example about the psychological support services. mmm like me I have anger issues. I am suffering from anger issues, so I am a student of Majuba College. I need that support, so that I can be able to pass, to do my subject properly.*

4.3.4 Students Perceptions on Psychological Support

The students highlighted major areas of concern with regard to the provision of psychological support. The areas according to the respondents include: SSS staff composition, shortage of professional staff, college management's role, non-dissemination of information, role of the SSS and existence of psychological support services.

4.3.4.1 SSS Staff Composition

The students are aware that each campus has an elected Chairperson who heads the campus's SSS structure and the individual assumes the role of the SDP. This is illustrated by the response that follows:

Focus Group Participant: *There is a chairperson per campus, who is supposed to be an SDP, one who is qualified to deal with psychological issues as the chairperson.*

The students expressed their discontentment by pointing out that the only qualified SDP was based at the central office not at the campuses where the SDPs' services were sought. The participant below underlined that the SDPs' should operate on campuses:

Focus Group Participant: *My understanding here is, we have someone that I suppose to be an SDP. Mmm, we don't have a professional in place and this professional shouldn't be at the central level and we should be having these people across all campuses together with their supporting team. We don't have that as yet.*

4.3.4.2 Professional Staff

The participants complained that the SSS structure is understaffed and there are no individuals that are qualified to provide psychological support services: This is supported by the subsequent response:
Focus Group Participant: *This is the shortage we are facing. We don't have professional SDP. We need people trained in psychology to help us, and not lecturers. They are here to teach, to be in class not to be SSS.*

4.3.4.3 College Management's Role

The students felt that the college management should not regard psychological support services as peripheral but as a vital agent for student stability that leads to academic success. This is summed up in the subsequent quote:

Focus Group Participant*: … there is a lot to be desired, I tell you. The management does not care about student welfare. Why is it that even up to now no one has been interviewed to fill the post? Because to them, counselling students is nothing. It's not a priority to them…*

4.3.4.4 Non-Dissemination of Information

The participants reported that the college does not hold any induction to inform the students on the available services such as psychological support services and other psychosocial programmes available. This is summed up in the quote that follows:

Focus Group Participant*: I think the college should have an awareness campaign where they inform us of these things. I mean psychological issues, we are not aware, even sports we only see notices around. No formal communication.*

4.3.4.5 Role of the SSS

The students understood that the role of the SSS was to ensure that the learners integrate into the college environment and also that the environment was conducive for learning. One participant had this to say:

Focus Group Participant: *I suppose their duties are to make sure that students do feel comfortable and settle well within the school.*

4.3.4.6 Existence of Psychological Support Services

The participants outlined that the SSS members focus on other activities such as sports and are not involved in the provision of psychological support services. This is summed up by the response from one of the focus group participants:

Focus Group Participant: *… so that they talk and give advice and all of that and then the additional members of the SSS are just going to assist us in terms sports and all the other activities that are there but not to counsel but as it is in reality we don't have SDP that the reality.*

The existence of psychological support services is also queried by the response below when asked about the availability of the services:

Focus Group Participant: *(laughs) … Why are we surprised? Let me put it like this, counselling does not exist at both campus and central level.*

4.3.5 Accessibility of Psychological Support Services

The college does offer a variety of psychological support services to students in the college's five campuses. These services are also offered by external services if the nature of the problem facing the student is beyond the college personnel's ability. The participants also highlighted the benefits and challenges faced when students try to access the services.

4.3.5.1 Role of Office Bearers

The participants provided varying responses with regard to the accessibility of psychological support services by the students. The responses below indicated that the SSS offices should always be open for students to conveniently access the psychological support services.

The only SDP in the college is stationed at the central office of the college. This is supported by the following responses from focus group interview members.

Focus Group Participant: *My understanding here is, we have someone that I supposed to be an SDP. Mmm, we don't have a professional in place and this professional shouldn't be at the central level*.

Focus Group Participant: *That office should be open for students to come and not all students' problems need SRC. There are problems that we can never deal with understand?*

4.3.5.2 Challenges faced when Accessing Psychological Support Services

On challenges faced when accessing psychological support services the participants identified operational times and conflicting roles of the SSS staff.

4.3.5.2.1 Limited Accessible Time

The participants felt that the operational times were confined to college hours and this restricted students from accessing psychological support services. The focus group participants had this to say.

Focus Group Participant: *Like what we have always said the services are so few, if they are there at all and I can only approach SSS for help during college hours. Why not make it 24/7?*

Focus Group Participant: *It's easy for people to say the services are here at the college,(but it) looks like the office is open during the day only. What about if I want help during the evening and weekends? Where do I get the help that I want?*

4.3.5.2.2 Work Overload

SSS personnel also serve as lecturers and they spend most of their time attending to academic issues and regard SSS duties as peripheral. The following quote support this.

Focus Group Participant: *We all know that the same teachers are the people helping us in this campus. They teach and also work as SSS; this is confusing where do they get the time to focus on counselling u?*

One of the participants from the focus group interview pointed out that the psychological support services are provided by lecturers who are always not available as they are in class most of the time. The participants further indicated that the supposed practitioners are not always available. This is supported by the quote below.

Focus Group Participant: *So we don't have SSS if it is like that because if you say lecturers are SSS, teachers are always in class, that's where they are supposed to be and in that office (SSS) there is no one.*

4.3.5.3 Effectiveness of Psychological Support Services

The participants identified increased certification rate, improved academic performance, improved student attendance and improved student retention as some of the benefits of accessing psychological support services.

4.3.5.3.1 Improved Certification Rate

The college's certification rate would improve as a result of providing and administering psychological support services to the students. This is supported by the following response.

Focus Group Participant: *If we look at the bigger picture, if many students pass the college will benefit a lot from student counselling. A practical example is it improves the college pass rate and name*

4.3.5.3.2 Improved Academic Performance

The participants pointed out that when students utilise psychological support services they tend to perform better academically. This was revealed by the following responses.

Focus Group Participant: *If you find someone who can help you with any issues bothering you, you tend to focus more on your studies and you will be able to concentrate in class.*

4.3.5.3.3 Improved Student Attendance

It was found that students lecture attendance at lectures would improve when psychological support services were provided by the college. This is explained below by one of the participants when asked on the benefits of utilising psychological support services.

Focus Group Participant: *When you got personal problems and there is no help, one is always absent. When there is a committed someone to help, we tend not to bunk classes.*

4.3.5.3.4 Improved Student Retention

The participants were of the opinion that if psychological support services are utilised student retention would improve.

Focus Group Participant: *... in my opinion this (provision of psychological support services) will help us like studying and not to quit school. Look at the NVC programmes, students always drop out. They need motivation, assist them to deal with their problems.*

4.3.5 Ways of Enhancing Psychological Support Services

Various strategies and methods on how to improve the provision of psychological support services to the students at TVET colleges were obtained from the participants. The various strategies include linkages with other key stakeholders, recruitment of more qualified staff, peer education and mentoring, training and capacity building,

4.3.5.1 Linkages

A participant from one of the focus groups stated that linkages with other colleges are a requirement and that are within the policies of the parent board, the DHET. The following quote supports this assertion:

Focus Group Participant: *I think it's not important to link it (Colleges) must be linked. On paper it says that, it's not like we have taken decision to say that no let's not be linked with other colleges. Even on paper the DHET wants it to be linked.*

4.3.5.2 Recruiting Professional Staff

The participants also highlighted the need to hire qualified staff. The individuals should be registered with the relevant bodies such as the HPCSA. This allows the individuals to execute their job description

effectively as they are aware of the necessary guidelines that SDPs should adhere to. The following quote suggest the need for qualified and registered staff:

Focus Group Participant: *A person that is registered, what is the council of psychologists HPCSA, yes that council, when the person knows how to deal with confidentiality issues of the students, a person that knows how to counsel students and if there is the need to see the families, maybe counselling needs to be done too, a person who is able to do these activities, not a support person who is just put there.*

4.3.5.3 Dissemination of Information

The participants highlighted the need for the college to inform students of the services available. They also note that this was communicated during students' orientation. One of the respondents had this to say:

Focus Group Participant: Students should be informed in a formal way about the services that are here at the college. Most of us are not aware that there is counselling because there was no orientation. How I am supposed to know the?

4.4 SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

This section presents the synthesised results from the two data collection instruments. Semi-structured interviews were used with college staff and focus group interviews were conducted with students. The combined results are based on the objectives of the study.

4.4.1 The Nature of Psychological Support rendered to Students

The objective sought to explore the nature of psychological support rendered to students. The focus was to find out the type of psychological support services and its appropriateness to students' needs. The responses to questions relating to this objective were from staff members responsible for the provision of psychological support. The participants identified career counselling, pre-counselling, short-term counselling, external referrals, on-going counselling and peer counselling and mentoring as the psychological services provided to students. Career counselling is part of the pre-entry support rendered to students during the enrolment process that helps students choose appropriate courses based on their intellectual capacity and personality. Pre-counselling is the initial step of the counselling process that is administered to all students seeking psychological help. The participants also highlighted that the nature of the psychological issue presented by the students will determine whether short-term or on-going counselling will be appropriate. It was also noted that external referrals are utilised if the psychological problem is beyond the expertise of the SDP. The participants also indicated the utilisation of peer-counselling and mentoring as a form of psychological support available to the students.

4.4.2 The Factors that Drive Students to Approach Psychological Support Services for Assistance

The second objective meant to identify the factors that drive students to approach psychological support services for assistance. Various reasons were presented by the participants. The most common factors include bereavement, family issues, depression, low socio-economic status, academic pressure, students' health status, relationships, depression, anger issues and trauma.

4.4.3 Students' Feelings on the Effectiveness of Psychological Support Services

The study also sought to ascertain students' feelings on the effectiveness of psychological support services provided by the college. This section presents students perceptions from the focus group interviews. The participants were discontented and presented a number of complaints with regard to the provision of psychological support. The majority of the participants highlighted that the SSS is understaffed, and that the staff are not qualified and not registered with the relevant bodies such as the HPCSA. The participants also felt that college management regards psychological support as peripheral

and not as an important component of student support. The majority of the student participants attributed non-dissemination of information to students as one of the obstacles to accessing psychological support.

4.4.4 Provision of Psychological Support Services

The participants indicated that psychological support services are provided to students at the TVET College. These are accessible at the college's five campuses but in limited form according to the participants. The psychological support services are provided by members of the SSS within the campuses and are coordinated by the SDP based at the college's central office. Referrals are made to external services if it is beyond the college personnel's expertise. The participants felt that the quality of services is compromised because the college lacks professionally trained staff.

4.4.5 The Accessibility of Psychological Support Services

The participants highlighted a number of obstacles that hinder the accessibility of psychological support services. The challenges include poor referral system, staff working outside normal working hours, students' different cultural backgrounds, SDP/student ratio, operational times and conflicting roles of the SSS staff, staff shortages and inadequate on-site counselling.

The participants complained that the referral system deprived students of immediate psychological support. The participants felt that the operational times were confined to college hours and this restricted students from accessing psychological support services. Most of the participants were of the view that different student backgrounds and experiences make it difficult to have a uniform prescription on how to address students' psychological issues. The participants further explained that cultural aspects also hinder the provision of psychological support services. Staff shortage was highlighted by the participants as one of the main challenges affecting the use of psychological support by students. The participants indicated that the college had only one qualified SDP and relied on unqualified voluntary staff. The participants complained about inadequate on-site counselling. The participants further complained that trauma counselling cases were referred to external services. The participants further highlighted that Students were hesitant to seek psychological help because they lacked trust in the existing system, feared stigmatisation and had confidentiality issues. The participants were also concerned with the lack of staff training with regard to psychological support. Work overload and conflicting staff roles were viewed by some of the participants as challenges affecting the provision of psychological support to students.

4.4.6 Effectiveness of Psychological Support Services

The participants also highlighted the effectiveness of psychological support services. The participants pointed out that if fully utilised by the students psychological support services would lead to: an improved certification rate, improved attendance, reduced student attrition and enhancement of college reputation.

4.4.7 Strategies Suggested to Improve the Provision of Psychological Support Services

The participants highlighted a number of strategies that can be used in order to improve the provision of psychological support to students. These responses were obtained from both sets of participants. The strategies include: establishing linkages, peer counselling and mentoring, staff training, recruiting more qualified staff and dissemination of information.

The participants emphasised enacting partnerships with other key stakeholders as a way of improving psychological support to students. Some of the participants underscored the significance of having peer counselling and mentoring as a way of improving psychological support services. It was also noted from the participants' responses that in order to improve psychological support, it is necessary to provide relevant training to personnel. The participants were also of the view that the college should hire qualified staff. Information on the psychological support services should be disseminated timeously to the students.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The results from the study underscored the existence of psychological support services, which is very important branch of the SSS structure. The nature of psychological support services available to students are determined by the various psychosocial issues affecting TVET students. Students present various issues for psychological help such as academic pressure, relationships, family issues, student health status, bereavement, depression and trauma. There are a number of challenges that hinder the provision of psychological support services including a shortage of qualified staff, low prioritisation of the service by college management. Benefits of utilising psychological support services and ways of enhancing the provision of psychological support services were also highlighted including improved certification rate, improved student retention and enhanced college reputation. Strategies to improve the provision of psychological support includes establishing of linkages, recruiting of professional staff, peer counselling and mentoring, staff development and training and on-site counselling.

The next chapter focuses on discussion and interpretation of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the results of the study. As underscored earlier the main aim of the study was to examine the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered and utilised by students at Majuba TVET College. The discussion was premised on the aim of the study, the objectives and the literature review

5.2 NATURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The college does offer to its students a number of psychological support services. The services are offered either internally or externally depending on the nature of the problem being presented by the student. Psychological support services are part of the non-academic student support services. Tamuliene (2014) identified two categories which are academic support and non-academic support. Academic support relates to support directly linked to academic performance. Non-academic support provides support FOR the student's emotional and social needs. These are not directly linked to their learning process but have a strong bearing on how they perform academically. The institution provides psychological support which is part of non-academic support. The results of the study revealed that psychological support is offered in the following forms: career counselling, pre-counselling, short-term counselling, external referrals, on-going counselling and peer counselling. These forms of psychological support as asserted by Tamuliene (2014) are important for academic success.

5.2.1 Career Counselling

Career counselling is one of the main services that make up the psychological support services of the college. It falls under academic support, one of the categories identified by Tamuliene (2014) that is aimed at fulfilling the student's emotional and social needs that are directly connected to the learning process. The results of the study revealedd that career counselling allows students the opportunity to choose a course that suits their intellectual capacity and personality. Recommendations of particular courses are made based on the student's academic results and results obtained from the CAP test.

5.2.2 Short-term Counsellling

The nature of psychological support services also include short-term counselling. Short-term counselling is administered to individual students so as to equip them with coping mechanisms for immediate issues.

Roberts, Boldy and Dunsworth (2015) on research conducted in Australia on the appropriateness of the psychological support services available point out that the services could be made more functional by being of a more student-centred. The findings contradict the above notion as the majority of the SSS committee members lack the necessary knowledge and techniques to administer short-term counselling. The only recommended individual is the SDP who is based at the college's central office. The structure delays the provision of psychological support to students because of the bureaucracy involved.

5.2.3 Pre-counselling

Pre-counselling is the initial step that involves the student having to meet the psychological support services staff member. The issues affecting the student are unpacked and a way forward to assist the student is drawn up. Further appointments are made with the student either to be assisted within the campus or be referred to the central office. If the issue is beyond the speciality of the college personnel external services are engaged. The campus's SSS office is the student's first point of contact where their issues are presented to the available member of the SSS committee. Pre-counselling is a necessity as it is the basis for all the other counselling processes if the students' psychological needs are to be addressed.

5.2.4 External referrals

The findings underscore the college's utilisation of external services. The college does make referrals to external services if the student's psychological issue is beyond the college SDP's knowledge and in other instances when the numbers of students in need are overwhelming. Local external services provided by psychologists and therapists are used. The SDP is solely responsible for making these external referrals. The appointments are planned around the available external services' itinerary. If the external services' schedules are overfull, this delays the referral process. The external services are provided by qualified and skilled individuals who provide quality services to the students seeking help.

5.2.5 On-going Counselling

This is a prolonged form of psychological support administered to students if their problem requires more time to fix. The findings reveal that this is conducted either internally or externally depending on the nature of the problem presented by the student. The results of the study show, that on-going counselling is provided to students and generally by external services through referrals. Some student issues require intervention that should be administered over long periods. A comprehensive support system is vital as asserted by Tamuliene (2014) who describes student support as a system that is made available by institutions of higher learning, which caters for the students' academic and emotional needs and is regarded as a precondition for enhancing the student's individual well-being and academic achievement.

There is a risk that the students may abort the process. The college does not make follow-up on the student once they have been referred to external services. If the students decide not to adhere referral this raises the question as to whether the system really does benefit the students.

5.2.6 Peer Counselling

Peer counselling is regarded as an important part of psychological support provided to students at the college. Students are trained to assist their peers in psychosocial issues they may be facing. The findings illustrate that peer counselling has just been introduced at the college. The college still has to plan how peer counselling is going to be implemented. The partnership with key stakeholders such as DHET and other tertiary institutions makes it worthwhile. The findings revealed that peer counselling alleviates pressure on SSS staff and some students feel more comfortable when dealing with other students.

5.3 FACTORS COMPELLING STUDENTS TO SEEK PSYCHOLOGICAL

The findings revealed that the most common factors that students present for psychological support include bereavement, family issues, academic pressure, depression, students' health status, low socio-economic status, relationships, and depression, trauma and anger issues. Cilliers et al. (2010) indicates that students are faced with mental and social challenges that interfere with their pursuit of academic success. The factors that drive students to seek psychological support are further explained below.

5.3.1 Depression and Anxiety

The findings suggest that depression and anxiety are two factors that coerce students to seek psychological support at Majuba TVET College. This is compounded by the students' low economic status. Tamuliene (2014) assert that non-university higher education is chosen by students with lower socio-economic status and in most cases they are first generation students. These students are at risk of dropping out. The results of the study have underscored providing psychological support as one of the mechanisms for coping with anxiety and depression. It can be deduced from the results of the study that, if accessible to students, psychological support improves student retention.

5.3.2 Family issues

The findings reveal family issues as one of the factors that make students seek psychological support. These students bring to the learning environment adverse experiences culminating from their relationship with family members. To provide a system that caters for the psychological needs of the students' barriers to accessing psychological support should be eliminated. Shiluabane et al. (2012) attribute the challenges to accessing counselling to psychological factors such as disturbed family, relationships with parents, lack

of social support, lack of trust in peers, anger, frustration and hopelessness. Disturbed family relationships interfere with the students' learning process compelling them to seek psychological support. Some students come from child headed families and require psychological support if they are to realise their academic goals.

5.3.3 Student's Health Status

Students are forced to seek psychological support because of their health status. The findings highlighted that the student population is diversified. Some of the students are chronically ill and require a continuous support system within the college if they are to integrate successfully and perform academically. Some students are HIV positive and they require continuous psychosocial support.

5.3.4 Bereavement

As illustrated in the findings bereavement forces students to seek psychological support at the college. The students bring in to the learning environment adverse experiences such as grief emanating from the loss of a guardian or a close family member. These factors interfere with the learning process, hence, psychological support is needed. The existence of such students is confirmed by Akhurst and Liebenberg (2010) who further reveal that the South African community cannot ignore the impact of HIV/AIDS in families where the students have to deal with grief and bereavement

5.3.5 Academic Pressure

Students present academic pressure as one of the many factors that drive them to seek psychological support. The academic pressure culminates from work overload. The students have to strike an equilibrium between social life and studying. Liebenberg (2010:576) shared results of research conducted at University of KwaZulu-Natal which points out that academic problems are a result of work overload, time management and anxiety relating to exams. Such scenarios compell students to seek psychological support if they are to achieve academically.

5.3.6 Trauma

The findings paints trauma as one of the circumstances that drives students to seek psychological support. The trauma can be a result of violent crime, assault and witnessing other traumatic events. Young (2009:473) conducted research that identified depression, suicidal ideas and sexual assault as some of the factors that lead to post-trauma stress. Young (2009:473) further asserts that mental health issues are very common among students attending institutions of higher learning, this is supported by the fact that large numbers of students approach the institutions' psychological support services.

5.4 STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

It was evident that the college's psychological support service was understaffed. The campuses' services are provided by voluntary SSS committee members and the entire college relies on one individual, the SDP, who is based at central office. This makes it difficult for the students to timeously receive psychological help timeously. The SSS structure which is responsible for executing psychological support services is deprived of qualified personnel. This compromised the quality of services offered to the students. The Framework for Further Education and Training Colleges (2008:2) underscores that most student support services in TVET Colleges suffer from inadequate capital and human resources that allow for adequate provision of student support services, psychological support services included. It can be noted from the findings that insufficient and unqualified staff undermined the provision of psychological support to needy students.

The role and commitment of college management is also questionable. Management lacks commitment to the provision of psychological support. The Framework for FET Colleges (DoE, 2008:2) on challenges facing TVET Colleges SSS structure confirms that key individuals and institutions regard the student support services as peripheral and not as a core service. These key individuals can be regarded as part of the college management. There is over reliance on the SSS committee members who carry out psychological support duties during their administration time. These committee members are full time academic staff.

The significant role played by psychological support to ensure the successful completion of courses is also undermined by the institution. Little is done by the college to ensure that students are informed of the availability of psychological support services. Russo-Glercher's assertion (2013:5) agrees that in tertiary institutions students are generally unaware of the availability of psychological support services.

The student support structure puts emphasis on other extra curricula activities such as sports at the expense of psychological support, a service which is vital to students' academic success.

5.5 ACCESSIBILITY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The findings illustrated that the college does provide psychological support services which are accessible at the college's five campuses. The psychological support services are administered by SSS members at campus level and referrals are made to the SDP based at central office. External referral services are utilised if the SDP does not have the capacity to handle the students' psychological issues.

5.5.1 Existence of Psychological Support

There is need for the institution, the state and other key stakeholders to establisht a comprehensive student support system that also caters for students' psychological needs. The psychological support should be accessible to all students within the institution if academic success is to be achieved. Young (2009) ssees the need to establish a comprehensive student support system that assists in tackling the many challenges faced by students, mental problems included.

It is evident that psychological support services are accessible tothe learners. However, there are quite a number of challenges the students experience in trying to access psychological support. Golardi (2013) postulates that although student support services are available to all students the main challenge is that they might not be accessible at the time and place convenient for students. The referral system utilised by the college cannot give immediate attention to students. In addition, the college does not have ultimate control of the referral system. The appointments revolve around the itinerary of the external service providers.

5.5.2 Effectiveness of Psychological Support Services

Benefits can also be derived if psychological support services are effectively provided to students in TVET colleges. Illustrated in the findings are a number of benefits that can be derived from the accessibility of psychology support by the students. The benefits that can be realised include improved academic support, improved college certification rate, improved student attendance, reduction in student attrition and enhancement of college reputation. These are some of the positives the college can derive if psychological support services are effectively utilised.

5.5.3 Challenges on Accessing Psychological Support

There are various obstacles that hinder the accessibility of psychological support services. The research findings underscored the poor referral system, working outside normal working hours, students' different cultural background, SDP/student ratio, staff shortages, dual roles of SSS staff, operational times and inadequate on-site counselling as some of the challenges identified by staff that hinder the effective accessing of psychological support by students.

5.5.3.1 Students Diversified Cultural Background

The institution accomodates students from diverse cultural backgrounds. It has been noted that it is difficult for some the staff providing psychological support to meet the cultural needs of the diversified student population. Ideally psychological support should embrace the cultural aspects of individual

students. Chong (2011) emphasises the need to comprehend the factors affecting the wellbeing of students with diverse cultural, language, different backgrounds and socio-economic status as a precondition for the provision of psychosocial services.

5.5.3.2 Inadequate Staff

The SSS is understaffed and deprived of professional employees. This has a negative impact on the provision of psychological support services. It has been noted that this understaffing of the SSS structure hinders the accessibility of psychological support by the students. Brock (2010:120) pinpoints that a major concern exists in public institutions on the counselor student ratio. The institution's SDP/Student ratio is a major concern as the existing personnel cannot cater for the large contingent of students in need of psychological support. This compromises the easy and timely accessibility of psychological support by the students.

The staff concerned, specifically the SDP, work long hours and sometimes during weekends. This routine is exhaustive and can lead to burnout rendering the accessibility of psychological services ineffective.

5.5.3.3 Referral System

The college's hand is forced to utilise external referral system. The external referal system does not facilitate follow-ups on students to ensure adherence when taking the treatement. The findings highlight the inadequacy of on-campus counselling exacerbated by inadequate resources and unskilled personnel found within the college's five campuses. This compromises the immediate accessibility of psychological support by the students.

5.5.3.4 Conflicting Roles of SSS staff

Accessiblity of psychological support services is also hindered by the conflicting roles of the staff serving as SSS Committee Members. The SSS staff serve as full time lecturers and carry out SSS activities as non-incentive receiving voluntary staff. These SSS members are not qualified to administer psychological support and receive little or no training at all to capacitate them.

5.5.3.5 Stigmatisation and Lack of Trust

Stigmatisation and lack of trust amongst students discourage them from seeking psychological help. Some students lack trust in the system responsible for administering psychological support services. It is quite evident that staff on the ground are not trained professionals. The staff do not have the knowledge and skills necessary for the effective provision of psychological support.

5.6 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

The findings highlighted a number of strategies that can be implemented in order to improve the provision of psychological support to students at Majuba TVET College: linkages with other key stakeholders, recruitment of additional qualified staff, staff development and training, peer education and mentoring, capacity building, and dissemination of information.

5.6.1 Linkages with Key Stakeholders

It is necessary to establish networks with other key stakeholders if the institution's psychological support system is to be improved. Key stakeholders include other TVET Colleges, DoH, and professional bodies such as HPCSA and PySSA. Maree (2012:106) conveys the importance of adhering to the various bodies that govern how professionals should conduct themselves. These should be guided by policies enacted by the DHET. The establishment of partnerships would foster the sense of sharing information on best practices and on how to improve the existing structure and human resources. Maree and van der Westhuizen (2012:109) mention the need for all tertiary institutions to create more relevant theories and practices. The relevant theories should accomodate the cultural and background context of the students. A uniform approach by key stakeholders to all the important facets of psychological support is one way of improving psychological support.

5.6.2 Recruitment of qualified Staff

The findings underscored that the existing student support services with the college can be enhanced by hiring additional qualified staff. The hired individuals should be registered with relevant professional organisations such as the HPCSA. These professional organisations prescribe the best practices and guidelines to be adhered to when providing psychological support. Recruiting more staff will improve the practitioner-student ratio. Brock (2010) opines that a major concern about the counselor-student ratio exists in tertiary institutions. Recruiting additional qualified personnel is one way of enhancing psychological support to students.

5.6.3 Staff Development and Training

Staff development and training will equip the relevant staff members with the necessary expertise to deal with psychological support issues. Capacitating staff complements other efforts aimed at improving psychological support to students within the college. External referrals would be limited and students would be more likely to be attended to immediately. Britto and Rush (2013:31) recommend that priority should be given to the training of staff members involved in the discharging of student support services.

This not only serves to empowerto the staff responsible for providing psychological support but also serves as a way of improving how these services are delivered.

5.6.4 Dissemination of Information

The results indicated that, in order to improve the accessibility of psychological support, students should be aware of the service's existence. Ways on how to access the psychological support services and any other available students' services should be conveyed to the students.   This information should be communicated during the student orientation process. This notion is supported by Miller et al. (2011:7) who accentuate that students should be involved in college pre-programmes such as orientation as this does assist in alleviating anxieties and accelerates the student integration process into the college environment. It is evident from the results that, conveying information on the existence of psychological support will contribute immensely to the accessibility and utilisation of the service by the students.

5.6.5 Peer Counselling

Peer counselling will not only complement the existing staff SSS staff structure but will also serve as a strategy to improve the provision of psychological support structure. Students seeking psychological help will not solely rely on SSS staff but can also make use of their peers. The college has a contingent of learners who have been trained on counselling. There are staff members who have also attended the training as peer mentors. This definitely will make the services more accessible to students. In addition, the students will be served by skilled and knowledgeable individuals. However, these peer counsellors and mentors require continuous supervision from more qualified and experienced individuals. Research conducted by Duncan, Brown-Rice and Bardhoshi (2014:44) advocate that psychological support practitioners should receive both administrative and clinical supervision. This ensures that they are up-to-date with the existing policies and procedures with regard to admistration issues. Clinical supervision seeks to improve the administering of psychological interventions.

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature review to highlight the issues surrounding the effective provision of psychological support to students. The college provides comprehensive psychological support and the services but in limited form. Student psychological support yields positive results as it facilitates student integration and academic success of the learners. Challenges are encountered when providing psychological support; which include, lack of qualified staff, a poor referral system, low prioritisation of psychological support by college management and lack of coordinated efforts in utilising psychological support.   Career counselling, pre-counselling, short-term

counselling, external referrals, on-going counselling and peer counselling are some of the psychological support available to students. Different strategies can be implemented to enhance the provision of psychological support to students. Engaging qualified staff, enacting linkages, staff development and training and peer counselling and mentoring are some of the strategies that can be utilised in enhancing psychological support.

In the next chapter, a summary of the entire study is provided. The researcher then provides conclusions and makes recommendations based on the objectives of the study and the results obtained.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study on the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered to students at Majuba TVET College. Psychological support services are offered by the college and the students present different problems for psychological help. Several of obstacles are encountered during the provision and accessibility of psychological support. However there are various measures that can be put in place to improve the provision of psychological support. The conclusions focus on the themes derived from the study's objectives.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study sought to examine the effectiveness of psychological support services rendered and utilised by students at Majuba TVET College. In order to explore the provision of psychological support services an intensive literature review was conducted. The qualitative methodology was used to allow the researcher to explore and obtain rich information on the provision of psychological support. A case study design was utilised. The participants were of Majuba TVET College students and staff. A Purposive sampling technique was used to select staff responsible for providing psychological support. The convenience sampling technique was used to select student participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff members of the SSS structure. To obtain information from the students, focus group interviews were used. Thematic data analysis was employed to analyse the data with themes derived from the objectives of the study. The following were major findings of the study:

- The nature of psychological support services provided to students include: career counselling, pre-counselling, referral system, short-term counselling, on-going counselling, and peer counselling and mentoring.

- There are various factors that compel students to seek psychological support. The most common factors presented by the participants are comprised of: bereavement, family issues, academic pressure, students' health status, anger issues, depression and trauma.

- There are several challenges that hinder the effective provision of psychological support services to students. Notable challenges include lack of qualified staff, a poor referral system, and low prioritisation of psychological support by college management, non-dissemination of information to students on the availability of psychological support, limited access time and inadequate on-site counselling.

- Effective provision of psychological support services will lead to improved academic performance, improved certification rate, improved students' attendance, improved student retention and enhancement of college reputation.

- Strategies that can be used to improve the provision of psychological support are the establishment of linkages with key stakeholders, hiring more qualified staff, staff training and development, access to psychological support on a 24-hour 7-days-a-week basis and dissemination.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

This section is dedicated to the conclusions of the study. The conclusions are derived from themes derived from the objectives of the study and supported by the literature review.

6.3.1 Nature of Psychological Support Services rendered to Students

It can be concluded that the college does offer various psychological support services to students. Psychological support falls under the SSS services structure which also caters for other students' needs such as financial support and physical health activities. Psychological support is part of the non-academic support. Career counselling is another key area. These services are offered by SSS committee members based at the college's five campuses. The team constitutes volunteers who are employed as full time academic staff.

The services are basically divided into pre-entry support and on-course support. Career counselling is part of the pre-entry support and it is conducted during the enrolment process. Career counselling focuses on assisting students to select programmes that match their intellectual capacity and personality. Psychological support is offered both internally and externally. Internal referrals to the SDP stationed at central office are made by SSS members if they cannot handle the student's problems. Referrals to external services are done if the problem is beyond the SDP's speciality. The institution was in the process of establishing means to utilise peer counselling and mentoring.

Selected students and staff were trained on peer counselling and mentoring. Pre-counselling is a procedure that is carried out by all staff members with students prior to the actual counselling process. Students are given the opportunity to discuss their problems with the practitioner before further action is taken. Short-term counselling is administered to solve the students' immediate problem. If the problem requires substantial time, on-going counselling is provided. Of concern is that, most of the staff especially the SSS staff members do not have the necessary expertise to effectively deal with students' psychological issues.

6.3.2 Factors that Compel Students to Seek Psychological Support

The institution enrols students from different cohorts. The diversified student population bring to the college environment different cultures and experiences. These individual students encounter different challenges that require psychological support. The most common issues that students present for psychological support include bereavement, family issues, academic pressure, depression, students' health status, low socio-economic status, relationships and trauma.

6.3.3 Students' Perceptions on Provision of Psychological Support

It can be noted from the study that psychological support services are available at the college but here are various challenges that students encounter in accessing psychological support which is limited. The obstacles to accessing psychological support are attributed to lack of commitment from college management which seems to regard the provision of psychological support as unimportant. Inadequate and unqualified staff also renders the provision of psychological support ineffective. Most of the students are unaware of the existence of psychological support services within the college. This is attributed to lack of information.

6.3.4 Accessibility of Psychological Support Services

Psychological support services are available within the college. The services are offered internally and externally. Internal services are offered to students by SSS Committee Members at the college's five campuses. Internal referrals are made to the SDP at central office if the student's problem requires a qualified individual. External referrals are made if the SDP does not have the capacity to address the student's problem. The effective provision of psychological support to students will yield improved academic support, improved college certification rate, improved student attendance, reduction in student attrition and enhanced college reputation.

There are a number of obstacles that hinder the effective accessibility of psychological support services by students. Lack of qualified permanent staff is of major concern. The department is understaffed and this compromises the SDP/student ratio. The staff ate overwhelmed with the large student numbers compromising the quality of psychological support. Most of the staff members at campuses are volunteers and this also questions their commitment to psychological support as they are full time academic staff. These staff members are not professionals in this field.

The operational times are also restrictive to students in need of psychological support. The services are only accessible during the normal college hours making it impossible to access them at night and during weekends and holidays.

The referral system deprives students' immediate access to psychological support. The external referral system does not allow the college to follow-up on students. Once the students have been referred to external services, the burden is on the students alone to complete their treatment. On-campus counselling is inadequate as SSS staff has to make referrals to the central office if they cannot handle the matter.

Non-dissemination of information to students on available psychological support services hinders accessibility. Students are not provided sufficient information on services available at the college. The information is usually only communicated during student orientation and students may not be aware of this event.

Some students are hesitant to seek psychological help because they lack trust in those providing the psychological support and also because of fear of stigmatisation.

6.3.5 Ways of Enhancing the Provision of Psychological Support Services

Despite all the challenges various strategies can be used to improve the provision of psychological support at the college. The college can establish linkages with key stakeholders such as other TVET Colleges, DHET, Department of Health (DoH) and professional bodies such as the HPSCA. Partnerships would allow the college to emulate other colleges that have successfully enacted and effectively provided psychological support. Partnerships with DoH and other professional bodies would ensure that the college personnel adhere to the prescribed codes of conduct and do not infringe on the rights of the students.

The hiring of qualified staff ensures that the services are provided effectively as these individuals are equipped with the necessary skills and expertise. Hiring more staff is a necessity to balance the staff student ratio. There is need to provide training to staff involved in the provision of psychological support

services as, SSS staff lack the necessary skills to deal with students' psychological problems. Information on the availability of psychological support should be disseminated as early as possible all the beneficiaries.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are derived from the study's findings and conclusions. The focus is on how to improve the provision of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College. Areas for further research are also recommended in this chapter.

6.4.1 Linkages with other key stakeholders

It is recommended that the college should establish networks with other key stakeholders. The college has linkages with local external stakeholders such as psychologists where referrals are made if the scope of assistance needed by the student is beyond the expertise of college personnel. Further partnerships should be established with other TVET Colleges. The enactment of such partnerships will facilitate the sharing of valuable information on how psychological support is being administered and utilised by similar institutions. This does not only allow the sharing of information on best practices but also on how other TVET Colleges have set up and are providing psychological support. By establishing networks with key stakeholders the provision of psychological support will be improved.

Linkages should be established with the DoH to bolster the provision of psychological support within the institution. Such a partnership will allow the college to access health services that are aligned to psychological support such as trauma centres. The DoH offers a number of services that cater for the well- being of the youth. Partnerships will ensure such services are accessible and are being utilised by the college students.

6.4.2 Recruitment of more and qualified staff

It is recommended that the college recruit additional qualified staff. At the time of the study the college's psychological support service relied on one permanently employed SDP for all five campuses. This set up results in having an unfavourable student practitioner ratio. Voluntary staff members are employed as full time academic staff who can only devote their administration time to psychological support. These academic staff members are not qualified to administer psychological support. Against the backdrop of such staff shortages it is recommended that the college engage additional qualified psychological support personnel in order to improve the provision of psychological support services.

6.4.3 Professional Board Registration

The research findings indicated that only the appointed college SDP executes psychological support duties. It is recommended that the existing and other staff that are appointed in the future are members of

professional associations such as the HPCSA. This will not only equip the staff with the necessary skills and techniques and but will make sure staff observe the prescribed guidelines as required. Professional associations will also allow the staff to continuously develop as they are responsible for recommending relevant training programmes that will update the practitioner's knowledge. Belonging to such professional boards will ensure that staff do not breach the prescribed rules and that any deviations will result in penalties.

6.4.4 Staff development and training

The college has existing staff that are responsible for psychological support. It is imperative that these individuals have the required knowledge and can administer the psychological techniques correctly. It is recommended that staff should be further developed and trained on the provision of psychological support. The college should continue subsidising staff members' studies and fund relevant programmes. More opportunities for further training should be accessible to and be utilised by staff responsible for counselling services. Staff development and training will improve the psychological support provided to the students within the college.

6.4.5 Commitment by College Management

Psychological support is regarded as an ancillary service that is not vital to students' academic success. Low prioritisation of psychological support services has an adverse impact on student performance and the college's certification rate. It is recommended that the college management shows commitment to the provision of psychological support by appointing fulltime qualified staff and not relying on volunteers. Sufficient resources such as infrastructure vital for providing psychological support should be provided.

6.4.6 Continuous Evaluation

The college has an existing psychological support services unit that has been in existence for a number of years. This unit was established and is governed by the Student Support Services Framework enacted in 2008. It is essential that the college consults the DHET on any changes in order to complement the existing structure. The college should also engage in continuous evaluation to allow for the identification of gaps and engaging in remedial action. Continuous evaluation of psychological support improves the quality of services provided.

6.4.7 Utilise peer counselling and mentoring

The college's peer counselling and mentoring programme was still in its infancy at the time of the study. It is recommended that a strategy that will fully utilise the programme be drawn up and be implemented.

Peer counselling will reduce the work overload on staff members and at the same time improve the rate at which psychological problems are attended to. Further funds should be mobilised and partnerships should be formed to ensure that peer counselling is utilised. Such a stance would make the psychological support services more accessible to the students.

6.4.8 Dissemination of information

It is recommended that institutions provide sufficient information on the availability of psychological support services to all students. The findings from the study highlighted non-dissemination of information to students as one of the challenges encountered by students in their quest to access psychological support. It is therefore recommended that colleges provide information to students timeously about psychological support and other available services. This should be done during student orientation and awareness campaigns on the provision of psychological support should be held on more frequent intervals.

6.4.9 Accessible Time

Psychological support services should be available around the clock. The current status allows students to access psychological support services only during the normal college times. This renders the provision of psychological support ineffective as students are left stranded if they need immediate help outside college hours. It is that recommended other counselling methods such as telephonic assistance be introduced to supplement the face-to-face counselling.

6.4.10 Referral System

Student referral systems for psychological help need to be improved if psychological support is going be effectively utilised by the students. The referral system revolves around the schedule of the external practitioner which delays the provision of psychological help to students. It is recommended that a practitioner is always available to attend to students immediately. A viable follow-up system should be put in place to ensure that students do not skip or default on their treatment.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study intended to have five SDPs as its sample, one SDP from each of the college's five campuses. At the time of the study, it was found out that the college had one SDP based at central office even though the organogram of the SSS indicated five SDPs. This compelled data to be collected on only one SDP as opposed to the intended five SDPs. This was, however, addressed through the collection of data from members of the SSS Committee.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study focussed on the effective provision of psychological support to students. The study covered areas such as the nature of psychological support, factors compelling students to seek psychological support, students' perceptions on psychological support and ways of enhancing the provision of psychological support.

Further studies should be conducted on the various techniques that can be used when providing psychological support to students. It is also imperative that besides the techniques, the various theories on psychological support should be further studied in order to identify theories that are more relevant to different student contexts.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: **Consent Form - Staff**

Appendix B: **Consent Form – Students**

Appendix C: **Ethical Clearance**

Appendix D: **Application for Permission to Conduct Research**

Appendix E: **Permission to Conduct Research from Institution**

Appendix F: **Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

Appendix G: **Focus Group Interview Guide**

Appendix H: **Semi-Structured Transcript**

Appendix I: **Focus Group Interview Transcript**

Appendix A: Consent Form - Staff

Date: _____

Title: Exploring the effectiveness of psychological support services provided to students at Majuba TVET College, KwaZulu-Natal Province

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Munyaradzi Muchineripi and I am studying doing research towards a Master of Education with Specialization in Adult Education at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled Improving Psychological Support Services at Majuba TVET College, Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal Province.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is expected to collect important information that could allow Majuba TVET College to enact a feasible psychological support service structure that is focused on addressing the psychological needs of the learners. The study will assist in determining strategies that foster the effective rendering of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College and other public TVET Colleges.

Why am I being invited to participate?

The researcher used purposive sampling to select key rich staff that forms part of the Student Support Services Structure. The researcher identified 1 Student Development Practitioners, The Acting Director Student Support Services, 2 participants from each of the 5 campuses who are part of the Campus Student Support Services Committee. The total number of participants will be 12.

What is the nature of my participation in the study?

The study involves semi-structured interviews that will be recorded verbatim. Open ended questions will be used to get in-depth information on the provision of psychological support services. The duration of the semi-structured interview will be between 15-25 minutes.

Can I withdraw from the study having agreed to participate?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation.   If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written

consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.   There is no compensation for participation and the data collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

Are there any negative consequences for me if I participates in the research project?

The researcher does not foresee any risks or discomforts.

Will the information that I convey to the researcher and my identity be kept confidential? Although the semi-structured interview will be tape recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the research report. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

How will the researcher(s) protect the security of data?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer.

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study? There is no compensation for participation and the data collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

Has the study received ethics approval?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU ERC, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

How will I be informed of the finding of the findings/results of the research?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Munyaradzi Muchineripi on +278 3510 8190 or 45018715@mylife@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible from April 2017.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Munyaradzi Muchineripi on +278 3510 8190 or 45018715@mylife@unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Mr D Addae on +2712 481 2927 or addaed@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the CEDU REC Dr Madaleen Claassens (mcdtc@netactive.co.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

……………………………
Munyaradzi Muchineripi

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname………………………………………… (Please print)

Participant Signature…………………………………………………. Date …………………

Researcher's Name & Surname …………………………………… (Please print)

Researcher's signature………................................. Date…………………

Appendix B: Consent Form - Student

Date_____

Title: Title: Exploring the effectiveness of psychological support services provided to students at Majuba TVET College, KwaZulu-Natal Province

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Munyaradzi Muchineripi and I am studying doing research towards a Master of Education with Specialization in Adult Education at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled Improving Psychological Support Services at Majuba TVET College, Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal Province.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is expected to collect important information that could allow Majuba TVET College to enact a feasible psychological support service structure that is focused on addressing the psychological needs of the learners. The study will assist in determining strategies that will foster the effective rendering of psychological support services to students at Majuba TVET College and other public TVET Colleges.

Why am I being invited to participate?

The researcher will use convenience sampling to select students who will form part of the study. The researcher will approach students around the five campuses until the required number of 6 students per campus is reached. The total number of participants will be 30 students. That will constitute 5 focus group interviews with 6 members in each group.

What is the Nature of my participation to this study? The study involves focus group interviews that will be recorded verbatim. Input will be derived from the participants on questions posed by the researcher. The participants will have the platform to express their opinions on the issues under study. Participants are expected to participate without any fear or prejudice. The duration of the focus group interview will be between 30-45 minutes.

Can I withdraw from the study even after having agreed to participate?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written

consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.   There is no compensation for participation and the data collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

Are there any negative consequences for me if I participate in the research project?
The researcher does not foresee any harm or discomfort.

Will the information that I convey to the researcher and identity be kept confidential? Although the focus group will be tape recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the research report. A focus group interview constitutes 6-10 members discussing responding to questions presented by the researcher. The participants will be responding to issues of a common nature. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

How will the researcher(s) protect the security of data?
Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer.

Will I receive payment or incentives for participating in this study? There is no compensation for participation and the data collected will be used for the sole purpose of the study.

Has the study received ethics approval? This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU ERC, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

How will I be informed of the findings/results of the research?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Munyaradzi Muchineripi on +278 3510 8190 or 45018715@mylife@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible from April 2017.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Munyaradzi Muchineripi on +278 3510 8190 or 45018715@mylife@unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Mr D Addae on +2712 481 2927 or addaed@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the CEDU REC Dr Madaleen Claassens (mcdtc@netactive.co.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.
Thank you.

………………………………

Munyaradzi   Muchineripi

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…………………………………………… (Please print)
Participant Signature………………………………………….. Date……………………..
Researcher's Name & Surname…………………………………… (Please print)
Researcher's signature…………………………………………... Date……………….......

FOCUS GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I_____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the group discussions (focus group interviews) may be used by the researcher, [Munyaradzi Muchineripi], for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): ....

Participant's Signature: ……………………………………………………………………………

Researcher's Name: (Please print): ……………………………………………………………

Researcher's Signature: ....

Date: ....

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

16 November 2016

Ref : **2016/11/16/45018715/64/MC**
Student : Mr M Muchineripi
Student Number : 45018715

Dear Mr Muchineripi

Decision: Approved

Researcher: Mr M Muchineripi
Tel: +2783 510 8190
Email: 45018715@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor: Mr D Addae
College of Education
Department of Adult Education and Youth Development
Tel: +2712 4812972
Email: addaed@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Exploring Psychological Support Services in public TVET Colleges in Amajuba District, KwaZulu-Natal Province

Qualification: M Ed in Adult Education and Youth Development

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 16 November 2016.
The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

1) *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
2) *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the*

existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Note: The reference number **2016/11/16/45018715/64/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Appendix D: Application for Permission to Conduct the Study

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

6. DECLARATION BY THE APPLICANT

I undertake to use the information that I acquire through my research, in a balanced and a responsible manner. I furthermore take note of, and agree to adhere to the following conditions:

a) I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the said institution and participants. I will not interrupt the said institution's programmes.

b) I agree that involvement by participants in the research study is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate in the investigation.

c) I will therefore provide consent forms to participants to complete prior to the commencement of the research.

d) I will obtain written parental consent of students under 18 years, if they are expected to participate in the study.

e) I will honour the right of participants to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and respect for human dignity at all times. Participants will not be identifiable in any way from the result of the investigation.

f) I will not include the names of the said institution or research participants in my research report, without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or institutions.

g) I will not use the resources of the said institution (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones) for the research study.

h) I will inform participants about the use of monitoring devices such as tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.

i) I will include a disclaimer to any report, publication or presentation arising from the investigation, that the findings and recommendations does not represent the views of the said institution.

j) I will provide a summary of the findings of the research to the Head of the specific institution.

I declare that all statements made in this application are true and accurate. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.

| SIGNATURE: | *(signature)* |
| DATE: | 8/15/16 |

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Appendix E: Permission to Conduct Research from the Institution

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

FOR OFFICIAL USE

DECISION BY HEAD OF INSTITUTION

Please tick relevant decision and provide conditions/reasons where applicable

	Decision	Please tick relevant option
1	Application approved	✓
2	Application approved subject to certain conditions. *Specify conditions below.*	
3	Application not approved. *Provide reasons for non-approval below.*	

NAME AND SURNAME:	Sawele J. Mblshwa
SIGNATURE:	
DATE:	2016/08/18
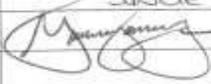
MAJUBA TVET COLLEGE
CENTRAL OFFICE

1 8 AUG 2016

TEL: 034 - 326 4888
PRIVATE BAG X6602
NEWCASTLE 2940

5

Appendix F: Declaration of Professional Edit

Blue Diamonds Professional Services (Pty) Ltd

Enhancing your brilliance
Tel: 031 916 1420
Fax: 086 627 7756   Email: jaybee@telkomsa.net
Website: www.jaybe9.wix.com/bluediamondsed

9 May 2017

Declaration of professional edit

EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS AT MAJUBA TVET COLLEGE, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

By

Munyaradzi Muchineripi

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 100 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

Sincerely,

Dr Jacqueline Baumgardt
Member, Professional Editors Guild

Appendix G: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Nature of psychological support

1.   Can you tell me your job title and your key responsibilities with the student support services?

2.   What is the nature of psychological support do you provide to students? Please explain.

Factors Compelling Student to Seek Psychological Help

1.   What is the nature of psychological problems do students present for psychological help?

2.   Students seeking psychological support come from different backgrounds and they present different psychological problems. How do you ensure that their psychological needs are met?

Accessibility of Psychological Support

1.   Can you explain the procedures that you follow when a student approaches your office for psychological support?

2.   Do you rely on internal psychological support or you also engage external psychological support services? Please explain.

3.   How do students benefit from the utilization of psychological support?

4.   What are some of the benefits does the college derive from the provision of psychological support to students?

5.   Can you explain some of the challenges that you encounter in trying to provide psychological support to students?

6.   What are your views on college management's role on the provision of psychological support services?

7.   Does the college have sufficient resources to support the provision of psychological support? Please explain?

Enhancing Psychological Support

1.   What are some of the strategies do you recommend in order to improve the provision of psychological support?

2.   Do you think it is necessary to forge partnerships with other TVET Colleges with regard to the provision of psychological support services? Explain.

3.   What are the required qualifications and competencies that make one qualify to provide psychological support to the students?

4.   Can you outline the nature of training that staff responsible for the provision of psychological support services need in order to effectively execute their duties?

5.   What are your views on qualified staff joining psychological regulating bodies such as the Health Professional Council of South Africa?

Do you have any other comments?

Appendix H: Focus Group Interview Guide

Nature of Psychological Support

1.   What is the nature of psychological support does the college provide to students?

Factors Compelling Students to Seek Psychological Support

1.   What is the nature of psychological problems do students present for psychological support?

2.   Students present different psychological problems. How does the psychological support staff ensure that different students' psychological needs are addressed?

Students Perceptions Psychological Support

1.   What are your views with regard to the provision of psychological support at your campus?

2.   What are your views on college management's role on the provision of psychological support to students?

3.   Does the college have adequate resources to facilitate the effective provision of psychological support?

4.   Does the college Student Support Services staff have the necessary qualifications and competencies to provide psychological support? Please explain.

Accessibility of Psychological Support

1.   Can you outline the procedure that you follow when accessing psychological support?

2.   Is psychological support available internally within the college or is provided by external stakeholders? Please elaborate.

3.   What are some of the challenges do you encounter in trying to access psychological support?

4.   Can you outline some of the benefits the students get from the provision of psychological support?

Enhancing Psychological Support

1.   In what ways do you think the college can improve the provision of psychological support/

2.   Do you think it's necessary to establish linkages with other stakeholders such as other TVET Colleges, DoH and other campuses with regard to the provision of psychological support? Please explain.

Do you have any other comments?

Appendix I: Semi- Structured Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Tell me about your title and your core duties

Participant 1: I am the Student Development Practitioner, so l am more into student development and that includes pre-entry support when they come, eh on-course support and exit support. So whatever the student, when the student is inside the premises of the college, I am responsible to make sure that I support them and attend to their problems, whether psychological, social, physical or academic.

Interviewer: You mentioned something about pre-entry support, which services are basically aligned to the pre-entry?

Participant 1: Ok, with the pre-entry support, what we do is when the student comes in to register, we have eh career guidance, career advice that we do for them and then we have placement test that they write. After that we need to sit with the student and discuss issues around the results of the test, so it's around challenging the student towards mm selecting a course that they like, that is in line with their personalities. There is on-course support, when they are here, we are responsible to ensure that they are comfortable within the college structure, then we attend to their needs. So with on-course support, it will include academic support, psychological support, health and wellness and any other problems that the student might encounter inside the premises of the college.

Interviewer: Thank you for that, what are some of the benefits that students get when they make use of psychological support services?

Participant: mm you know when the students come in; we have realized that they come in with a lot of baggage. So they normally have problems that they encounter before they come to the college. So what they get from us, we do counselling and then if we feel they need more support we refer them to psychologists and we pay for the services. So it means the student can come in with a ten year old problem, then they get help from here and then we assist them, it's not only the psychologists, there is doctors, optometrists, so all the required referrals we have within the college.

Interviewer: So what sort of psychological problems do the students present in order to get help?

Participant: (Sighs), we are dealing with a lot of students that come from child headed families, so you can just imagine the type of psychological problems that they will come with and some students will be dealing with the death of a loved one, their guardian, things like those, then we will find students that are finding it hard to cope within the college environment. So those are part of psychological problems that

they come with. Sometimes, more recently we had a student, one of their peers died in the room, to all that effect they had, it's a lot. A variety of problems that we come up with but, its most of them are something was done years ago. So when they come in, get support from the college.

Interviewer: You mentioned that if you can handle the psychological issue you refer to psychologist. Do you have any referral system in place?

Participant: Yes we do. We have a database within the SSS of the external services that we use. So we have a database for psychologists, doctors, psychometrist and all those people, because sometimes you deal with a case, you find out that a student had already gone to a psychologist. So then we have to follow up on that same psychologist and refer back. Yah so we have a database for those people.

Interviewer: When you attend to students, do you have any specific times that the services can be accessible to the students?

Participant: With SSS normally we don't have any time when you say you not working. Yah, because sometimes you have to work after hours. We need to work, because when we assist the student, we have to work around their schedule, sometimes you see that the student is available sometimes after 7pm with the afternoon classes. So we are not really confined, because also on weekends. Maybe when we need to meet the parents and some of those people we need to go and assist them.

Interviewer: What form of support do you get from the college management with regard to the provision of psychological support services?

Participant: We, I will say they allow us to apply our intervention; they rely on us to tell them what we need. So I haven't had a case where I am not supported. They say we the specialist in these matters (chuckles). So whatever we say goes. I will say they are, I can't be specific on what type of support but whatever request, we get from them.

Interviewer: Can you outline some of the challenges that you encounter when it comes to the provision of psychological support services?

Participant: mm, I will say most of the time students are referred on their very last stage of their problems. We, we normally get when the student really needs, is in dire need of assistance whereby we get in and assist a very early stage of the problem. I think that's one of the challenges. The second one is when we work with external stakeholders, we have to work around their schedule because they are doctors, and they are working. So some they, we have an urgent matter that you need to attend to and you find, that there is no opening for us to take the student through. And the other one, it might be a challenge

for someone else, for someone. I'm used to working outside the college hours. It's I think that would be one of those things. If somebody comes on and they are not willing to work outside college hours then that would be a challenge. Yah, but I'm used to it. It's nothing new to me.

Interviewer: We understand Majuba is a Public TVET College, student population comprised of students from various backgrounds. How do you ensure that these students' different psychological needs are met?

Participant: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Students come from different backgrounds and they are faced with varying psychological needs. How do you ensure that their psychological needs are addressed?

Participant: mm, you know, I believe that we are not Jack of trades. So when we deal with students from another background, then you, you need to do your background check, in order to see on how best to assist the student. Sometimes I will to go through, phone the parents, they will tell you, no don't do anything it's nothing medical, it will adjust, sort itself out and the moment they say that you cannot interfere with those things. So it's very important that work with people around and understand better the student's background before you intervene because you might do more damage if you don't understand what they are going through.

Interviewer: Do you think it is necessary to forge partnerships with other TVET Colleges with regard to the provision of psychological support services?

Participant: I don't think so because the colleges are in different places. So, if we have partnerships, with Mnambiti for example, then it means sometimes we have to travel to take our students to Mnambiti. I think it's important that we form our own partnership with people around. The only thing that we can do with other colleges will be to share best practices on how to deal with these matters. Yah, I think that will be the only thing that we need to do, because I feel there might be colleges that deal better with issues that we are. So I feel, if we sit and share best practices, it will be best for our college.

Interviewer: Do you have any linkages with professional bodies like HPCSA?

Participant: ah not at this point, no, the reason for that I think we have partnerships with people that are registered. Yah so we really don't because at this point in time because of those people I don't think it's necessary.

Interviewer: Can you outline the core competencies should one have in order to effectively render psychological support services to the students?

Participant: It will have to be somebody who studied psychology. That should be the core. Somebody who is passionate about the youth, somebody who can work heart fully. We really don't need somebody who will tell us, I really need to be home and somebody who understands the college set up because it doesn't help to have somebody that does not understand what we are on about. But psychology is core, yah.

Interviewer: I understand the college has five campuses. How do you ensure the psychological support services are adequately provided to the students in each of the campuses?

Participant: Oh ok, that one is a difficult one. What happened before, because now right now I am the only SDP in the whole college, so before I would have scheduled appointments with the campuses. We had days I would be at campus the whole day, then I can, you know deal with whatever problems that they have, but what we have seen is that you are in Campus A, something happens in Campus B, then I have to quickly drive there. So what we have done, we have people on campus that we rely on, that we phone whenever there is a student crises. Then I can quickly make an appointment and drive there. That's why now I am at Central Office. It makes it easier for me to move from Campus A to Campus B. It's very frustrating because sometimes I have to attend t four places in one day in different campuses and it's emotionally taxing buts it's something we just have to do.

Interviewer: What strategies can be put in place in order to improve the provision of psychological support services?

Participant: mm, something that we have already done. We trained peer educators and peer mentors. So each campus has ten peer mentors and ten peer educators. So we are hoping that through these people, students can get better services from us because then the student will then the student will move from the peer educator and peer mentor before I attend to the problem and some of the campuses have created committees. So there are people, it's not all of them but some of them, we are just looking at those people to assist. Also we are looking at employing four more people. It will means we have one SDP per campus to attend to the students' problems.

Interview: Do you receive any training to assist you in the provision of psychological support services?

Participant: We attend, mm there is an organization that deals with, they call it Student Affairs because that what's it's called in Universities. So we normally attend those sessions they have. It's more of best

practice sharing, and then sometimes during the year we have invitations from other stakeholders of training that will enhance SSS. So we do attend such programs if we see that it will assist. Yah, then we also have HEAIDS (Higher Education Aids). Yah we also have training from them.

Interviewer: Do you have any other comments?

Participant: What I can say is that SSS in TVET Colleges is one of the departments that still need a lot of work because you find ukhuti, it's one of the offices, departments with less personnel, whilst it should be an office with more personnel than any other department. It does not help us if there is 10 000 and 7000 of those who need psychological assistance and the only people that can assist it's two or three. So I feel that once colleges get more personnel, it will give healthier students to learn, which in turn we get more pass rate out of them.

Interviewer: This brings us to the end of our interview. Thank you for your time.

Participant: Pleasure.

Appendix J: Focus Group Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Can you tell you outline the structure of the SSS?

Participant 1: We do have a SSS in Majuba. In fact it's supposed to be in every campus, every campus should have a SSS even at central level we have eee, the one who is the chairperson of the SSS. She is there at central, but in-fact, we call it an Student Development Practitioner (SDP), that work with the Student Support, those teams to support us to assist the Student Representative Council (SRC) in activities such as sports and all that and there is a chairperson per campus, who is supposed to be an SDP, one who is qualified to deal with psychological issues as the chairperson. Because if we can look at the office of the SSS, the way its structured, they are even chairs and sofas, so that they talk an give advice and all of that and then the additional members of the SSS are just going to assist us in terms sports and all the other activities that are there but not to counsel but as it is in reality we don't have SDP that the reality.

Participant 2: Just to add something I don't understand about the sports activities, it seems like we all focusing on sports activities. All of us students can't play soccer, volleyball, there must be something that can be done like other activities and I can't believe that all of us can do sports activities at school.

Interviewer: You mentioned sports, what form of other support do you get from SSS?

Participant 3: Basically eeh, the support that we have from SSS besides sports, there is the chairperson of SSS, the one who is responsible for all the activities, he calls meetings with the SRC, who assist but its clear that we do need and SDP because there questions that he cannot assist us with. Now we are looking at one, let's say you a teacher, coming into the meeting of whom the SDP. The SDP must be in an autonomous office, one needs to speak openly, do this job openly without fear of saying this is the HOD, this is the Campus Manager, of which the SDP is a lecturer who falls under these people. That is why I am saying there is no SDP. When the SSS speaks there, SSS speaks in fear saying at the end of the day I will lose my job, so I will shy away from this, so that's why I am saying we do not have an SDP as it is but according to the procedures the SDP should be there. SDP should be there because the SSS speaks in open, dealing straight with the DHET, just managing on its own dealing straight with the DHET to ensure that things are run properly as the DHET has guided the campus just like the Rector or the Council.

Interviewer: I understand there are 50 accredited public TVET Colleges in South Africa and they accommodate students from poor socio-economic backgrounds and each has different cultural

backgrounds and experiences. What sort of problems do you as students present to the SSS for psychological help?

Participant 4: I think it's to help students cope with the workload, yah nje in general, to teach them how to cope and strategize so as not to feel overwhelmed yah something like that.

Interviewer: Any other additions?

Participant 3: No, you know, I do have some additions, as you are hearing, as we are here as a diversified students we are not the same, as students we are not the same, some students suffer from HIV, such as HIV positive, some have such problem, it's very hard as student you cannot just go to another student and tell him that I am HIV positive and I am not coping. This person is not trained for that, that person when you go and tell him, he can go and talk to anyone else. There is no confidentiality at the SRC side that says I can I can speak anything that the student. As students we are not the same, maybe I come from the background that my parents are late and can't afford my fees. The SDP should assist in identifying such students and provide with proper support in terms of accessing financial support and counseling. These things are not utilized because there is no SDP.

Participant 4: I will give you as an example about the psychological support services. mmm like me I have anger issues. I am suffering from anger issues, so I am a student of Majuba College. I need that support, so that I can be able to pass, to do my subject properly, I need this support from Majuba, so that I can be able to perform academically.

Participant 6: My understanding here is, we have someone that I supposed to be an SDP, mmm we don't have a professional in place and this professional shouldn't be at the central level and we should be having these people across all campuses together with their supporting team, we don't have that as yet.

Participant 5 (interjects). This is the shortage we facing. We don't have a professional SDP, the most sensitive issues like that, things like you are HIV positive, you can't just tell that to anyone, that I am HIV positive and I need emotional support, how to (pause). We don't have SSS anywhere the structure is sitting at central office. We are here at the campus and there is nothing.

Interviewer: What do you think are some of the challenges that you face when try to access psychological support services?

Participant 3: Let me put it like this, the SSS doesn't exist at Majuba College both at central and campus level. But even if you look at people who are calling themselves as SSS, or who have been given the duty are not qualified, so what is happening is this our understanding about SSS office, people who

have degrees in Psychology, who understand Psychology, people who have signed agreements saying that they are not compelled to speak, to speak their confidential, those people don't. So even if I can tell SSS my problem and he/she speaks but my problem, what will do nothing, she will tell me I am a lecturer and I am not compelled to have secrets. It's my nature I just talk and I have no training that say I must not talk, understanding there is no training and there is no signature that I signed, by telling me your problem because it's too much for you, it's also too much for me, so I decided to tell someone. So we don't have SSS if it is like that because if you say lecturers are SSS, teachers are always in class, that's where they are supposed to be and in that office (SSS) there is no one. Even if a student can fall and go there is no one even tomorrow. That's an office that is there and even the things that are supposed to be there are not there because the SDP would have requested, the SDP would have a budget. There is no budget even at central office. If the SSS is there where is the budget. Even for campuses there is a budget, why it is with SSS there is no budget and then you come back and look at the SDPs and if the SSS was there as they are saying ad there is something called SSS, many of the things happening right now shouldn't be happening. That office should be open for students to come and not all students problems need SRC, there are problems that we can never deal with understand, because even for students who should be privileged because of their profile, the privileges are not being utilized.

Participant 4: We don't have the required resources.

Interviewer: The induction orients the students to services available to students. Do you get relevant information during the induction?

Participant 3: No induction is given to students, the induction is only given to the SRC and even at the SRC induction you will find that this is SSS of our college that's all they tell us. When one speaks of our SRC members, let's talk about an ordinary student, so how does a normal student know what SSS should be doing, because right now they are even surprised, what's this all about. Why are they surprised about its existence of the SSS? Students will start asking themselves what's this SSS.

Interviewer: What should be done to improve the provision of psychological support services to students?

Participant 2: Move from paper to practical and appoint a real person in the office.

Interviewer: Can you please clarify on the real person?

Participant 2: The existing policies at the central office in a particular cabinet, let's put a human being now at each campus an SDP and that SDP should be a professional person. A person that is registered,

what is the council of psychologists HPCSA, yes that council, when the person knows how to deal with confidentiality issues of the students, a person that knows how to counsel students and if there is the need to see the families, maybe counselling needs to be done too, a person who is able to do these activities, not a support person who is just put there.

Participant: In addition to that also, the additional members of the SDP must be voted by the students (laughter).

Interviewer: Are you aware of the availability of peer coaches and peer mentors to assist students with psychosocial issues within the college?

Participant 4: We don't know anything they just hide things? Interviews are conducted every year but no appointments are done of SDPs, does it mean these people do not qualify or do not mean the required criteria.

Participant 3: You know it's funny because the college might be eating all these monies because they might falsify information purporting that they have an SDP per each campus and then the department should I think should be sending some money, payments of some sort. Where are those monies because the people who are appointed have their full time job as lecturers. They are not entirely attached to the SSS. We don't know where the college is having a problem in putting an SDP. Interviews, if they want professionals, professionals will come and the monies will come too and be paid to the correct relevant person finish. We don't know where the hiccup is.

Participant 2: The truth, the reality is that even if you do not find people from outside. I know for a fact that Majuba has educators, they do have a degree of psychology and they can be taken out of office because the salary of an SDP is equivalent to a Senior Lecturer's salary. So any lecturer can jump for the opportunity. So any teacher can assume that thing if they do have a degree in psychology. We had a meeting with Umfolozi, Umfolozi is managing and it has these SDPs. You find out that there were teachers with these qualifications and teaching and put them in the offices and they are working okay.

Interviewer: Do you think it is necessary to establish linkages with other TVET Colleges with regard to the provision of psychological support services?

Participant 6: I think it's not important to link, it must be linked. In paper it says that, it's not like we have taken decision to say that no let's not be linked with other colleges. No on paper the DHET wants it to be linked.

Interviewer: Any other comments