



An Investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor
Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and
Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)

Submitted by

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Declaration

I, **Thabani Comfort Nkosi**, declare that:

The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated is my original research.

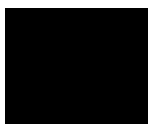
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Dedication

I dedicate this piece of work to my late grandmother “Magcin’tuba” for the amazing job she did in raising me. To Bongiwe “BE” my late mother as well, better schooling that she provided for me bear the fruits. My whole family, friends and everyone who believed in me during this challenging journey, I thank all of you.

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to Almighty God for giving me a second chance in life. This second chance enabled me to recognize the necessity and viability of this project. Without his strength, I would not have had the fortitude and strength.

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Thirdly, I would like to thank my fellow two “Mosquitos” who became friends I keep, Sam and Ty, for everlasting commitment in reaching out at all my times of need.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Saajidha Sader (Saaj as she preferred to be called), for progressive guidance.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CHE – Council on Higher Education

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DHET – Department of Higher Education and Training

DUSM – Disability Unit Staff Member

EWP1 Education White Paper 1

EWP 6 – Education White Paper 6

HEI – Higher Education Institutions

KZN – KwaZulu-Natal

NCHE – National Council on Higher Education

NCV – National Vocational Certificate

NDP – National Development Plan

NPC – National Planning Commission

NPHE – National Plan for Higher Education

RSA – Republic of South Africa

SWD – Students with Disabilities

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNCRPD – The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Abstract

Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) emphasises that the state "must make gradually available and accessible" the right to higher education by reasonable methods. Despite wide pledges indicated in policies and legislation addressing the needs of formerly disadvantaged students with disabilities, the literature from the field of social justice education reveals that many of them continue to experience problems in higher education.

This study aimed to explore the post-school educational experiences of Black students with disabilities from low socio-economic backgrounds at one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Northern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The study further aimed to investigate the factors that facilitate or impede their participation and success, as well as how they navigate these factors.

A qualitative narrative approach was employed to explore seven students' personal and college experiences from diverse rural District Municipalities. In-depth, semi structured narrative interviews, together with photo-voice, was used to generate data that explored their positioning. Three main themes emerged from the analysis which revealed elements that either restrict or promote the experience of access, participation, and success of students with disabilities. These are academic, sociocultural, and access.

According to information obtained from the seven students, these three areas have a significant impact on how the majority of the TVET College's students with disabilities perceive their educational experience. A thorough investigation into the experiences of students with disabilities revealed that factors such as their social position, class status, the college's infrastructure, peers and faculty support, self-motivation, the college's proximity, the influence of their families or friends, the nature of the curriculum, and the attitudes of peers or /and college staff toward their disabilities all played a role in whether they had a positive or negative experience at TVET college.

The significant impact of these findings is that... Findings reveal that the college must implement measures that facilitate [inclusive] experiences [for] students with disabilities. The findings also reveal what helps them navigate these impeding factors is their self-motivation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background

In South Africa, diverse students can enrol in higher education. In this context, the term "diverse" refers to several social groupings of students who are identified by their ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, race and disability, and who attend historically underprivileged as well as privileged institutions of higher learning (Second National Higher Education Summit, 2015).

Access to higher education and professional degrees, in particular, remains difficult for students with disabilities, despite the improved access to higher education. Access issues for students with disabilities are typically found to begin within the educational process (Ndlovu, 2019). This is mainly because they run into obstacles that can be avoided as they move through different educational systems at lower levels. Even for the small percentage of students who succeed in tertiary education, there are still obstacles to overcome (Mutanga, 2018). Very few persons with disabilities hold professional employment, which reflects this fact. Barriers to obtaining professional degrees may also contribute to the prevalence of non-professional work among people with disabilities (Ndlovu, 2019).

Globally, large numbers of young adults with disabilities are studying and residing on college campuses (Smith, 2007). The movement toward a more inclusive education system began in 1990 on a global scale. The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtien in 1990, outlined a broad vision for the future, including ensuring universal access to basic education for young people, and adults, as well as promoting equality (World Conference on Education for All, & Meeting Basic Learning Needs, 1990; Mutanga, 2018).

All people have the right to an education (South Africa, 1996). This right is usually realised by providing disability support and reasonable accommodations to enable tertiary students with disabilities to participate on an equal footing with their classmates (Fossey, Chaffey, Venville, Ennals, Douglas, & Bigby, 2017).

Since 1994 in South Africa, there has been a slew of transformation-oriented efforts aimed at bringing about structural and institutional change. The transformation of South Africa's institutions, particularly

post-secondary education, has been a priority (Mzangwa, 2019). As a result of colonialism and the systematic exclusion of Black people during the apartheid system of administration, inequalities were ingrained in many aspects of society.

The 1996 South African Constitution mandated that the state meet several objectives in and through higher education (South Africa, 1996). Transforming the higher education landscape to increase participation is one of them (Mutanga, 2018).

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which among other provisions, aims to further the right of access to high-quality education; is one of the international human rights treaties that South Africa has signed and ratified (Clarke, 2016). Section 29 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution upholds this right (South Africa, 1996). Section 29 (1) (b) of the Constitution emphasizes that the state "must make gradually available and accessible" the right to higher education by reasonable methods (South Africa, 1996, P. 24).

One of the many recommendations made by the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 to enhance the sufficiency of redress programs, particularly those relating to increasing economic opportunities for previously underprivileged groups, is access to high-quality higher education across the nation (National Planning Commission, 2011).

Thus, higher education institutions have been urged to accept students who were previously excluded based on race, gender, or disability as part of the long-term goal towards change in institutions of higher education (Mzangwa, 2019). The issues facing higher education in South Africa are clearly stated in the Education White Paper 3, P. A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System and the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (Seepe, 2017). Among the challenges are concerns about:

“Graduate and research outputs' overall quantity and quality; strategic planning, leadership, and governance failures; a lack of representative staff profiles; organisational cultures that have not overcome historical racial divides; and the escalating competition among institutions, which poses a threat to further destabilizing the higher education sector” (Department of Education, 2001, P. 5).

Furthermore, the DoE (1997) aimed for the redesigned higher education system to support equitable access and impartial chances of success for all those desiring to maximize their potential through higher

education while eliminating all discriminatory practices and pursuing reparation for previous inequities.

Many disabled students still encounter issues in higher education despite widespread promises made in policies and legislation attempting to address the expectations of previously underprivileged students, along with those with disabilities (Mutanga, 2018; McKinney & Swartz, 2022). These include discriminatory practices, lack of resources and equitable infrastructure, and low morale among lecturers executing new policies, along with a limited number of teachers and administrative employees (McKinney & Swartz, 2022).

The difficulty that students with disabilities (SWDs) have in getting accepted into higher education institutions (HEIs) has long been attributed to a lack of public funding (Vincent & Chiwandire, 2019). Mutanga (2018) claims that inclusion is a difficult notion to grasp. Forms of inclusion that appear to be inclusive may lead to exclusion. South African higher education institutions continue to admit students with disabilities, however, they may only receive financing for their disabilities if they meet certain academic requirements. Students with disabilities who do not meet these academic requirements are deregistered (excluded), even if their failure is due to an unchangeable and unfriendly higher education environment (Mutanga, 2018). Thus, this study investigates the post-school educational experiences of Black, poor, students with disabilities. It then aims to raise awareness and provide recommendations.

1.2 Purpose, Focus and Aims of the Study

In this study, black students with disabilities from low socioeconomic backgrounds are examined in relation to their post-secondary educational experiences at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Northern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The focus of this study is on the technical and vocational education and training college experiences of Black, poor, students with disabilities at Furniture TVET College. The purpose of the study is to examine the variables that either support or hinder their success and participation, as well as how they deal with these variables.

1.3 Research Objective

The research objectives are as follows:

- To investigate the educational experiences of black, poor, students with disabilities in one TVET College
- To identify the factors that facilitate or impede black, poor, students with disabilities access to the curriculum, their participation and success.
- To determine how black, poor, students with disabilities demonstrate their agency in the way they navigate these factors.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Main Research Question

What are the educational experiences of black, poor, students with disabilities in one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College?

1.4.2 Subsidiary Research Questions

- What are the factors that facilitate or impede the access, participation, and success of Black, poor, students with disabilities in a TVET College?
- How do Black, poor, students with disabilities demonstrate their agency in the ways they navigate these factors?

1.5 Rationale

The rationale for this study is based on my personal and professional experiences. In 2014, a car accident left me paraplegic and permanently wheelchair-bound. After my car accident, I started to experience difficulties in navigating my way around the campus of the TVET College, where I am employed.

A key challenge I faced was access to the buildings, which raised my awareness of the hurdles that people with disabilities face, which I was not aware of as an able-bodied person. My personal experience of living both as an able-bodied person and as a person with a disability has raised my awareness of the hurdles that people with disabilities are experiencing. One day at my workplace, I witnessed colleagues, who are lecturers, displaying an indifferent attitude towards a student with disabilities. The student was labelled as an attention seeker, as she had more demands compared to

average students. I had to remind my colleagues that their attitude was a form of discrimination and ableism. As an able-bodied person, I was not aware of the barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities.

As a lecturer, I have observed the challenges that Black, poor, students with disabilities face on college campus. Black, poor, students with disabilities face challenges in terms of finances, access to buildings as well as access to the curriculum. Engelbrecht, Nel, Smit and Van Deventer (2016) found that lack of resources and infrastructure are among the challenges students with disabilities experience.

The physical environment is inaccessible for students with physical disabilities at the TVET College. The curriculum is not structured to address the barriers students with disabilities experience. For instance, the lack of materials in braille prevents the curriculum from accommodating students with visual impairments. Students with these disabilities are not given the support they need from the college. Sporting events and other campus community activities are normalized without the participation of disabled students.

Worldwide, higher education institutions are expected to increase their student base by attracting minority groups that have been mostly left out in the past (CHE, 2016). Due to this, universities have expanded their admission policies to include students from racial and ethnic minorities as well as more disabled students (Amosun, Volmink, and Rosin, 2005). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has been consistent in trying to address the imbalances of the past through formulating policy and publishing the Education White Paper 6 (DHET, 2013). These equity policies have stimulated the admission of people previously excluded from higher education such as women, Blacks, the poor, and students with disabilities.

Education policies in South Africa provide a clear picture of the need to promote inclusivity and social justice in higher education, particularly concerning the previously excluded people with disabilities. The Republic of South Africa has a constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), laws, and inclusive education policies, such as The Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System (2018), the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education (EWP6, Department of Education, 2001) and the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation on Higher Education (DOE, 1997). These guidelines were created to make it possible

for all students to obtain fundamental education, higher education generally, professional degrees, and, ultimately, professional employment.

However, there is a disjuncture between policy and practice given that many higher educational institutions lack the capacity and resources to implement equity policies. “Some practices and non-actions in higher education perpetuate injustices towards disabled students, which shows the gap”, (Mutanga, 2017, P. 3). Siwela (2017) agrees that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges cannot currently cater to students and staff with disabilities. Furthermore, although inclusion regulations allowed all students in South Africa access to degrees, according to Ndlovu (2019), discriminatory actions, marginalization, and injustice that prevented students with disabilities to access Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) still exist.

While researchers locally have investigated the experiences of students with disabilities in TVET Colleges, there is a scarcity of studies that focus on the intersection between disabilities, race, and class (Mutanga, 2017; Malle, Pirttimaa, & Saloviita, 2015; Siwela, 2017). In investigating the post-school educational experiences of Black, poor, students with disabilities in a TVET college, this study, unlike other studies reviewed, takes a social justice perspective and is informed by the transformative paradigm.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Disability

To be disabled can be conceptualized in a variety of forms and take on a wide range of meanings. Some people develop disabilities as a result of medical diseases such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, blindness, or physical impairment. Being disabled may suggest that disabled persons are subjected to social constraints (Siwela, 2017).

Disability can be explained using either a social or medical model. The medical model of disability assumes that the cause of disability only exists within the individual, whereas the social model takes into account how the environment affects the individual (Guevara, 2021).

According to Oliver and Barnes (1998, P. 18), a disability is defined as an interaction between a person who has an infirmity and a setting devoid of adjustment (facilities and supportive personnel). According to their claim, "disability is viewed as the environment's property and not the individual".

Since this study examines the experiences of Black, poor, students with disabilities, this definition guides the course of this study.

1.6.2 Impairments

“Impairment is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment” (Oliver, 2017, P.5). Impairment is regarded as a characteristic of a person. The environment is viewed as impersonal and static. While impairment is a biological function, disability is society's reaction to those who have it (Siwela, 2017).

1.6.3 Disabled Students or “Students with a Disability”

There are also disagreements over whether the labels "disabled students" or "students with a disability" should be used.

“The term ‘disabled students’ was preferred over ‘students with disabilities’ because the term ‘people with disabilities’ implies that the person is disabled because of their impairment or condition, whereas ‘disabled person’ implies that the person is disabled not because of their condition or impairment, but because of society’s inability to effectively cater for that person” Seale (2013, P. 5).

As Siwela (2017) asserted in her study, the term "students with disabilities" is used in this dissertation since it is more widely accepted in South Africa. It is only proper to bring up the disability when it is relevant to the situation. The individual is far more significant than the disability. For example, it is preferable to say "student with disabilities" rather than "the disabled student" since it emphasises the student rather than the fact that the student has a disability (Siwela, 2017, P. 13).

1.6.4 Barriers

"Variables in an individual 's surroundings that, via their absence or existence, obstruct functioning and induce disability" are known as barriers (World Health Organization, 2011, P. 214). “An inaccessible physical environment, the absence of useful assistive technology for learning, unfavourable perceptions of disability and services, and systems and regulations that either don't exist or make it difficult for everyone with a health condition to participate in all facets of life” are just a few examples (WHO, 2011, P. 214).

In this research, a learning barrier is defined as anything that prevents a student from learning properly. A student with a disability might perceive their condition as a natural barrier to learning and will need varying degrees of assistance to handle it to meet their educational objectives. Other challenges could come from society and the environment. This definition was chosen because an individual with a disability can only become disabled when their environment is inaccessible.

1.7 Research Design: A Qualitative Research Study

This study chose qualitative research as the best method for addressing its study objectives. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research allows researchers to grasp the world around them. Silverman (2016) agrees that qualitative research is better for studying human behaviour.

1.7.1 Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

1.7.1.1 A Narrative Approach

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative approach that studies experience through a narrative lens. It is a way of considering and analysing experience. Throughout the investigation, narrative inquirers think about the experiences in a narrative manner (Clandinin, Steeves, Li, Mickelson, Buck, Pearce, & Huber, 2010). According to Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2020), a researcher can use narrative inquiry to obtain access to the participants' natural habitats to gain a better understanding of their experiences.

This study, therefore, opts for a combined qualitative narrative inquiry to explore the post-school experiences of students with disabilities.

1.7.1.2 Research Site

This study took place at “Furniture” Syndrome TVET College, which is situated across 3 District Municipalities namely: Zululand, UMzinyathi, and UMkhanyakude. Furniture TVET College has a central office and eight campuses.

1.7.1.3 Sampling

Students with disabilities from “Furniture” Syndrome TVET College were conveniently and purposefully chosen for this study's sample. There were a total of 7 Black, poor students with disabilities chosen for this proposed study.

1.7.1.4 Data Collection Methods

This study has employed in-depth semi-structured and photo-voice data collection methods.

1.7.1.5 Data Analysis

This research study used content analysis to analyse the data generated. Neuendorf (2018) says that content analysis generates valid text inferences in the form of themes. The researcher classified words, and phrases from the semi-structured interview into a series of meaningful categories, and then came up with themes that were explored and analysed.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

In this study, English is the publication language. It is different from the source of data, which as Nurjannah, Mills, Park and Usher (2014) state, requires forward and backward translation. What is commonly referred to as ‘code switching’.

Interviews were conducted in isiZulu as all participants are isiZulu first language speakers. Translation might, therefore, be considered a limitation, although it was done by a professional court interpreter.

I functioned as a “translation moderator” with the support of the professional court translator. Where context to the objectives of the study was necessary, I consulted with the translator and the students to draw attention to the “intended meaning and context in the source language” (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson & Deeg, 2010, P. 315). I maintained this function to uphold the reliability of the study (Nurjannah, Mills, Park, & Usher, 2014), as the linguistic issue, should not be overlooked as unimportant (Santos, Black, & Sandelowski, 2015). Moreover, to maintain objectivity and prevent bias, the researcher had participants examine the findings to make sure they accurately reflected their initial opinions. To avoid bias, the researcher also requested that the supervisor check the data.

1.9 Classification of Chapters

The chapters are summarised as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter lays out the study's background, the problem description, the study aims and objectives, the study's limitations, and a brief outline of the methodology utilized in this study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Using the theoretical context as a focal point, this chapter situates the current research issue within the body of knowledge, including what may be deemed rhetoric in higher education, policy framework, and initiatives for the inclusion of students with disabilities in global and local contexts. Furthermore, this research highlights the difficulties of including students with disabilities.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The design and methodology of the study are described in detail in this chapter. The detail covered in this chapter includes strategy, the population, the sampling procedure, data collection tools, ethical considerations, as well as data processing methodologies. Additionally, the chapter explains the approach taken to solve the study's research problem.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussions of Findings

This chapter provides an analysis of the data gathered from participants and discusses qualitative data that was analysed with regard to the study's research objectives. Moreover, the study's results are analysed and thoroughly discussed in the context of the literature review.

Chapter Five: Summary, recommendations, and conclusion Chapter Six:

This chapter discusses an overview of the research's conclusions, suggestions, and key findings. This chapter also emphasizes the most important contributions to future research work on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in post-school learning environments.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The present chapter offered an overview of the research approach as well as the study's setting, the problem under consideration, the aims, research objectives, and questions. A summary of the chapters of this research study was also provided. This chapter introduced the subject of inclusion of Black, poor students with disabilities in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Literature review is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The context of the study, the research problem, and the important research questions that served as the study's compass were covered in the prior chapter. This chapter offers pertinent literature and an overview of the material that was used to bring to light an understanding of the challenges affecting students with disabilities in higher education institutions around the world, as well as in South Africa. This chapter focuses on educational legislation in South Africa, and the challenges students with disabilities experience and highlights the gap between legislation and implementation with regard to facilitating the inclusion and support of students with disabilities in institutions of higher education. This chapter provides an adequate review of the relevant domestic and foreign literature. The chapter also outlines how international laws like the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have influenced national laws in South Africa.

2.2 The Legislative Field

There has been a plethora of transformation-oriented programs in the post-1994 period, all aimed at bringing about meaningful institutional change. Cloete (2002) argues that the 1994-1996 period was characterized by a massive, participatory policy-making process, that culminated in the National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) report of 1996.

For instance, the 1996 South African Constitution requires the state to fulfil a wide range of goals pertaining to and surrounding higher education. One of these is changing the terrain of higher education to boost participation. Institutions of higher learning have been motivated to accept individuals that represent groups that were historically excluded based on race, gender and disability as part of the broad mandate to change the education landscape. Enshrined within the right to inclusive education, is that all mainstream education institutions accept all learners, and change how they are set up, including facilities, to meet every learner's needs (Adhikari, 2018).

Commensurate with these changes in South Africa, many international policies have been written to aid in the implementation of inclusive education (Moriña, 2017; Moriña & Morgado, 2018). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which was ratified

by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, is one of the most prominent global policy frameworks (Favalli, 2018, Kamenopoulou, 2020).

According to Article 24 of the UNCRPD (United Nations, 2006), States Parties must ensure that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to basic tertiary education, career training, vocational training, and continuous learning without marginalization. To this end, the article states that States Parties “shall see to it that people with disabilities get adequate accommodation” (United Nations, 2006). The fact that 164 countries, including South Africa, have signed the UNCRPD demonstrates a global commitment to realise the UNCRPD's principles of inclusive education (Mutanga, 2017). Section 29 of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa upholds this right (South Africa, 1996).

Apartheid policies, including the expansion of the University Education Act (1959), culminating in the establishment of separate racial and ethnic institutions of higher learning, before 1994 (Mutanga, 2015). Higher education was segregated based on race during apartheid, culminating in white-dominated institutions benefiting disproportionately, and predominantly black institutions languishing behind, without as much appropriate facilities and staff capacity (Jansen, 2003).

For Black students, curriculum and academic programs were designed to facilitate their employment prospects as domestic workers and labourers, while ensuring that they remained uneducated to qualify for white-collar employment. The placement of unqualified teachers in black schools aided this strategy. On the other hand, White students were subjected to curriculum and programs that trained them for white-collar work (Kamga, 2016). To maximize their success, White students were given access to the best teachers, who were paid well. Moreover, only White students with disabilities had access to education. Many with mild to moderate disabilities were admitted into mainstream, well-funded white schools with support devices to ensure that the students received good education (Kamga, 2016).

As a result of the legacy of apartheid, and the resulting association between education and income, poorer students in South Africa, generally perform badly academically. Prevalent income inequalities and poverty affects access to institutions of higher learning, and student retention leading to dropout rates in higher education (lack of finances (Spaull, 2015; Gustafsson, 2011; Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010).

Hence, under the diversity rights framework, the South African higher education system supports students with disabilities. The formulation of particular policies to advance access to higher education institutions and protect students with disabilities is informed by general national anti-discrimination laws and policies (Bell & Swart, 2018).

Emanating from these provisions, higher learning organisations are required to adopt strategies that support, advance and meet the needs of students with disabilities, and provide for any disparities and disagreements to be addressed in the context of human rights rather than privilege (Matshediso, 2007; Mutanga, 2017).

The education White Paper 3 then established a policy framework for these changes based on the proposal of the National Council on Higher Education's (NCHE). The paper outlined funding mechanisms to facilitate, support and attending to the expectations and previously excluded students, as well as the development of the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

Following thereon, a national policy framework on disability was created for the post-secondary education and training students with disabilities. These developments and changes in government legislation and policy spurred hope that people with disabilities will have the same rights, provisions and freedoms as non-disabled people (Engelbrecht & de Beer, 2014).

2.3 Legislation on People with Disabilities in South Africa

South Africa has taken significant steps to protect, uphold, and honor the rights of people with disabilities by passing numerous pieces of legislation and policies that forbid discrimination in any form. Van Der Merwe (2021) claims that the Disability People of South Africa (DPSA) has fought for the rights of South Africans with disabilities to be treated equally. A Disability Rights Charter of South Africa was introduced in 1992 through the DPSA. As a result, the Republic of South Africa's Constitution includes the rights of people with disabilities in its Bill of Rights.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) also oversees the rights of all other South African citizens as well as those of individuals with disabilities. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the 1996 Constitution of South Africa all make this clear that equal education for everyone is a core human right. Denying individuals access to education is a form of discrimination that is against the law.

As it significantly affects individuals with disabilities and, by extension, students with disabilities in higher education, it is essential to understand South African disability legislation. Being a developing nation, South Africa faces numerous obstacles due to the frequency of chronic diseases, as well as poverty and crime, all of which exacerbate various predispositions to disability (Masasa, Irwin-Carruthers, & Faure, 2005; Jelsma, Maart, Eide, Toni, & Loeb, 2008). Generally, the early 1990s, and the dawn of the twenty-first century, saw an advance in disability-related laws in both developed and developing nations (Duma, 2019).

The DPSA's tireless advocacy prompted the South African administration to establish the Office on the Status of Disabled People (OSDP) in the Presidency, to represent disabled people across all sectors. The Charter required that individuals with disabilities be included as deserving and proper residents of the country and made explicit referrals to individuals with disabilities in the South African Constitution in regard to non-discrimination, access to necessary services, and equal treatment (South Africa, 1996).

Through the Office on the Status of Disabled People in the Presidency, the White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy was promulgated in 1997. The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was updated in 2015 (Duma, 2019). By emphasizing their full participation in a societal structure that is inclusive of all individuals and free from discrimination, this White Paper aims to ensure the complete inclusion of people with disabilities.

The South African state has supported numerous initiatives and passed numerous laws to ensure that everyone has fair access to education. basic and higher education right is promoted in Section 29 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996).

Education White Paper 3: A Plan for the Transformation of Higher Education calls for the integration of all students and for the modernization of higher education (Department of Education, 1997). The National Plan for Higher Education 2030 has the goal of facilitating and increasing the skills development of individuals with disabilities by at least 2%, which will help to alleviate poverty among this group (South Africa, 2015a).

Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, promotes not just the inclusion of learners with special needs in the education system, but also their inclusivity at all levels of education (Department of Education, 2001). The Department of Social Development's White Paper on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (WPRPD) recognises the different types of disabilities, their causes, and the socioeconomic contexts of those with disabilities that may impede their development.

A recent policy document, '*the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System*' (DHET, 2018), concentrates on the post-school education and training of individuals with disabilities and guarantees inclusiveness and equality for all. The Strategic Plan 2010-2014 of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) encourages accessibility higher quality and diversity of service. Staff and students with disabilities should have their needs met (South Africa Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

In brief, the general goal of the South African legislation is to foster fairness, equal educational opportunities, discourage and eliminate all kinds of marginalisation of individuals with disabilities in order to safeguard and preserve the human rights of all South Africans. Nevertheless, for lack of effective implementation, rules and legislation intended to improve access to higher education for individuals with disabilities, these aspirations might not be implemented (Duma, 2019).

In many cases, students with disabilities are still facing difficulties at institutions of higher learning, which has an impact on their participation, advancement, and success in higher education (Mutanga, 2017; Siwela, 2017). Given the many real-life scenarios they experience in academic settings, laws to protect their rights appear insufficient. While all of these legislations have beneficial intention and goals, they can only be realised when institutions of higher education, including university communities, are genuinely engaged in learning about the value of experiences and achievements of students with disabilities' (Duma, 2019)

2.4 Gaps in Policy Implementation

The literature suggests that High Education Institutions (HEIs) have inclusion policies in place. Students, on the other hand, reported that HEIs have not embraced (or yet comprehended) inclusion and are failing to address the different requirements of students. As a result, the majority of students reported receiving minimal or no support. Furthermore, standardised teaching approaches in institutions of higher learning, including universities, do not recognize diversity or encourage inclusivity, thus limiting academic inclusivity (Dreyer, Mostert, & Gow, 2020).

According to a study by Kendall (2016), students feel disenfranchised in interactions with lecturers and think their needs aren't being met. Dreyer *et al.* (2020) claim that students believed that legislations and services for students with specific learning disabilities were designed to benefit the institution rather than the students. Notwithstanding the fact that the state has proposed a number of financing policies to increase access to higher education for South African students with disabilities (SWDs), their implementation remains difficult due to lack of effective and trustworthy monitoring systems (Ramaahlo, Tönsing & Bornman, 2018; Mbuva, 2019; Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Simui, Kasonde-Ngandu, Cheyeka & Makoe, 2019; Chiwandire, 2021).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The impression of individuals with disabilities as stranded, unwell, requiring charity, and a position of dependence is based on a general definition of disability as a physical handicap or impairment. Historically, 'medical models', in which an individual with a disability is viewed as 'abnormal' in some way, have had an impact on disability concepts (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). The medical model of disability, which is permeated with the notion that there is a problem with disability and that individuals with disabilities are flawed, insufficient, and dependent on healthcare experts, supports this position (Sedibe & Buthelezi, 2014; Majola & Dhunpath, 2016).

Studies show that individuals with disabilities have lesser expectations, less success in school, poorer health, higher rates of unemployment and poverty, and lower social class designations. These people are considered to be qualified recipients of government aid, care from specialized facilities, and charitable assistance. Such impressions, however, are inevitably skewed (Sedibe & Buthelezi, 2014; Majola & Dhunpath, 2016; Guevara, 2021). The traditional welfare approach of the medical model of disability has drawn criticism. As a result, there has been a move from medical/individual models of disability toward a social model of disability (Duma, 2019).

According to the social model, disability is caused by oppressive cultural beliefs and environmental obstacles resulting from the injustice and discrimination of individuals with disabilities. As per the social model, it is societal norms and environmental obstacles, not inherent characteristics, that render a person 'disabled,' preventing them from completely and adequately participating in society (Thurman, Harrison, Garcia & Sage, 2019). An emancipatory step toward the full integration of

individuals with disabilities into society and fighting discrimination based on disability beliefs is a central component of the social model (Shume, 2020).

It is typical to think of the social model in terms of eliminating barriers or changing beliefs or attitudes. However, it is more radical and significant than that (Berghs, Atkin, Hatton, & Thomas, 2019). The social model is currently the utmost popular approach to dealing with disability since it shifts the responsibility of disability from the person to the community and helps individuals with impairments to be self-sufficient (Duma, 2019). The South African government claims to see disability through the lens of the social model (Mutanga & Walker, 2015). Controversies around Disability Studies, as well as similar viewpoints on inclusive education, revolve around the social model of disability (Terzi, 2004).

The social model of disability, developed primarily by disabled scholar Michael Oliver, is a critical contribution to the debate about the complexities of disability (Terzi, 2004). The model has also had a major impact on Disability Studies and educational perspectives on inclusion (Retief, 2018). The social model of disability's primary goal is to enhance social integration of persons with disabilities, create social networks, secure community involvement, and develop social capital, all of which, in a nutshell, is social integration (Duma, 2019, P. 32). According to Simplican, Clifford, Leader, Kosciulek, and Leahy (2015, P. 19), "the broad perceptions of social inclusion that can entail being acknowledged as an individual beyond disability, substantial and reflexive relationships, adequate living accommodations, work opportunities, formal and informal supports, and community engagement" are examples of social inclusion.

The social model explores the relationship between disability and society, locating the response to the rise of industrial capitalism and its particular organization of economic activities in deciding why disabled persons were excluded from the economic and social system (Retief, 2018; Terzi, 2004). By conceptualizing disability as solely socially induced, the social model offers a fraction and, to some extent, a fallible perspective of the linkage between impairment, disability, and community, establishing a framework that calls for explanations and extensions and restricts the realization of its own inclusion goal (Terzi, 2004).

Proponents of the social model seem to have overlooked the significance of comprehending the challenges faced by those with disabilities, which come from a variety of sources including the human, environmental, economic, and political spheres. One paleness of the social model is that it perceives disability as homogeneous; yet, this approach may be self-limiting, because some persons with disabilities have problems that necessitate continual medical assistance. The focus of scholars has, thus, shifted to developing a better understanding of disability by integrating multiple and intersecting factors (Duma, 2019).

As Mutanga (2019) notes, the human rights model is another model of disability that has gained traction among international stakeholders, particularly following the passage of the UNCRPD in 2006. The model views disability as a fulfilment of human rights in the rights discourse. It advocates for the right to equitable chances and social participation (Degener, 2016). From the human rights standpoint, the UNCRPD "strives to define moral principles or values as the cornerstones of disability policies" (Mutanga 2019, P. 5). "Disability is becoming more widely recognized in policy circles as a wider human rights concern than just a medical one," based on the intersection of the human rights model with both the medical and social models (Barnes 2012, p. 21 as cited by Chiwandire, 2020, P. 43).

Although the majority of disability policies around the world use the human rights paradigm, some academics have criticized it for being unable to adequately address the rights of people with disabilities (Chiwandire, 2020). The human rights model frequently comes across as overly rhetorical. The gap between policy and implementation is another issue with the human rights perspective (Mutanga, 2019). South Africa's rising disability rates among children who are denied basic education options demonstrates how the state has failed to put the human rights approach into practice, as these adolescents will be inevitably denied admission to post-secondary education in the future (Van Der Merwe, 2017 as cited by Chiwandire, 2020). However, one may contend that some of the criticism has not so much do with the model than the disconnect between policy, related implementation and monitoring thereof.

Another influential model of impairment is the International Classification of Functioning (ICF), also referred to as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. The model was established by the World Health Organization (WHO). Disability, according to the ICF, is a mix of multiple elements, including societal, institutional, and individual factors, that shape the setting in which an impaired individual lives. Regarding that, the ICF employs a bio-psychosocial approach to

provide a comprehensive understanding of disability (World Health Organization 2001 as cited by Mitra, 2018). The ICF was developed to “synthesize the social and medical models [in order] to identify the repercussions of health conditions,” (Mutanga, 2019, P. 4). According to Schneider and Hartley (2006), as cited by Chiwandire, (2020), One of the ICF's advantages is that it acknowledges and takes into account the importance and impact of both internal personal traits and external environmental factors in the comprehension of disability.

The ICF, like any other model of impairment, has certain shortcomings, primarily because of its categorisation, which upholds an image of activities heavily inspired by a bio-medical perspective and continues to emphasize biology as the deciding factor (Söder, 2009 as cited by Chiwandire, 2020). The ICF also has the flaw of not prioritizing people's choices and aspirations, that further, Mitra (2018) believes are evenly important in the analysis and representation of people with disabilities' lived experiences. The high inequality, financial resources, and accessibility of public services in South Africa, according to Mutanga (2019, P. 5), "impact how individuals with disabilities and their families deal with the repercussions of impairment, and not accounting for these variables will leave many matters unvisited".

2.6 Educational Inclusion and Exclusion

Prior to the 1990s, marginalising policies and a medicalised view of disability that accompanied it pervaded the entire education environment, including in South Africa, making it impossible for disabled people to pursue tertiary qualifications (Redpath, Kearney, Nicholl, Mulvenna, Wallace Martin, 2013). When students with disabilities did make the transition to a higher education institution, they were forced to adjust to their new surroundings (Getzel, & Thoma, 2008; Barkas, Armstrong, & Bishop, 2022). Instead of providing adequate facilities to accommodate and meet the learning needs, students would rather be denied admission to certain academic programs (Shakespeare, 2015). Based on the belief that students with disabilities wouldn't be able to finish the course, this exclusion was made (Howell, 2006; Fuller, Riddell, & Weedon, 2009). Nevertheless, since the late 1990s, a growing number of students with disabilities have registered in higher learning institutions all over the world, despite this handicapping circumstance (Lourens, McKinney, & Swartz, 2016; Moria, López-Gavira, & Molina, 2017; Seale, Georgeson, Mamas, & Swain, 2015).

The introduction of the social model of disability, which initiated a radical change in the philosophy of disability and education in the late 1970s, is largely responsible for this rise in numbers of enrolment of persons with disabilities in higher education establishments. However, the embodied perspectives of students with disabilities on tertiary campuses have yet to entirely permeate effective implementation and monitoring of legislation and related policy (Lourens & Swartz, 2016; Moria, 2017; Moria & Morgad, 2018).

Unfortunately, research shows that fair accommodation, facilities and related learning aids and infrastructure are only given out of a sense of goodwill rather than as an unquestionable outgrowth of legitimate citizen rights (Goode, 2007; Moria & Morgad, 2018). True inclusion necessitates more than just admission to mainstream schools, universities and other institutions of higher learning; it also necessitates social restructuring and sufficient funding (Lourens et al., 2016). Simply allowing more students with disabilities access to universities and other higher education institutions won't be sufficient. Despite various initiatives supporting the integration of students with disabilities in academic institutions, many students with disabilities are still unable to enrol (Disability Alliance, 2017), and those that do, the retention remains low.

Further to that, for instance in South Africa, while inclusion policies allowed all students to enrol in advanced degrees and diplomas of higher learning, there were inequitable procedures, isolation, and discrimination that kept students with disabilities out at the start. The real obstacles are deep-seated problems of colonialism, apartheid and the prevalent disconnect between legislation, policy and effective implementation and monitoring, which are not visible on the surface (Ndlovu, 2019).

Mutanda (2018) further said inclusion is a difficult idea to grasp. In certain cases, superficial types of inclusion could lead to exclusion. So, while unequal representation in institutions of higher learning remains a troubling reality for students with disabilities around the world, disabled youth in South Africa still have limited access to these institutions. Furthermore, the superficial impression of a one size fits all disability inclusion policy framework in the country is not producing expected results, even among those students who make it to college or university. Thus, policymakers should incorporate recommendations of specific studies on disabilities to design locally suited policies, and oversee their effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation for continuous assessment and improvement.

There are some other concepts such as educational marginalization (Nylund & Rosvall, 2019). According to Messiou (2013), educational "marginalization" is the unfair, preferential, or biased distribution of access to education, learning resources, and facilities depending on a person's location, gender, socioeconomic status, or personal circumstances. Overall, it is a process of exclusion (Heldke & O'Connor, 2004).

Dropout Rates

Academic achievement may be based on students' attitudes, qualities, behaviour, and levels of family and university support, rather than just IQ or cognitive skills (Kappe & Van Der Flier, 2012; Dent & Koenka, 2016). Presently, all institutions are grappling with diminishing success rates and rising dropout and failure rates, as well as delays in the completion of degrees (Gutman, 2017; Moodley & Singh, 2015). Dropout and low graduation rates affect not only the academic community but also society on various levels (Duma, 2019).

Government subsidies help public colleges survive, and in South Africa, the government currently funds many students from low-income families through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) provides cash to the majority of poor students, allowing them to attend free higher education. According to a CHE (2016) assessment, however, about 28 per cent of the money is spent on students who would never graduate. Racial disparities in dropout rates exist in South Africa as a result of racist colonial and apartheid social, geographical, and economic policies that continue to cause injustice, exclusion, and extreme inequality today (Moses et al., 2017).

There are numerous studies (Engelbrecht & De Beer, 2014; Lyner-Cleophas, Swart, Chataika, & Bell, 2014; Massey, 2019; Lekena & Bayaga, 2018) that illustrate the difficulties faced by students with impairments, as well as worries regarding high dropout rates. According to previous studies, students with impairments receive minimal support, have high dropout rates, and take longer to obtain their degrees in some cases (Ngubane & Zongozzi, 2021). Since dropout victims are frequently absent from the system and unreachable, dropout and failure have multiple effects that lead to long-term disassociation that is challenging to evaluate (CHE, 2016). Many students with impairments have also fallen through the gaps, and quantifying their dropout rates is challenging due to database flaws (Duma, 2019). In a study by Lekena and Bayaga, (2018), it was found that Over 50 per cent of students with

disabilities, typically those from low-income or deprived circumstances, dropout due to financial struggles to carry the direct and indirect costs of university attendance.

Challenges Faced by Students with Disabilities during Covid-19

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), people with disabilities, especially students, were “significantly impacted” by the outbreak (WHO, 2020, P.1). Over 1.5 billion students and families were impacted by school closures induced by the COVID-19 pandemic (UNESCO, 2020). Numerous issues in educating students with disabilities in online learning arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Smith, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted equity issues and challenges that affect all students but are especially acute for those who have disabilities (Tindle, 2017; Sullivan, 2020; Kaden, 2020). The fact that students in rural or underdeveloped areas have unfair access to technology and the internet shows a lack of equality (Fishbane & Tomer, 2020). Furthermore, due to their need for a more structured learning environment and interactions with their peers and teachers, many students with disabilities find it difficult to succeed in an online learning schedule.

Among these challenges are access to equipment, wi-fi, technological assistance, tests, and libraries, as well as using online learning tools and engaging with instructors and peers. It was also discovered that the switch to virtual education has made it more difficult to obtain requisite accommodation (Chugani, & Houtrow, 2020). Furthermore, other equipment, such as scanners and printers, appear to be difficult to obtain (Ned, Swartz, McKinney, McKinney, Tshabalala, Ngah, & Maeneche, 2021).

Implementing the Universal Design for Learning principles into educational practice, and training academic staff on how to execute them, could be a useful intervention for enabling inclusion. Furthermore, substantial consultation on lived experiences of students with disabilities might aid in their inclusion, as they know what they require for their learning (Ndlovu, 2020). The findings of a study by Ngubane and Zongozi (2021) speak to the critical need for collaboration among educators, the government, and the commercial sector, especially as society grapples with the aftermath of COVID-19.

To prevent more dropouts, lecturers must learn to use more inclusive digital teaching methods so that students with impairments can complete their degrees and live productive lives (Gokool-Baurhoo &

Asghar, 2019; Dianito, Espinosa, Duran, & Tus, 2021). College and universities, for instance, might collaborate with businesses to fund inclusive teacher training and reskilling efforts. If teacher training practices are not changed, students with impairments may face even greater dropout rates. Lecturers should become familiar with the ideas of Universal Design for Learning (Areekkuzhiyil, 2022; King-Sears, 2009). This is intended to make curriculum design and teaching platforms more flexible in order to serve a wide range of learning demands.

2.6.1. Access to Post-School Education for Students with Disabilities

Brief definition of Post-School Education and Training and TVET

PSET in South Africa encompasses all educational and training opportunities for people who have completed their education, those who have not, and those who have never attended school. The PSET institutions are all brought together by the DHET, which was established in 2009. Young people are primarily trained in TVET colleges to acquire the abilities, information, and attitudes required by the labor market. They assist students who wish to finish their education as well as those who want to enrol in vocational programs after Grade 9 or after completing Grade 12 (White paper for post-school education and Training, 2013).

Access to Post-School Education

All levels of inclusive education should be available to people with disabilities, irrespective of age, unbiased of any kind, also based on the principle of equality of opportunity (United Nations 2008). This provision extends to tertiary-level students with disabilities. Several researchers (Heiman & Kariv 2004; Hyde, McLaughlin & Everson, 2009; Leyser & Greenberger 2008; Madriaga, Hanson, Heaton, Kay, Newitt & Walker, 2010) have highlighted the rights of university students with disabilities.

Academic and social hurdles have long been recognized as impediments to learning. In South Africa, some important studies on disability in post school education has been undertaken (Mutanga, 2017; Siwela, 2017; Buthelezi, 2014; Tugli, 2013). Researchers have discovered several elements that have influenced academic success and positive social experiences of students with disabilities in post-school education (Murray, Wren, & Keys, 2008; DaDeppo, 2009; Marshak, Van Wieren, Ferrell, Swiss, & Dugan, 2010; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011).

Residential Access

All students in post-school educational institutions should be legible for residential facilities, especially those from poor and previously excluded groups. Students with disabilities should be accommodated in such a way that they can travel around easily at any time. According to Duma (2019), if a campus residence produces a “home away from home” experience for students, it can be said to develop an inclusive culture. This is because, as students enter higher education institutions and university, campus residences frequently serve as a new temporary home for many of them, especially those who must leave their family homes (Chiwandire, 2021, P. 116).

Several studies such as Abdullahi, Yusoff, and Gwamna (2017) and Kim and Lee (2016) have found that students' performance is largely dependent on the physical and non-physical resources provided by their institutions. According to Abdullahi *et al.* (2017), several universities that fail to satisfy their residence housing requirements have seen their students suffer from inadequate academic progress and high attrition rates.

Worries about the majority of universities' failure to build residences that cater to the various needs of students with disabilities have been raised in South Africa (Mugume & Luescher, 2015). The lack of suitably planned, maintained, and managed residences is another difficulty that South African institutions have in providing suitable accommodations (residences) for students with disabilities (Duma, 2019). According to Duma's (2019) research, students with disabilities experienced significant levels of stress because of lack of access to suitable residence buildings, which in turn harmed their academic performance.

Physical Access

Physical access is one of the daunting challenges that students with disabilities encounter in higher education (Mutanga, 2017). One of the most prominent complaints of physically impaired individuals is the inaccessibility of the surroundings caused by architectural impediments (Lourens & Swartz, 2016).

According to Fitchett (2015), as cited by (Mutanga, 2017), South African higher education institution has begun to construct new facilities with accessibility for individuals with disabilities in mind. Regardless of this progress, students with disabilities interviewed said new buildings are still an issue since there is too much distance between the sitting sections, the lectern, and the board.

According to Siwela's (2017) research, some school buildings are inaccessible to some students with disabilities. In support of that, Mutanga (2017) found that students with disabilities had trouble getting into lecturer offices, because they were difficult to get into. Thus, there is a need for reasonable accommodation and building design to meet the needs of people with disabilities in places that are inaccessible to them. Furthermore, institutions of higher learning must strive to make all their buildings accessible to fulfil the right of inclusive education (Tudzi, 2020).

Access to Funding

The idea of social justice places an emphasis on the fairer allocation of material and immaterial good and services among society's participants. Scholars have emphasized the importance of finance in achieving meaningful inclusive education and providing access to Higher Education Institutions for students with disabilities (Chiwandire, 2021). The main justification for giving SWD students' enrolment in HEIs funding priority is that they have long been "disadvantaged or excluded from various social activities, especially education" (Ntombela & Soobrayen, 2013, P. 149). According to Mutanga (2019), countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia have advanced laws and practices that allow them to meet best practice requirements. In South Africa, according to on-going research, government policy and expenditure do not prioritize funding for students with impairments in higher education (Tudzi, Bugri & Danso, 2017; Ramaahlo, Tönsing & Bornman, 2018; Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Simui *et al.*, 2019; Mbuva, 2019). According to Ramaahlo *et al.* (2018), South African colleges and universities must guarantee that they have sufficient funds, budgeting mechanisms, and management commitment in the allocation of funding.

2.6.2. Access and Participation to Curriculum

Social isolation was one of the difficulties faced by some students, who did not feel readily welcomed by their peers. They felt that it was the uniqueness of their disabled bodies that made it impossible for others to accept them into friendship groups (Lourens & Swartz, 2016; Mutanga, 2017). Siwela (2017, P. 83) claims that a "rigid educational program [curriculum] that shows a lack of flexibility in terms of time, place, resources, and methodologies" is yet another issue that students with disabilities face. Buthelezi (2014) found that syllabuses and learning approaches were rigid and that assessment methods favoured abled students and those without special needs, as students with physical disabilities, were

unable to learn in a program that was not structured to accommodate them. Siwela (2017) proposes that the curriculum be reformed to provide platforms for innovation or to require teachers to use dynamic teaching methods. Mutanga and Walker's (2017) research, which included professors from two universities, discovered that these lecturers had a lack of awareness of diversity, which caused them to exclude students with disabilities from teaching and learning activities, and hence contributed to their poor performance [failure] at higher education.

According to Chiwandire and Vincent (2019), insufficient financial resources to cover the day-to-day expenses associated with a disability, bureaucratization of application processes, reductions in disability grants, merger scholarships to encourage part-time and distance learning for SWDs, and bureaucratization of application procedures are all barriers that place students with disabilities at a significant educational disadvantage compared to their peers who are not disabled. Moreover, students with disabilities face challenges on campus, including negative faculty attitudes, ill-prepared mentors, and stigma (Hong, 2015).

The Role of Lecturers

The role that lecturers can play in ensuring the academic success of SWDs is emphasized in previous research on the inclusion of SWDs in the classroom. Provided that there are more of these students, some academics stress the importance of HEIs training lecturers to best satisfy academic demands (Chiwandire, 2021). For example, lecturers might need to be knowledgeable of dyslexic students' learning needs if they want them to succeed academically and obstacles, as well as patience when dealing with them in the classroom (Ryder & Norwich, 2019).

According to Mutanga (2017a), for South African HEIs to achieve real inclusion, instructors must have favourable attitudes toward diversity, as this will provide a conducive climate for SWDs to thrive in their academic pursuits. Researchers contend that lecturers' unfavourable attitudes negatively affect the participation and academic success of students with disabilities, once they get entrance to higher education institutions (Moria, 2017; Chiwandire, 2021).

According to Ndlovu & Walton (2016, P. 4), the aversion of educators to assist SWDs stemmed from their "negative judgment of skills and poor expectations in academic prospects of students with disabilities". Lyner-Cleophas (2016) and Chiwandire (2017) investigated the shared experiences of lecturers and students with disabilities. According to the findings, the academic achievement of SWDs

is strongly reliant on lecturers' willingness to teach in methods that incorporate these students. Studies of lecturers in South African higher education (Mayat & Amosun, 2011; Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015; Ohajunwa et al. 2015; Mutanga & Walker, 2017; Mutanga, 2019) indicate that lecturers avoid their obligation to assist students with disabilities by referring them to Disability Units on a regular basis. Awareness-raising initiatives targeted at lecturers have been suggested as the ideal solution given how negative attitudes among lecturers prevent students with disabilities from being included in the academic community (Chiwandire, 2021).

Disability Inclusion and HE Curriculum Transformation

Transformation has often been seen from the perspective of academic inclusion in inclusive education discussions, with higher education institutions being urged to alter their cultural practices in order to increase SWDs' access, participation, and academic performance (Chiwandire, 2019).

One strategy to promote disability inclusion in the South African setting is for institutions to provide accessible curricula and assessment methods by lecturers (Lyner-Cleophas, 2019). In support of that, Chiwandire (2019) says that the legislative framework in the country supports that. As the 2001 Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education states, “The wide spectrum of diverse needs for learning will have to be addressed in the new curriculum and assessment approaches” (DoE 2001, P. 31-32).

In South Africa, research in education reveals the reality of how curriculum in schools continues to exclude students with disabilities, denying them the opportunity to completely see themselves reflected in the curriculum (Chiwandire, 2019). According to South Africa's Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for Post-School Education and Training System, restrictive curricula and hostile teaching and learning environments are institutional barriers to the academic inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education institutions (DHET, 2018). According to Mutanga (2017), the rigid and inaccessible curriculum is to blame for the high dropout rates of students with disabilities in colleges and universities. As a result, less than 1% of all students in higher education institutions in South Africa are students with disabilities.

2.6.3. The Role of Motivation on Participation and Success

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is defined as " the capacity to communicate needs and wants and to decide what assistance is needed to fulfil those needs and wants " (Stodden 2000, P. 36).

Self-advocacy in the context of disability research may entail giving people with disabilities a voice, attending to their needs to take control of their lives, and boosting their self-assurance and belief in their abilities (Inclusion International, 2016). When it comes to their rights, personal learning approaches, and self-esteem, students with learning disabilities often struggle to advocate for themselves (Garcia-Rojas, 2019). Students with learning disabilities may have a limited grasp of their rights in terms of school adjustments, and they may be unaware of learning practices that could help them succeed (Garcia-Rojas, 2019).

There are many studies in the HE field that says SWDs are required to learn self-advocacy skills in order to persuade their higher educational institutions to establish a hospitable environment for them to achieve academically (Hsiao, Zeiser, Nuss, & Hatschek, 2018; Chiwandire, 2021). Many experts agree that the ability for self-advocacy is crucial in aiding the transition and perseverance of SWDs in post-secondary education (Thoma & Wehmeyer 2005; Daly-Cano, Vaccaro & Newman, 2015; Vaccaro, Daly-Cano & Newman, 2015). Students with disabilities, who have learned self-advocacy skills, have a better probability of academic success than their classmates who have not learned self-advocacy skills. Equipped with self-advocacy skills, SWDs transition easier from high school to university (Kimball, Moore, Vaccaro, Troiano, & Newman, 2016; Vaccaro *et al.*, 2015). In a study by Vaccaro *et al.* (2015) the ability for self-advocacy, on the part of certain students with disabilities, resulted in them acquiring a favourable sense of belonging.

Despite the abundance of past research on the necessity for SWDs to self-advocate in higher education, several hurdles still exist (Chiwandire, 2021). For instance, many SWDs find that learning to advocate for themselves is a challenging and complicated process because they "are not given access to knowledge on how to advocate for oneself". Due to this, many people are unsure of when, how, and even if they should speak up for themselves (Stuntzner & Hartley 2015, P. 2).

Self-determination and Family Support as Success Factors

Many favourable outcomes in students with disabilities have been linked to self-determination. Students noted that their grit and determination, as well as their understanding of their handicaps and needs, were major contributors to their success (Dreyer, Mostert, & Gow, 2020).

College life necessitates a higher level of self-determination than is required of secondary school pupils. Student must be well-organized enough to fulfil the demands of college life on their own. Despite the diversions presented by college life, this should be done without parental or teacher monitoring (Siwela, 2017).

Another key component that helps students with disabilities succeed is their social relationships. According to a study by Dreyer, Mostert, and Gow (2020), students believe that family and friends are their most important sources of support. According to Pham and Murray (2016, P. 235), “In order to enhance outcomes for children with disabilities, efforts should be made to establish or strengthen relationships between adolescents and adults rather than with peers”. Siwela (2017) concludes that to be successful in post-secondary education, students with disabilities need self-determination skills, family participation, and support, as well as instructor support.

The Role of Disability Unit Staff Members (DUSM)

At most South African Higher Education Institutions, Disability units are essential to mainstreaming and integrating disabled students. However, in the research on incorporating students with disabilities in South Africa and internationally, the voices of disability unit employees are notably absent (Chiwandire, 2021). Most researchers focus on giving a voice to lecturers and students with disabilities but forget to give voice to disability unit staff members.

People with disabilities do not have all of the solutions; therefore, counsel from a diverse group is required. According to Seale (2017), disability support professionals, who have also been excluded from practice and research in favour of SWDs and lecturers as study participants, are a part of this balanced group. South African literature has described the critical role of DUSMs in fostering the inclusion of disability awareness campus-wide, particularly where it concerns teaching and learning, as well as promoting a thorough approach to disability inclusion (Howell, 2015). Furthermore, certain South African Disability Units have been lauded for their contributions to achieving positive outputs and successful learning experience for SWDs (Chiwandire, 2021). According to Howell (2015), disability units must be crucial in driving processes for teaching and learning that are friendly, amiable,

and socially inclusive for students with disabilities if campuses are to develop an all-encompassing approach to disability inclusion.

2.6.4. Participation in Non-academic Activities and Success

Research in the context of higher education shows that there is evidence describing how non-academic factors impact educational performance (Dryer, Henning, Tyson, & Shaw, 2016; Zulic, Hajkova, & Brkic-Jovanovic, 2021). Non-academic activities are any extracurricular college activities that are offered in addition to the academic program, especially athletics, music, and the arts (Kariyana, Maphosa & Mapuranga, 2012). Non-academic activities are widely disregarded in most educational institutions, according to Castelli, Hillman, Buck, and Erwin (2007), because academic accomplishment is the main focus of college curricula and post-college programs. Hoffman (2016) contends, however, that many young people benefit from essential socialisation opportunities when they engage in extracurricular activities. For instance, involvement in these activities has been associated with improved academic performance, higher academic aspirations, and less dangerous behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse, or dropping out of college (Darling, Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Fakhretdinova, Osipov, & Dulalaeva, 2020). Therefore, it is imperative for TVET colleges and IHEs in general to not disregard the involvement of students in extracurricular activities.

2.6.5. The Disability Discloser Dilemma

College students with non-apparent disabilities may find it more difficult to decide whether or not to formally disclose their disability to the institution. Disclosure is regarded as a "risky business," with the hazards potentially outweighing the advantages of doing so (Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018, P. 288).

Unlike students with evident disabilities, students with non-apparent disabilities are expected to voluntarily disclose the disability to others. Fear of being stigmatized and/or discriminated against, or being socially ostracized, or treated differently are some of the risks associated with the disclosure of one's disability. On the positive end of the risk scale, acceptance of the individual's disclosure includes enhanced academic and social support, as well as emotional wellbeing (Eccles, Hutchings, Hunt, & Heaslip, 2018).

However, regardless of whether the impairment is easily identifiable by others or not, all students with disabilities should handle their personal information and decide when, with whom, and how much information about their disability they communicate (De Cesarei, 2014).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at appropriate literature about the research topic's underlying issues. Issues, arguments, and discussions about various realities of disability were examined in order to shed insight into my research. First, it discussed the variety of experiences that students with disabilities had in higher education institutions in South Africa and other nations, followed by considerations of inclusive education and disability in South Africa in relation to related literature drawn from experiences and studies in other countries. Lastly, as the current study's fundamental point of conception, the theoretical framework employed in this study was discussed.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology used to address the study's goals and objectives. The research paradigm and design, sampling procedure, data collection methods, the study's location, data analysis, and the validity and reliability of the measuring tool are all discussed in this chapter. This chapter intends to describe in detail the processes involved in this study, from study design through data collection to data analysis.

3.2. Transformative Paradigm

This research study is located in the transformative paradigm. The transformative paradigm and its underlying presuppositions, offers a structure for researching social oppression and education (Mertens, 2007). Mertens (2007) defines the “transformative paradigm” as an umbrella term that incorporates paradigmatic perspectives that are designed to be emancipatory, participatory, and inclusive. According to her, the transformative paradigm is distinguished by a focus on the life histories of marginalised people, such as females, ethnic/racial minorities, people with disabilities, and the poor. The people who will be most affected by the research should be “involved to some extent in the methodological decisions”. Now according to Mertens (2007) the transformative paradigm encourages researchers to draw an “explicit connection between the process and outcomes of research and the advancement of a social justice agenda” (Mertens, 2007a, P. 216).

A transformative worldview involves participants in the study process in more ways than one. It is also concerned with promoting social justice. Although if respondents seem unable to name institutional discrimination or are themselves involved in reinforcing it, as internalised oppression, the researcher must be aware of the power differentials that exist among the study partnership and recognise limitations of systemic oppression on behaviours and actions. In reality, in every transformative or liberation work in education, raising consciousness is frequently the first step (Hurtado, 2015; Phelps, 2021).

This study, is hoped, will contribute to social transformation through mutual learning and reciprocal relationships, as one of the desired outcomes of a transformative paradigm, with the researcher learning from the wisdom of individuals engaging in long-term struggle under unjust and oppressive

circumstances, and research participants gaining new insight into their own lives and reform efforts with the researcher's expertise (Phelps, 2021). Thus, I will also be learning from the experiences of students living with disabilities.

The method of data collection chosen for this study makes it a participatory space whereby respondents were afforded a space to share their lived experiences. The space also allowed the researcher to engage them critically in sharing their lived experiences. Consequently, this research will add to the body of knowledge and transformation efforts required in the field. The transformative paradigm allowed me as a researcher to challenge and bring awareness of the post-school experience of students with disabilities at the chosen TVET college.

3.3. Research Design

The choice of research methods and design is influenced by the research paradigm. The research paradigm addresses the question of what should constitute appropriate research methods. The transformative nature of this study prompted this study to select a research design which is qualitative in nature.

3.3.1. Qualitative Research Study

This study is a qualitative research study. Qualitative data is made up of data gathered by the researcher through interviews, focus groups, and observations. Generally, qualitative data is analysed by grouping it into categories and displaying the variety of thoughts gathered during the data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Bryman, 2017).

Rubin (2008), Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015) and Silverman (2016) all are in agreement that qualitative research is better for studying human behaviour, so it was chosen for this study. In a qualitative approach, the researcher frequently asserts knowledge that is based primarily on constructivist viewpoints or advocacy or participatory perspectives (Mohajan, 2018). Data was collected through interviews supported by photovoice.

According to Creswell and Poth (2016), those conducting qualitative research have a bewildering range of methods to choose from. Qualitative research methods are complex and can be numerous, depending on how they are classified; some classification schemes have more than 20 methodologies. The standard five methodologies are reflected in some way in all classifications, regardless of how they are

categorized. Case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, and phenomenology are some of them (Butina, 2015).

3.3.2. A Narrative Approach

This study opted for a narrative inquiry methodology. Narrative inquiry is a type of qualitative research in which the stories themselves serve as raw data (Butina, 2015). Narrative inquiry is a theoretical framework as well as a methodology that values people's socially produced tales (Scheidt & Godwin, 2017). The inquiry is lens on a qualitative approach that studies experience through a narrative lens. It allows for consideration and analysis of experience (Butina, 2015).

Although the narrative approach has its roots in the social sciences (anthropology and sociology), it is increasingly being used in education, healthcare, and the humanities (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Narratives, like most qualitative research methods, provide for significant depth in the research participant's perceptions at the expense of the generalisability offered in quantitative research (Creswell, 2012).

The narrative approach is distinguished by the collection of a story or stories from individuals or small groups. As storytelling involves the audience, there is frequent collaboration with the researcher. Individual experiences are described in these accounts, and the researcher is frequently exposed to the identities of those individuals (Butina, 2015).

In students' tales, a narrative approach allows participants to acknowledge diverse identities and experiences (Scheidt & Godwin, 2017). Since this study wanted to bring some transformative knowledge to raise self-awareness and advocacy towards changing the status quo lived by students with disability, the selection of a research design that allows the respondents to voice well their lived experiences was necessary.

The narrative inquiry approach, as a form of qualitative data gathering, allowed the researcher and respondents to generate data that will be used in chapter four and five, to generate knowledge that challenges and transforms the status quo. Thus, in this study, the respondents recreated their stories through narrative inquiry to express clear viewpoints on their post-school experience. This was done in alignment with the mutual learning and reciprocal relationship voiced by the transformative paradigm.

3.4. Research Site

This study took place at “Furniture” TVET College (pseudonym) which is located in the Northern Region of KwaZulu–Natal. Three District Councils, Zululand District Municipality, uMkhanyakude District Municipality, and uMzinyathi District Municipality, serve the college's expansive service area.

Furniture TVET College has a central office and eight campuses named “C, F, H, M, O, X, Y and Z” campuses. The college has 284 employees, 233 of whom are permanent and 51 are on contractual basis (Furniture, 2022). Currently, it has enrolled 4103 students, 20 of those are with disabilities.

Furniture TVET College offers more than 15 courses in 3 streams namely: National Certificate Vocational (NCV) Level 2 – Level 4; Business Studies, National N Diploma Courses (N4 – N6); and Engineering Studies, National Diploma & Artisan Development Courses (N1 – N6) Furniture TVETMIS, 2022). High unemployment rates and a poverty rate that reaches 79% in some areas characterize the Furniture TVET College catchment area (Mthashana, 2022). There are roughly 1.4 million people in total, only 45% of whom are employed, 7% of whom have completed grade four, and 36% of whom have never attended school. Without a doubt, the above situation is exacerbated by the lack of industry (Furniture, 2022).

The college serves primarily underserved communities and is in a unique position as a rural college. This offers numerous opportunities while also posing numerous difficulties. Numerous young people in the area are given hope by the presence of a college because it acts as a vital entryway to education and employment. However, it is becoming more difficult to meet the needs of all the youths with different aspirations primarily because most students who enrol in the college come from very low socioeconomic backgrounds and thus need financial support from the state. More than 95% of applicants meet the means test requirements for bursaries. Another difficulty is that some students find it difficult to complete their courses on time or even graduate because they are unprepared for the environment and culture of a college (Furniture, 2022). Following are the current pass rates by stream: 64.41 percent for National Certificate Vocational (NCV), Level 2–Level 4; 83.65 percent for Business Studies, National N Diploma Courses, N4–N6; and 86.51 percent for Engineering Studies, National Diploma & Artisan Development Courses, N1–N6 (Furniture TVETMIS, 2022).

3.5. Sample, Sampling Strategies, and Sample Size

Participants were selected using a non-probability sampling procedure that relied on the researcher's discretion (Patten, 2016, Creswell, 2014). Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that does not provide any basis for a probability estimate, that components in the population or sample will be included in the study sample (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

It is a sampling method in which the researcher chooses samples based on his or her judgment rather than random selection (Patten, 2016). The researcher's knowledge of the population and the study intent makes the sampling techniques convenient, purposeful and appropriate for this study.

As a purposive non-probability sampling method, the researcher chose members of the population to participate in the sample based on his or her judgment (Creswell, 2014). The researcher selected black NSFAS recipients' students with disabilities who provided the knowledge required to solve the research issue using a purposive sampling process. Recipients of NSFAS are classified as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, thus regarded as poor in this study.

Students with disabilities from Furniture TVET College were conveniently and purposefully chosen for this study sample. The college principal was approached by the researcher to arrange a meeting through campus managers with all Black students with disabilities in all campuses.

The study was introduced to the students and the researcher requested all those interested to participate in the study to consult the researcher privately. There was a total of 7 Black poor students with disabilities who volunteered to participate in this proposed study based on the following: Black, currently registered, currently NSFAS recipients.

Participant List

The table on the next page describes the participants.

| Participants | Age | Male / Female | Course | Campus |
|--------------|-----|---------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Mathobi | 22 | Female | Office Administration Level 2 | Y |
| Abram | 38 | Male | Office Administration Level 3 | Y |
| Mamncane | 32 | Female | Office Administration Level 2 | Y |
| Meheck | 32 | Female | Management Assistant, N5 | Y |
| Gebo | 30 | Male | Office Administration Level 4 | Z |
| S'fiso | 31 | Male | Public Management, N6 | Z |
| ZuluGirl | 30 | Female | Office Administration Level 2 | Z |

3.6. Data Collection Methods

This study employed the following data collection methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews and photovoice, which was incorporated in focus group interviews.

Data collection for this study was done in different stages and adhered to all Covid-19 protocols.

Stage One: Briefing Meeting & Photovoice Workshop

This process took place at campus Z on the 21st November 2021. Participants from campus Y were transported to campus Z. Meheck outlined that this trip also acted as an excursion for her as it was her first time to visit that part of KZN and to see *the sister* campus as well.

Photo-voice

Photovoice is a visual research technique that places cameras in the hands of participants to assist them in documenting, reflecting on, and communicating topics of concern while also encouraging social change (Wang, 1997). Photovoice participants define, record, and reflect their community's strengths and concerns through the use of a particular photographic technique, which is typically used for marginalized groups (Wang, 1997). The Photovoice method was chosen as it improved students with

disabilities engagement, raised their awareness, and boosted the research partners' self-efficacy to foster social change.

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) a focus group is a group interview concerning few participants of demographically similar purposes who might react to specific researcher-posed questions. The interviews involved a group of people who were asked about their perceptions, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and views (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). This method was chosen because it would allow students with disabilities to voice their "feelings, experiences, perceptions, and ideas (Christensen, Mygind & Bentsen, 2015).

I. Briefing Session

The purpose of the briefing session was to introduce participants to the project as well as the data collection plan and process. They were assured of confidentiality through anonymity and other key ethical issues that the researcher adhered to (described in detail in ethical considerations section). The workshop on photovoice, which aims to provide participants with relevant information on photovoice, photography, and the ethics of photography was the next activity. The briefing lasted 45 minutes.

II. Photovoice Workshop

All participants used their smartphones to capture photos.

III. Training

Facilitation started very well but could sense tension as participants took it as a formal lecture because they know me as a lecturer. My professional status kicked in and it nearly compromised the whole plan. However, I was able to turn this situation around. The initial anxiety on their faces gave way to a relaxed mode as soon as I unpacked the topic, set the focus and guidelines.

IV. Exercises

Participants began these exercises on their arrival at the campus. They took pictures of themselves before we even started the workshop. They took selfies and full pictures in turns. I requested to see those pictures, and was very impressed, as their spontaneity illustrated what we were about to immerse ourselves in. That forced me to change the training to be more of a participatory pedagogy instead of a preaching/banking method.

V. Actual Exercise

I gave everyone an opportunity to tell the group about the modern digital cell phone pictures they took of themselves.

They completely took over the facilitation and explained in detail how a picture can be enhanced using different features.

I then requested them to take pictures of the whole group. They immediately used flash when necessary and applied all functions like angles and so on. Their pictures were relevant and responded to the question I had asked. I realised the importance of including prior knowledge to in facilitation planning.

VI. Home Activity

Participants were requested to take story telling photos which impact/ impacted their lives as per the research questions. They were given liberty to take as many pictures as possible which they would present to the group in our next meeting.

Stage Two: Semi-structured Individual Interviews

This interview session took place on the 28th November 2021 at campus Y. Two distinct days were used to conduct the interviews. Four students were chosen to participate in a group that was formed on the first day. Three students were interviewed the following day. Every student took part in an interview that lasted between 40 and 45 minutes. In addition, the professional psychologist was on standby in the waiting area to assist. He was not in the interviewing room.

Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview is "created to elicit subjective feedback about a particular event or phenomenon from people who have experienced it. When there is adequate objective knowledge about an experience or phenomenon but insufficient subjective knowledge, it employs a fairly detailed interview guide or schedule" (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, P.2). Semi-structured interviews are flexible (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). Thus, allowing for a flexible and focused data collection process. This made it easy to probe participants' responses and delve into the research problem. The researcher had the flexibility to ask students with disabilities about their experience, class, and race issues they might be facing.

Stage Three: Sharing Photographs & Photovoice Exhibition

This session took place in campus Z on the 5th December 2021. Each participant was required to choose a maximum of five photographs from those taken to present to the group. Furthermore, participants were guided and required to present and explain their five photos. Participants were asked to form two groups for group photo presentations. Photos were grouped based on categories they have identified and were captioned. A sample of questions, which consisted of five questions (see appendix D) was then given to participants to prepare their chosen group photo presentations.

3.7 Data Analysis

Researchers utilize research data analysis to reduce data to a story and interpret it to extract insights. The data analysis procedure aids in the reduction of a large amount of data into smaller data classes. (Assarroudi, Heshmati Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi, & Vaismoradi, 2018; Lecompte & Schensul, 2012). Research data analysis employs qualitative content analysis to describe and interpret textual data using a systematic coding process (Assarroudi et al., 2018).

This research study used content analysis to analyse the data generated. Neuendorf (2016) asserts that content analysis generates valid text inferences in the form of themes. The researcher classified words, phrases from the semi-structured interview into a series of meaningful categories then came up with themes to be explored and analysed. Moreover, the data from photovoice was incorporated into the focus group interviews to solidify themes that emerged from this data. Analysed data is presented and discussed in detail in chapter four and five.

3.8. Reliability and Validity

In research investigations, validity and reliability are used to assess and improve the quality of research tools (Noble and Smith, 2015).

According to Zohrabi (2013, P. 258), the guiding principles of naturalistic and/or qualitative research, are based on the idea that reliability, dependability, and trustworthiness come from the assessor and the multiple research stakeholders. In qualitative research, reality is comprehensive, complex, and dynamic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Therefore, from data collection through data processing and interpretation, it is the responsibility of researchers and study participants to check for validity at every stage of the research process. Whether or not the research study is reliable, honest, and does what it purports to evaluate is the fundamental question of validity. Triangulation was carried out in accordance with the procedure for verifying the validity of qualitative data.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017, P. 33), by combining different methods, triangulation "strengthens a study". This could entail employing a variety of techniques or data. Moreover, triangulation, according to Turner, Cardinal, and Burton (2017), refers to the employment of many, distinct methodologies to better comprehend a theory or reality. This study made use of a semi-structured interview, focus group, and photovoice to ensure triangulation.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a collection of codes of moral principles that a researcher in a study should adhere to, to avoid any wrongdoing (Resnik, 2015). The researcher must strictly abide by rules requiring informed consent, protecting participants' rights to privacy and anonymity, and maintaining confidentiality.

Autonomy

Respect for individual autonomy includes: voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity.

Voluntary Participation

People's lives are often, but not always, invaded by social research. Participation in a social experiment often disrupts the subject's regular routines. Furthermore, social research often necessitates individuals disclosing personal information to outsiders' researchers. As a result, precaution must be taken to ensure that research participants are willing to take part (not forced to participate) (Kılınç & Fırat, 2017).

Furthermore, participants should be mindful that participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw at any time (Babbie, 2015; Babbie, 2020). Participants were informed of their right to participate and withdraw, if necessary, using informed consent.

No Harm to Participants

Following their voluntarily participation, participants must be protected from harm by the researcher by adhering to the three main values of respect for people, beneficence, and fairness. Respect for

individuals necessitates voluntary engagement based on a thorough understanding of the situation. The term "beneficence" is attributed to the idea that research does not affect the subjects and should, preferably, benefit them. Counselling services provided by the college were available. The researcher sought authorization from the college to grant respondents access to this service.

Justice implies that the costs and benefits of science should be fairly distributed in society (Babbie, 2015; Babbie, 2020; Buchanan & Warwick, 2021). In this research study, the researcher adhered to the UKZN ethical committee policy of no harm to participants by not asking any questions that could cause harm to participants.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are two methods that enable the study to protect the research subjects' identities and well-being. Anonymity refers to the safeguarding of participants in the study so that even the researcher is unable to link them to the information provided (King, Horrocks, and Brooks, 2018).

Anonymity

The anonymity of participants in this research project was ensured by omitting their names and asking participants to select a pseudonym. Moreover, the name of the institution was not revealed, in place of which a pseudonym was used.

Confidentiality

A research study guarantees confidentiality and applies when the researcher recognizes a specific respondent's responses, and agrees not to reveal them publicly (Babbie, 2015; Coffelt, 2017; Lancaster, 2017; Babbie, 2020).

The study did not disclose any of the respondents' details. The identities of all participants were kept confidential. At no point during the discussion of the results were the respondents' names mentioned. Participants were notified of all of their rights per the university ethics committee's standards. Participants were notified that they have the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.10 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is one of the principles of 'critical' qualitative research and has to do with the degree of influence the authors exert on the results whether knowingly or unknowingly (Romm, 2015). My position as a lecturer with a physical disability (paraplegic) might somehow influence the study by

conveying prejudices and enlightenments (Morrison, 2015), which can be considered as a limitation to the study.

I tried to “ensure that exclusion” of less active participants were encouraged to share and engage with their lived experiences without placing undue pressure on them during the research process (Romm, 2015, P. 415). I was very aware of not influencing participants before and during the interview sessions, especially given that I had to explain some key ideas used in this study in relation to in social justice to ensure they had a clear understanding of the focus and aims of the study. As a person living with a disability, I am particularly cognisant of the fact that people can perceive people with disabilities as needing assistance, when they are quite capable of representing themselves and their views. In this respect, I had to check myself that I exercise self-restraint, where necessary to allow participants the space to articulate their experiences without being made to feel that they needed assistance to share their stories during the research process (Morrison, 2015).

Full approval of ethical clearance was granted after college examination when participants were no longer on campus. I had to schedule the photovoice workshop with participants during their vacation and this meant bringing them back from their homes. As a result, I had to fund their transport expenses to and from the venue as well as provide meals.

3.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the research design and methodology adopted, the sampling procedure used to identify and recruit the target population, the research site, the qualitative methods used to generate data as well as ethical considerations. The chapter ended with a focus on researcher reflexivity and this was a critical and necessary stance that I adopted as the researcher.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.1. Introduction

It is the intention of this chapter to present and discuss the key findings in terms of students' lived experiences of technical and vocational education as a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal. Before presenting the key findings of participants' post school educational experiences of participation and success, it was necessary to provide participants' biographies so that the reader could gain a better understanding of the critical socio-cultural and economic circumstances that influence their post-school education and training. The chapter therefore begins with participants biographies. Drawing on the biographical section of the interviews and the data generated through photo-voice, I constructed their biographies, which I shared with them to review and change, if necessary.

As explained previously (see Chapter 3) seven participants participated in this study. Participants were aged between twenty-two and thirty-eight. The researcher did not make use of the participants' real names for ethical concerns and to safeguard their actual identities. For the purpose of this study, the participants named themselves Zulu Girl, Sfiso, Gebo, Meheck, Mamncane, Abram, and Mathobi. Their short biographies are presented in their own voice, at times drawing on actual quotes from the interview transcripts.

Following the biographies, the chapter presents the key findings in relation to participants' experiences of participation and success at a TVET College. The key themes presented respond to the following research questions:

- What are the educational experiences of black, poor, students with disabilities in one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College?
- What are the factors that facilitate or impede the access, participation and success of black, poor, students with disabilities in a TVET College?
- How do black, poor, students with disabilities demonstrate their agency in the ways they navigate these factors?

The key findings, which emanated from the analysis of data generated are presented as key themes and this is followed by a discussion. This section examines the factors that influence students' experiences

of participation and success in the academic programs they were registered for. These findings begin with a focus on the following related factors: motivation to study, choice of institution, choice of career, the process of registration, and post-school readiness.

4.2 Participants' Biographies

4.2.1. Mathobi

I am Mathobi, a 22-year-old Black female student living with a disability. I was born and raised in the rural hamlet of kaMthandi in Mnambithi where traditional values and practices are maintained at all costs. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have been born in matrimony because the social narrative of being born outside of marriage is destructive. Both of my parents are uneducated, unskilled, illiterate. My mother is a stay-at-home mother and my father works in construction. We have direct parental support from both parents despite our financial challenges. Some of my siblings are still in school, and the second born of the family has a degree in logistics but is unemployed. As a child living with a disability, I [got] warm support from them, they encouraged me to be out there with other kids, and they encouraged me to accept the disability I lived with and not feel bothered.



Figure 4.1: KaMthandi Rural Area

My birth certificate identifies me as a member of the Christian congregation, which gives me an advantage over other children in the neighbourhood and more especially in school as I belonged to the school's congregation. The political atmosphere at my school combined with my Christian faith placed me favourably among the elite group.

I am considered a disabled person because of the physical impairment of my hand. I have always had a right hand with four fingers. First grade was the first year I truly understood how unique I was, but I never felt under pressure. Both my parents and school teachers gave me their loving support and since I was a child with a disability; they told me to play with other kids and to accept my difference without being worried about it.

Due to my condition, peer pressure began to affect me in Grade 10, especially at a period when boys were encroaching on my personal space. I used to cover my hand because I felt so self-conscious about it, which made me feel like an outcast and inferior. I consequently engaged in self-discrimination and self-isolation. When I was in grade 11 in 2017, my first partner became aware of this problem. He was courteous and advised me not to let it affect me.

I had originally intended to enrol in college to obtain a Bachelor of Nursing degree, but after I failed Grade 12, that ambition was abandoned. Two key issues contributed to my failure in Grade 12. The lack of high schools in my neighbourhood was the first. I had to travel a long way to go to high school in Ezakheni because my neighbourhood is quite remote and neglected, which exposed me to a variety of criminal activities such as sexual harassment and rape. Next, the second event that affected my emotions throughout Grade 12 was seeing my brother die at an accident site. My parents did not handle my anxiety that year because of our family's financial situation and lack of access to my school atmosphere, which directly affected my academic performance and caused me to fail.

The educational level of my parents prevented me from being exposed to or prepared for post-secondary education. Schools in our area also only focused on us doing well in matric but did not expose or prepare us for post-secondary education. Currently, I'm enrolled in National Certificate Vocational, Office Administration, Level 2. At this point, I feel as though I had no choice but to be compelled into attending this college. As first year students, we also did not receive any induction. However, my first admission and registration at this college were straightforward because after applying for my preferred course, I was called to the campus and helped with any prerequisites I had. I was extremely pleased with my experience, and I felt included as a result of the help I received.

I worried a lot about my disability, and I think that's why I was shy and silent. In my first year at this college, I used to conceal my disabled hand, exactly like in elementary school, but this year I was able to be more open about it, and I can even now wear short sleeves.

4.2.2. Abram

I am Abram, a 38-year-old grandmother's boy. I was born into a large family of seven in the rural community of Mashesheleni in Nquthu. My late grandmother raised me and made sure the whole family was taken care of. My parents separated, as a result I take the surname of my mother as the standard that a child born outside of marriage belongs to "*umalume*" (uncle).

The social narrative of being born out of wedlock has harmed many in society, having to explain to your peers the meaning of taking your mother's surname at a young age, was distressing. That alone put me in a position to be exposed to peer pressure through name-calling, discrimination, and exclusion. When other children talked about their fathers, I used to keep quiet since I didn't have one and it hurt. I was made to appear as if my mother had been abandoned while pregnant due to her bad behaviour.

A man is not considered a man, in the eyes of my family and society, if he has not married by a certain age. I have one child and live in an arranged marriage. The family decided to let her move in when I brought three live cows to my in-laws. I am now treated like a man and get all the privileges that married guys get in my community. Due to the fact that they produced a real man who married, my family has a positive reputation in society.

Regarding the family's financial status, we don't have any at-home employees and only partake in agricultural pursuits like planting and selling crops. My grandmother instilled in me the idea that we are our land. We are fortunate to have a substantial amount of land that we efficiently utilize. Being underprivileged has taught us to look after our land so that it will look after us. Additionally, we're teaching this to our kids.



Figure 4.2: Warm Houses that Made Me a Man

My National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) application form, from the medical doctor, states that I live with an intellectual disability, which is categorized as a neurodevelopmental disability. I also have a physical disability and chronic lung illness. Additionally, I am rather short compared to my colleagues in height. I began to isolate myself from others when I realized that I don't look like my classmates, which was in the fifth grade. Even now, people continue to question my manhood due to the types of garments I wear and the places I am unable to access.

I'm currently enrolled in the National Certificate Vocation (NCV), Office Administration, Level 3. My study is not going according to plan as I'm finding it difficult to complete my NCV. I have been at the college since 2017, and I'm only able to pass 2 to 3 modules out of 7 per year.

I decided to attend college because I wanted to learn more, and the options it provides influenced me because I did poorly on my Grade 12 exams. When I was younger, I intended to major in psychology at the university, but my Grade 12 performance prevented me from doing so. My desire to pursue advanced academic education and knowledge also played a role in my decision to attend college.

I had trouble getting to the college and no accommodations were offered to me. Upon enrolling at the college, I was informed that I needed to take my studies very seriously and never lose sight of my home life. Gaining access and registering for the first time were both very challenging for me. It was not at all accommodating to come in and enrol for my preferred qualification, however, registration went smooth as I was made aware of what was expected of me.

4.2.3. Mamncane

I was born in a family of nine in the rural settlement of Mzimhlophe in Nkandla. Being born in Nkandla felt significant in recent years since it produced Mr Jacob Gedley'hlekisa Zuma, a democratic former president of South Africa, whom we all grew up admiring.

Due to the high rate of unemployment in this village, my sister and I were raised by parents who were both uneducated and unemployed. I am at a loss for words when describing the level of love and support they provided to their two young daughters. The love and support we received from our parents served as proof that family warmth is not determined by a person's level of education. The little we had on the table meant the world to and for all of us since we all understood what it took my father to provide, even though they were unemployed. We never went to bed on empty stomach.

My mother passed away when I was 14 years old in 2003, and I felt as though my heart had been ripped out of me as I had to immediately take over her responsibilities. Yes, dad was there with his full support, but cultural family and societal construction beliefs prevented him from doing housework, which increased the burden on my shoulders. I was required to prepare meals for the family, clean up after them, and do the laundry because they are tasks that are traditionally associated with women.

I was born healthy and without any disability, I got ‘*umbhulelo, umeqo*’ at the age of 14, a year after my mother passed on. Upon seeking help from traditional healers (*izangoma and izinyanga*), it was revealed that my late mother was calling me to join her on the other side because she died with a heavy load on her shoulders of leaving me at a very young age, her soul wasn’t resting. As I could not be helped by traditional healers, my family decided to take me to the public hospital. I was admitted to a government hospital because I came from a very poor family which could not afford private hospital fees. A wrong surgery was performed on my leg which left my left leg physically disabled as I can’t bend it.

My father assumed responsibility for caring for me in my mother's absence because I was unable to walk, but he was only partially able to do so because I was her daughter and because of cultural and gender norms. Some aspects of me were off-limits to him, and neither could he see me undressed. My father could not see me naked even if I was sick. Moreover, we could not discuss certain topics, related to female intimacy.



Figure 4.3: My Route to School

Getting to my school, which was on top of a mountain, became challenging because of how far away it was. I was permitted to arrive late to class, but I was unable to participate in much of the lesson. In Grade 12, I was unable to show up on time for my exams, and I consequently failed the grade.

The fact that I lived in a rural area without access to public transportation became a barrier to my education, but I now realize that even if there had been public transportation, I would not have been able to afford to use it because my family was poor. Walking alone in the bush on crutches also put my life in danger of being raped or killed, for that matter.

I decided to attend college rather than stay at home since I realized that staying at home wouldn't help me move forward in my life. Furthermore, the fact that this college offered office administration was another reason for me to choose it. Initially, I wanted to study between Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Nursing at a university but ended up here at TVET College, I honestly did not see myself here.

At the college, access was challenging due to poor treatment, which was proven by one employee who was in charge of registration. Had it not been for her senior who called me when I was exiting the gate, I would not have been accepted. I was nevertheless enrolled in the National Certificate Vocation, Office Administration, Level 2. I was advised about the course fees and the fact that there is no room for playing, because I might lose financial aid from NSFAS and suffer, which has unfortunately happened as I dropped out of TVET College, because I had been excluded by NSFAS due to poor academic performance.

4.2.4. Meheck

I am a 32-year-old woman who was raised in a household of four in the remote community of Hlathi Dam in Nquthu. Due to the fact that my parents passed away when I was 13 years old, I have never had a secure, established life. As a young girl, being an orphan had a detrimental effect on me, since I did not grow up with the parental love that other children do.

My God-sent aunt came to my aid and became a lovely guardian in her house in the Dannhauser community of Annville, but she, unfortunately, passed away when I was 15 years old. When I was in grade 10, her daughter who had been caring for me in the same home also passed away.

I currently reside in the Mfongomfongo neighbourhood of Nquthu with a person who is not related to me. I had to switch schools because of my chaotic personal situation, but I never had any challenges because I was born intelligent. Since I lost both of my parents when I was young, I didn't go to preparatory school. I do recall being able to count to ten, speak words correctly, and distinguish between different colours when I started first grade. My first experience with education outside of the classroom was watching television at my aunt's house.

The issue arose when I had to relocate to Nquthu and enrol in grade 11 in a new and strange setting. The school used severe corporal punishment to enforce discipline among students. At the time, I had developed a disability from rheumatoid arthritis, and I was beaten on the same hands. That absolutely altered how I felt about the school.

I detested going to school, and failed Grade 11 in part due to my disability, the corporal punishment, and the fact that I switched from the tourism program, which they did not offer in the science program. I retook Grade 11, eventually passed, and then moved on to Grade 12, where I also passed and was admitted to a university for a bachelor's degree.

I didn't continue my education because I detested going to class; all I wanted to do was go through Grade 12 and be done with it. After graduating from high school, I continued to be unemployed, indulged in unprotected sex, became unexpectedly pregnant, and I am now a single mother.

I was inspired by Pastor Zondo's speech on Ukhozi FM Radio to attempt living again. Being an orphan prevented me from receiving post-secondary education preparation; in addition, the schools in our area concentrated on getting good grades in matric but did not expose or prepare us for post-secondary education. As a result, I had to figure out how to survive on this campus without any induction as a first year student.

This college's entry and registration procedures went without a hitch. I currently have 2 uncompleted courses for N6 in Management Assistant. The second semester of 2022 might be my last because NSFAS dropped me as a result of my "subpar" academic progress.



Figure 4.4: A Place Called Home

4.2.5. Gebo

Nongoma, my place of birth, is the home of the honourable King of AmaZulu. We are deeply rooted in Zulu culture, and young boys are groomed in stages based on their ages, beginning with "Ukubuthwa" and progressing to "amabutho". I am 30 years old, born into a family of 3. I am currently residing with my grandmother and uncle. My mother married my stepfather. They live together at Vuna in Nongoma. I was raised by my grandmother using her old age grant.

Being born outside of marriage makes it exceedingly difficult for boys to grow up in my village. I missed following my father about as other boys did. I was called "umnqolo" because I ran around my grandmother's skirt instead of trailing my father, which is against Zulu custom. Only girls should do this.

I reside in a village called Bhanganoma near the Hluhluwe game reserve, where we sing "*Nomangab'zindl'ezodakamntanamikusekhaya la*". Meaning we take pride in our mud houses (figure 4.5) as they are our only homes.

My residential village is very Zulu-oriented, to the point where males are taught gender norms at a young age. A boy is expected to behave in a certain unique way to the girls'. Boys are educated to do household chores, many of which are challenging and dangerous. They are also forbidden from crying for fear of being referred to as "sisi". An extremely demanding and difficult manner to grow, but one that is widely anticipated in society. You must succeed on this path or you risk being side-lined for the rest of your life.



Figure 4.5: The Mud Road to College

I was born with two severe disabilities. I have a neurodevelopmental disability (communication disability, speech) and a physical disability (cerebral palsy). Since our beloved deep rural area had no schools, I had to wait until I was able to travel a long distance (figure 4.5) to find an education. The distance to school required an abled child to be able to overcome all the obstacles or barriers on the way to school. I experienced a lot of oppression in primary school as a result of the way I walked and spoke. As if that wasn't enough, I had to retake Grade 11 three times because teachers were unable to accommodate my speech disability. They couldn't hear me, and I struggled to keep up with the workload.

I had to switch schools and was placed back in Grade 10, after which I was pushed up to Grade 12, where I performed miserably. Race, class, geographical location, and disability all played a role in my poor Grade 12 performance, and the demise of my dream of becoming a social worker.

As the years passed, I decided to attend college and improve my Grade 12 because returning to mainstream school would require me to start from Grade 10 all over again. My sister earned her Human Resource diploma at this institution. This served as inspiration for me to continue my education there. My family had also urged me to do so.

When I arrived, I was told that there was no upgrading to the Grade 12 program at TVET College. I was, therefore, introduced to National Certificate Vocation (NCV) programs, among which I chose office administration. Hence, I am enrolled in NCV, Office Administration, Level 2. It did not take long for my application to be accepted, which made me delighted. I was a little nervous during registration because it was a new situation for me, with new people and no orientation.

4.2.6. Sfiso

Figure 4.6 represents the story (background) of my life. A rural and marginalised place, yet they have made me who I am. My small village of Ophondweni in Jozini, is where I was raised in a healthy and typical manner. Under that tree (Figure 4.6), I was trained to become a man. I am 31 years old and was born into a family of nine. God has granted both of my parent life. My father works as a freelancer, and my mother is a housewife, as is customary in this area.

I struggled in matric, which made it difficult for me to pursue a teaching degree at university. I did not receive proactive advice on how to improve my matric grades in order to increase my chances of admission to the university. Due to their education, my parents could not acquire that knowledge that may have changed my life. After seeing how badly my family's financial situation had gotten, I started looking for a job, and I was fortunate to find one in Durban. At the time, I was able to support my family and care for myself.



Figure 4.6: Houses Behind my Manhood

My able status was changed to disability in 2013 after I was hurt in a robbery. I was informed by my hospital doctors that I had significant brain trauma and was now physically disabled (with cerebral palsy). I now use crutches since my right side is impaired.

I was fired by my employer because of my condition, and in this situation, it was impossible for me to find another job. I had to rely on my disability allowance which resulted in me not being able to support

the family. For me, this was a significant setback, since I wanted to support my family. It also hurt my ego because men are supposed to be better than boys in this regard.

This condition has put my manhood to the ultimate test, especially since I come from a highly culturally based community. I frequently ask for help from others, which is contrary to my upbringing, which taught me that a man is defined by his labour. My manhood has been questioned to the point where my elders have questioned whether I can bring and maintain a wife.

I chose to go to college to finish my education, because I realised that staying at home would not be in my best interests. I chose to attend this college even though it was my second choice, because of the dorms and the course I wanted to pursue. I started from Level 2 to Level 4 in NCV, Office Administration, because my results were poor. Access to school was initially problematic. I was met with animosity from the administration, but registration went off without a hitch in the end. Today I now possess N4, N5 and N6 in Public Management and am doing my 18 months of in-service training.

4.2.7. ZuluGirl

I am a Zulu orientated lady from a village at Ulundi. Growing up as a young black girl in a stick-and-mud house in Ulundi, while hearing my single, uneducated mother pray every evening meant just one thing: studying hard to finish Grade 12 and get a job to fulfil my mother's desire. Even now, at the age of 30, as a woman, I can reminisce about her prayer.

Being Christian grounded, my mother's prayer was our daily bread. "God protect my children against the evil thoughts as they go to bed with empty stomachs, make them better people to uphold your name the next day". That prayer alone projected me to be who I am today. I thank my mother for being the strongest mother, the provider that she is. She made sure that we went through each day with the hope that one day we will become better people.

My sole goal in life was to rescue my family from their squalid living conditions and provide them with a decent home they could call their own. That could only be accomplished through education, which I found difficult to access due to the distance I had to travel to get to school.

Once inside the school gates, I had to try to ignore my hunger and focus on the subject at hand. I stood out from the other students since I didn't have a fancy, spotless outfit or a pleasant enough smell like they had.

Due to peer pressure, high school was considerably harder. I aspired to be on par with my contemporaries and approachable by boys, but who was I? I lacked the necessities of being a human. I had trouble focusing on my studies, thus I did poorly in my Grade 12 exams. I thanked God for that certificate as I saw the doors opening.

After Grade 12, God answered my mother's prayer, and I got a steady job at Transnet, which was a huge boost for my family; for the first time. We went to bed with full stomachs. My mother could afford church offerings just like any other women at church. This job brought back humanity to us. It was not just a job. It was a dream come true. God's plan to lift us out of poverty.



Figure 4.7: Warm Houses I Grew Up In

I had a stroke unexpectedly, leaving me with a physical disability (cerebral palsy). I was unable to handle my duty load. I lost my job. It is common to think of people with disabilities as inanimate objects that can only sleep and take care of their conditions. The disability is seen as being inhuman. I was fired because I am a disabled person who will be a liability to the company. I was not even allowed to bargain about staying. I had just been dismissed, which caused me to be frustrated and angry, as I asked myself: "*Why me, Lord?*"

This had a very negative effect on our family because I was as good as dead and could not provide for my family anymore. We returned to misery and starvation. My womanhood also was tested extensively as I had to learn new ways of sustaining myself. My romantic relationship ended as my partner lacked

the capacity and desire to continue with a disabled lady. 4 years after I had a stroke, I decided to carry on with life and apply to college. The proximity of the college to my home was another motivating factor. I want to work as a clerk when I graduate.

I did not have any type of preparation at the college. My access experience was easy, as I did not experience any difficulty. Although no preparation or explanation was given to me during registration, I can claim that my registration experience was good. I am currently registered for the Level 3 in NCV, Office Administration.

4.3. Student Aspirations

For the majority of students when asked what informed their decision to come to college. Their motivation was to achieve an improved quality of life, to be empowered, to overcome oppression, to acquire knowledge and skills, and continue with life. These are the factors that motivated the students who were interviewed to come to college.

As an illustration, some participants claimed,

“...Eeeeeeee the thing that made me interested in studying is to avoid disability oppression and be seen that I’m capable of doing something...” (Sfiso)

“...Mmmhhhh I can say I didn’t pass grade 12 and saw years passing by and realized that I can’t go back to the mainstream schools because they would make me repeat from grade 10, I then decided to come to college and try...” (Gebo)

“...Mmm the thing is, I decided to go to college I said eeeee let me not stay at home so that I continue with life because staying at home won’t help me...” (Mamncane)

4.4. Access to PSET

4.4.1 Choice of Institution

Family influence and proximity of the school were the main factors that influenced the majority of participants to choose this college. The fact that the college is within the range of their habitation influenced participants to choose it. Furthermore, past experiences of relatives who attended the college played a role in their decision. The finding reveals that for some participants this college was their 2nd option while for some this college was the only option. Other participant backed up the aforesaid

assertion by saying: “...*This one? [It’s] I have a sister who studied HR here and she is now working. Yes, she did HR and for me, I wanted to go to another college but at home, they convinced me to come here through my sister’s success...*” (Gebo)

According to other participants of the study, the distance between their habitation and the college was also a factor that influenced the choice of the institution:

“...*This College is closer to home, distance influenced my decision...*” (ZuluGirl)

“...*This college is closer to home*” (Sfiso)

“...*No my first preference was Orange (pseudonym) campus, when I arrived there they had very few programmes to choose from and they were already full. They advised us to enrol for agriculture which wasn’t for me, I then went to this campus...*” (Mehek) “...*No, this was my only first choice college at Campus X...*” (Abram)

Participants' responses made it clear that socio-economic variables, such as the student’s geographic location, and family influence, played a significant role in influencing their decision to choose the TVET College.

4.4.2 Choice of Career

The interviewees fervently acknowledged that the modules they are currently enrolled in are their main choices as the modules will help them to have their dream careers. As an illustration, one participant said,

“...*Yes, I want to work at the office as a clerk when I graduate...*” (ZuluGirl)

Another participant said that the current qualification registered for now was the first choice.

However, he had another option in his mind but his disability prevented him to choose it.

“...*Mmmmmh hhhh let me say that I first chose management assistance, but the second choice was electrical engineering which I was channelled to but when I started, I recalled that my disability would prohibit me as some of the duties would require me to use the ladder in fixing things in roofs and I’m scared to fall, that’s when I requested to be squeezed back to management assistance...*” (Meheck)

Another participant wanted to upgrade her Grade 12 but was advised to choose another qualification available. *“on my arrival I wanted to upgrade my Grade 12 not knowing that there are other courses besides Grade 12. One Miss explained to me thoroughly and then I chose office admin...”* (Gebo).

4.4.3 Post-school Readiness

The information gathered from the interviews revealed that no formal preparation was given to participants. Some of the participants were just given pieces of advice by high school teachers about post-school life. When asked about what preparation they received to study at this college and for college life, two participants who were disabled after Grade 12 said:

“...Ahhhhh Nothing, I did everything for myself. Ohhhh I was still able when I did my schooling, I had no disability by then...” (Sfiso)

“None at this college. No I became disabled after I had completed grade 12” (ZuluGirl)

Another participant said:

“...Preparation? From home? Yes, teachers told me that college is very different from high school [one,]. At college one is responsible for decision-making of what is desired unlike in high school where you are spoon-fed, not here to take your own decisions about what and what not to do...” (Mathobi)

4.4.4 Process of Registration

From the responses generated by the participants, it was clear that the registration process went well for the participants, although for most of them there was neither orientation nor preparation. One of the participants in the study admitted that,

“...Nothing was explained to me, however registration went smooth, no explanation was done, I was very happy, no I had to stand the queue just like all students and I wasn't given any special preference, should they have given me special care as a person living with a disability, I was going be very happy and see that the college cares for us...”. (ZuluGirl)

Another participant claimed that he was happy not to be given special treatment as it made him feel normal. However, he was not still sure how the special treatment could have spun out,

“...For registration, ah there was no orientation, everything was normal. That helped to reassure me that I’m normal like other students. This could have gone in two folds, if was given a disability priority I was going to take that negatively because I would take that as oppression and discrimination towards me as a person living with a disability, it would have perpetuated the superstition [stereotype] of people with disability as different. On the other side, I could have positively taken it that the college is caring and accommodating towards people living with disabilities. As I say I could have taken it in two ways...” (Sfiso)

4.5 The Influence of Social Positioning on College Accommodation

There is a contrast between the two campuses chosen to participate in this study. One campus offers accommodations on campus to students and the other one does not offer any. Some participants complained about their accommodations. They stay in private accommodation where they rent one room whereby they have to cook, do laundry, and sleep. The situation is affecting them as they do not have enough time to focus on school work as they have to go get water a bit far to do all these cleaning and cooking.

“If I could be housed in a proper college catering residence, it would make my life a lot easier, and I could concentrate on my studies.” (Mathobi)



Figure 4.12: One-room Private Accommodation

Two of the photographs (Figure 4.13.) depict how their social positioning affects some of the participants. The two participants photographed their sandals, describing how it hurts them not to be

able to afford better shoes, how other students tease them, and how it affects their confidence, causing them to lose focus during lectures.



Figure 4.13 Sandals

Another set of images (figure 4.14.) depicts how some participants are confronted with several obstacles such as distance and dirty roads. Participants are willing to come to school in good shape, but due to the social positioning that does not allow them to use better ways of transportation, they arrive exhausted and anxious, which affects their concentration during lectures. For the majority of responders, it is regarded as a barrier. Another student took a photo of the car she uses to get to campus every day (approximately 60 kilometres), making the student quite uncomfortable because of her leg so she has to sit at the bakkie.



Figure 4.14 Distance travelled from home by day students

4.5. Participation and Success

Peer Attitudes

Students with disabilities endure disempowerment and exclusion in daily life. Mostly, as a result of being labelled as different and *othered* in a variety of social contexts, such as their communities or social environments. One of the most important components of their school experience is their social contacts with classmates, which manifest in relationships ranging from consistent, encouraging friendship and full acceptance to systematic victimization and exclusion (Vlachou & Papananou, 2015).

When asked about their relationship with other students, all participants revealed experiences of labelling which caused extreme discrimination. Furthermore, participants acknowledge that their relationships with most students improved after a while.

"...Most of them make me feel excluded and discriminated because they gossip about my disabled hand, while pointing at it and they gather around me intending to watch my hand, and I recognise that they are around me to view my hand. I see them caucusing about my hand, and that makes me feel discriminated, because they see me as abnormal to them." (Mathobi)

"... Some of them discriminate me". (Abram)

As it can be seen from Mathobi and Abram responses, they felt excluded by other students because of their attitudes towards their disabilities. This experience made them feel discriminated and excluded.

"... When I first arrived there were those who had a bit of problem with me but now not anymore". (Mamncane)

"... Ayyyyy students from my classroom had that when I first arrive". (Meheck)

"... Others get frightened when we meet for the first time before they get used to me. They are sceptical. (Gebo)

Others are discriminating depending on how regularly they have interacted with people living these disabilities." (Sfiso)

"...Others are not right. They are scared of me because of the disability I live with. It's prejudice. I think people are not educated about disabilities in general and are also not capacitated on how to handle people living with disabilities." (ZuluGirl).

For Mamncane, Meheck and Gebo, the hostile attitudes of their classmates changed with time. This is due to their lack of education on disability. Since they were not educated about people with disability, it was difficult for them to accommodate them easily. Their understanding of disability improved with time as they interact with their classmates with disabilities.

Institutional Access: *Physical environment*

The inability of students with disabilities to focus on their studies while dealing with the effects of a disability or multiple disabilities is one of the most important factors influencing academic progress and graduation rates for these students (Sachs & Schreuer, 2011).

It could be difficult to navigate the campus. The normal college student finds it annoying to have to use the stairs when there isn't an elevator available. For a student using a wheelchair, it may be difficult to get to class (Los Santos, Bain, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2019).

Participants acknowledge that it is difficult to access the college, especially during the rainy season. Furthermore, participants claim that there were no measures to facilitate their access to the college.

When asked about how accessible the college is and what measures has the college taken to accommodate you concerning your disability, participants said:

“...Ahhhh there are no measures taken to accommodate me since some classrooms are on the first floor and I have to climb steps in order to access those classrooms” (Sfiso)

“...During the first few days, it was very difficult accessing this campus and walking around since there are so many steps, too many steps to climb even when changing lecture venues without any help. But now it's better. Mind you I stay in student residents on another campus. I walk myself from there and back in all kinds of weather conditions, sunny and rainy days without any help. One day I struggled at the gate because there was heavy rain and there was a pool of water at the gate, stones were put to [assist] . . . avoid water, but I couldn't jump on them because of my disability. I ended up walking through that pool, and I nearly fell, because of the rain, nobody cared to help” (ZuluGirl)

“...Let me just say when it's not rainy it's easier to arrive, when it is rainy it becomes very difficult, but I try because I have no choice. I want to be educated and have a better life. Let me just say I do get NSFAS, mmmmmhhh and the support from Mr Fruit (pseudonym). I get it when I need it. It depends daily...”

Figures 4.8; 4.9. and 4.10. depict how difficult is for students with disabilities to access the college. According to participants, the college does not have proper infrastructure to fully accommodate students with disabilities. Some students photographed the waiting area on campus (figure 4.9.) to show how this area was built without thinking of students with disabilities.



Figure 4.8 Access Gate and Stairs to Lecture Halls



Figure 4.9 Waiting Area



Figure 4.10: Steps within the Campus and the Road from Campus Residents



Figure 4.11: College Residence Lacking Water in Toilets and the Laundry

Teaching and Learning

According to Sakiz and Saricali (2018) and Lourens and Swartz (2019), there are still many obstacles to be removed before we can begin discussing the complete inclusion of students with disabilities at colleges and universities.

When asked whether they have experienced any barriers to learning in any of their subjects. Participants agreed. Their challenges vary from accessing and using computers, drawing graphs, and no extra time during tests (exams), to a lack of lecturers to be observant of their disabilities.

ZuluGirl said:

“...Yes I have barriers, especially in maths [subject] when we are drawing graphs. I’m struggling to correctly position the ruler because of my hand disability. I just don’t use it anymore but if the lecturer is observant on certain days, he helps me to use the ruler, if he didn’t I just don’t use it. I don’t ask for help. Maybe I’m scared. I’m a very shy person. The office practice subject because the lecturer doesn’t honour lectures. This makes life difficult during exams, but when she does honour lectures, she teaches well...”

Mathobi said:

“Yes. The first challenge I faced is with computers. Mmmh I tried to solve it but I wasn’t successful. I went to the doctor and the doctor issued me with a letter, and he asked me why I have to come [to me] regularly because my disability is visible. I told him that they wanted a letter from you and issued one. I then took the letter to the college, and I was advised to take it to Miss Wind (pseudonym), who told me that it is already late. After that no follow-up was done”

Resources like dictionaries, calculators, computers, and books are crucial for the success of technical vocational education and training programs at the institution (Nzembe, 2019). Figure 4.13. shows either the computer lab or equipment.

A thorough examination of the photographs reveals that some lab chairs (plastic chairs) are inconvenient for students with disabilities. Furthermore, some lab equipment, such as keyboards, are not designed with individuals with disabilities in mind, and students frequently express their dissatisfaction with this. Participants used these photos to display their challenges when learning.



Figure 4.13: Computer Lab and Classroom Equipment

College Support

Academic support has long been valued as a crucial element of the TVET College's education and training (Nzembe, 2019). When asked whether they received academic support in the college to address the barriers they have experienced. Participants have diverse responses. Varying from no support to little support to support only during exam time.

Abram said there is little support. “...*Very little...*”

Gebo said there is support but only during tests/exams “...*I can say that only when we are writing tests and when time is up, they give me extra time to finish. During lectures, I do things myself...*”.

Meheck agreed that there is support.

“...*Ayyy let me just say I got it because they have explained to us how to write especially in this IP. They told us to make sure that we write word to word and become right and minimise mistakes.*”

Although results are not back as yet, but managed to get duly performance (DP) and enter exam room... ”.

Mothobi said “...No...”

Since each college faculty member deals with students one-on-one in the classroom, they have the most influence over the potential to hinder students' performance (Becker & Palladino, 2016). Students with disabilities are more likely to stay in school and achieve success, if instructors and administrators are better aware of their needs (Walker, 2016). College support is an important factor for students with disabilities.

Lecturers Support

According to several research, lecturers are essential for including students with disabilities (Kezar, & Maxey, 2014; Love, Kreiser, Camargo, Grubbs, Kim, Burge, & Culver, 2015; Morina, 2019).

When asked whether lecturers provide academic support when they experience barriers to learning. Several participants claim that lecturers do provide support to them and that lecturers are engaged in inclusive education support.

One participant said: “...*I can say yes. Lecturers do give us support. We ask academic questions may be where we were left behind. They do offer help, and they even sit you in a separate classroom and go over academic work that was done. I can say it is visible...*”. (Mamncane)

Few participants acknowledge that lecturers do provide support but not all of them. One participant said: “...*Yes some of them give us support...*” (Abram)

“...*Some of them do give me support but some of them don't. I think they didn't notice that I live with a disability. No maybe there is a special group called higher aid in Vryheid that I attended, I was referred to it by one lecturer who is part of this campus...*” (ZuluGirl)

When asked to describe their relationships with their lecturers. Most participants agreed that they have a healthy relationship with the lecturers. One participant said:

“...*Ahhhhhh yes it is very good, yes ohhhh, especially with computer tasks, my lecturer explained more and helped, but nothing to do with a disability...*”. (Sfiso)

Another one said:

“... It’s good and I feel free to seek assistance from them because they are also free and approachable...”. (Abram)

“...Ayyy let me just say it’s a beautiful and healthy one, they are all right shame I don’t want to fault them. They support us just that what they need to do for us is to be capacitated to give us more time during exams, but during external exam papers all that comes out as questions is exactly as how we had been taught. I’m free to ask anything and I do ask...”. (Meheck)

Another said:

“...Ayyyyy I’m free to talk to them. Yes, it is healthy...” (Gebo)

Another participant said:

“...Some of them do make me feel accepted and included but some of them makes me feel excluded because, what I can say is that they are not observant. Maybe they don’t follow up. They just shout at me - why are you behind with your work than others without thoroughly checking-up the reason, but just come to me and “angikakalate” shouting and shouting at me and then leave...”. (Mamncane).

As it can be seen, participants claim to receive little support from lecturers but the majority claim to have a healthy relationship with their lecturers. It is suggestive that lecturers seem to be friendly and supportive to students but do not have enough training in dealing with students with disability. Thus, struggling to provide proper support to them.

Disability Unit

When asked about the role of disability units in this college, all participants stated that there are no disabilities units in this college, which is in contrast with the recommendations of White Paper 6.

One participant confused me to be disability officer because I work closely with them as a person living with a disability.

“...No”. (Mathobi)

“...No there is no support, no support”. (Sfiso)

“...No there is none”. (ZuluGirl)

“...Yes, they introduced me to Mr Nkosi for disability and things like that, it helped me because I knew that there is someone I can talk to whenever I have a problem at school. Let me just say it became better. Yes, Mr Nkosi’s office”. (Meheck).

“...Not that I know of “. (Gebo)

“...No, can sa. Ayyyy, an office that is designated to us? No, there isn’t any”. (Mamncane)

“...Eeeeeee in this college there is NSFAS office and office of the social worker. Eeeeeee . . . for disability . . . is taken by [the] social worker”. (Abram)

Non-educational Activities

Participation in extracurricular activities may boost students' engagement in academics at the college, reinforce their long-term educational goals, and reduce behavioural issues, while also improving psychological wellness (Nzembe, 2019).

When asked whether they participate in any non-educational activities on their respective campuses, all participants revealed that they don’t due to a lack of facilities that accommodate them. Two of the participants are however, engaged in these activities in their communities. One participant took a photo of a soccer-playing ground which is a barrier.

“...No I ended up giving up all playing related to learners in primary school, because I was unable to hold the netball, and they laugh at me, and end up uttering bad comments like I make the team lose. So I ended up giving up. I am not participating in anything.” (Mathobi)

“...Ahh no. In sports, I go only to support in the fields. There is no sport that can accommodate me.” (Sfiso)

“...No, I am just a member of Higher Health and it is very helpful by capacitating me about understanding me as a person living with a disability.” (ZuluGirl)

“...Let me just say I have played chess but not many students can play it or have an interest in it for that matter. I like it because it challenges the mind and capacitates us to cope with the disability, and avoid suicidal thoughts of taking a rope to hang yourself. Only chess accommodate me on this campus”. (Meheck)

“...No. For now, I do not engage myself in anything other than academic work”. (Gebo)

“...No, there are none . . . none. I think the disability will prohibit me”. (Mamncane)

“... it is acting. Yes” (Abram)

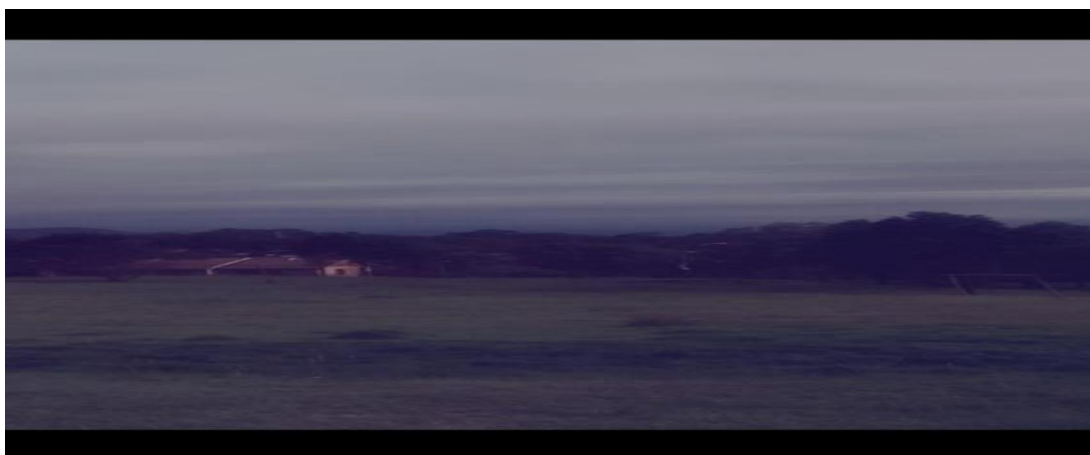


Figure 4.14: Inaccessible Soccer Field

Success

Retention, academic accomplishment, and on-time graduation are used to gauge student success (Los Santos, Bain, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2019; McEwan & Downie, 2019). When asked whether they have achieved success in their subjects, participants agreed that they have succeeded through hard work and, the way the teaching is delivered, has helped them to achieve success.

One participant said:

“...I have had success because I’m at level 4 now. I study hard although I’m not a fast learner I take my studies very seriously...” (Gebo)

Another one said:

“...Hahahahaayy yes I’m trying this subject [which] results were withheld. Aayyy it got me worried truly. My success is based on the pressure I’m putting on myself through hard studying...”. (Mamncane)

Another participant said:

“...Ayyy! Yes, I have success. I find it easy because of how we are taught, the delivery is good...”
(Sfiso)

4.6. Discussion of Findings

Experiences of their social identities vary depending on where and how my participants are located. This examination of the findings aims to investigate, analyse, and reflect on their life histories in light of how multiple social identities interact and shape how they experience the world.

Additionally, it will demonstrate how their diverse experiences altered and reshaped the social identities they had, making the development of those identities’ fluid and brittle. Furthermore, it will allude to the different events that have shaped who they are.

All the participants of this study are socially constructed as being Black and their socioeconomic class status put them in the spotlight, because they are surrounded by people living in poverty. Even in school, their target socio-economic class position was meaningless and unable to give them the cultural capital they needed (Fleisch, 2007; Spaull, 2015).

Cultural concepts emphasise how, when students enter college, the cultural capital acquired in the family setting aids the student in making decisions that would enable the student to successfully engage in their academic and vocational programs (Bajaj, 2009; Wilder, 2014; Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Fleisch, 2007; Spaull, 2015; Lee & Bowen, 2006).

Access to post-school settings, post-secondary education, and training that may lead to independent living, is considerably important for students with disabilities (Clavenna-Deane & Coates, 2022, P. 1). An analysis of factors that influenced college access reveals motivation to study, choice of institution, choice of career, the process of registration and post-school readiness play a role in the participants’ lived experiences.

The findings reveal that for some participants what motivate them to study was to achieve an improved quality of life, be empowered, overcome oppression, acquire knowledge and skills, and ‘continue with life’. The following observations from the findings demonstrate how difficult it is to comprehend success and disability. success must be achieved internally, but this is not an easy journey because they must first acknowledge their limitations and then act to overcome them, either by taking their studies

seriously. However, it appears that stress and pressure are a part of their existence, and that achievement occasionally requires outside assistance. Therefore, supportive lecturers who are skilled practitioners can make any subject knowledge simple for them to comprehend.

For the participants, what informed their choice of institution is the proximity of the college and the influence of family, and friends. This finding supports the finding by Nzembe (2019), that found that the proximity of the college is an influential factor. Some of the participants decided to join this college because it was close to their habitation and for some participants, the choice was influenced by friends or family, who studied there.

On the basis of the results, it can be said that, for most of the participants, access means being accepted and registered by the college. Participants acknowledge that the courses in which they are currently enrolled are their top choices, since the courses will assist them in achieving their goals. Moreover, accessibility was also a factor that influenced them to choose their current qualification. The type of course that students take is also influenced by availability (Nene, 2019). Thus, this finding is aligned with the study by Nene (2019).

For the participants, the registration process went well although in most cases there was no formal orientation or preparation. Furthermore, the findings reveal that participants did not get formal preparation. According to Nzembe (2019), inadequate NCV program preparation is to blame for students' lowered performance, yet in some cases few students do perform exceptionally well academically at NCV level 2. However, this somewhat unexpected outcome is due to some participants having had informal preparatory talk with teachers at their former high schools.

Physical environment, poverty, and academic as well as social relations, were identified as factors impeding access, participation, and successful academic performance. Almost all of the participants expressed frustration with the institution's inability to meet their needs and assure accessibility in terms of physical access, mobility, academic knowledge, and college life. Regarding physical accessibility, the majority of participants mentioned inappropriate stairs, sitting areas, lack of ramps and wheelchair-accessible restrooms, and classrooms with bad chairs.

Accommodation is another factor impeding the participation and success of students with disabilities. The findings reveal that the college is not accommodating students with disabilities well. This result is consistent with the research done in Greece by Vlachou, Papananou (2018).

Furthermore, the finding is aligned with the study by Morina and Orozco (2019) that reveals physical impediments, faculty members, peers, and a lack of resources and information were some of the barriers to learning and participation. This study posits that access is still a major issue, and it should be addressed urgently to avoid marginalising students with disabilities.

Efforts to effectuate transformation and redress in response to the ongoing and historical effects of these experiences as well as attempts to create and maintain the modes of knowing, being, and relating that these processes seek to eradicate are all included in the broad concept of decoloniality (Stein & Andreotti, 2017).

The analysis of the data reveals that the participants had smooth access to the college in terms of being accepted and registered. Moreover, the findings reveal that the majority of participants had access to modules of their choice. However, their smooth access was not perfect. Thus, the researcher advocates that, although the participants did not experience obvious oppression, it can be seen that participants were not fully aware of their rights. The fact that the college did not provide formal orientation to prepare participants for post-school life is a form of institutional exclusion that should be addressed.

Furthermore, the government should do better to facilitate the provision of schools that accommodate students with disabilities. This will open opportunities for students with disabilities to enrol and access qualifications that allow them to manifest their talents and thrive, thus closing the current gap between legislation, policy and related implementation.

In terms of academic and social relations, the findings reveal that most participants agreed that lecturers provide some sort of support. As *social distances* are inscribed in bodies inside society, people with disabilities are depicted as the other, and they are subsequently isolated or –alienated (Bourdieu, 1989). Some students complained that their peers first struggle to get along with them but then the relationships improve with time.

Labelling people living with disabilities as objects of shame compounds dehumanising attitudes and perceptions that often are attached to people living with disabilities. It positions them as society's abnormal citizens (Zondi, 2017). Fanon (1963) agrees that vulnerable groups such as Blacks are always reduced to the 'other' through negative labelling as their existence is based on the normality of someone 'superior' to them. Othering constitutes prejudice, exclusion and oppression towards people living with disabilities. It differentiates them in ways that marginalises, excludes and oppresses exclusion them in

society (Siwela, 2017), thereby depriving them and society of the diversity of talent and experience that is mindful, present and conscious of human *difference* in society.

From my personal experience, ableism through hostile attitudes *colonises* people living with disabilities. More efforts should be put in place to educate both students with disabilities, faculty members, and students in general to find humane ways that prevent any kind of discrimination on campus and in society. The fact that, at an interpersonal level, their peers were first reticent to approach students with disabilities as described in this study, constitutes interpersonal oppression of persons living with disability, and persons who are typically perceived as ‘normal’.

Thus, the college should make use of formal orientation to educate students and staff members on equality in education and on the rights of students and people with disabilities.

Students with disabilities need educational support in institutions of higher education, notwithstanding support at the college and at primary levels of education. The college should encourage direct contact with support staff, so that students will have the opportunity to make known their particular needs. Furthermore, students with disabilities should rely on Student Support Services (SSS) for assistance through Disability Units (DUs) to equip them to study at TVET Colleges, and prepare them for college life (Mutanga, 2017; Siwela, 2017; Buthelezi, 2014).

The findings reveal that students with disabilities did not get much support from the college and did not acknowledge any existence of college Disability Unit support. This is seen as a structural inequality as the college ought to provide special care to students with disabilities, knowing well that students with disabilities have different needs. Despite all the challenges experienced by students with disabilities, it was revealed they were motivated to succeed. This is aligned with the study by Bye, Pushkar, & Conway, (2007) and Morina, (2019).

Poverty was another factor identified as impeding the access, participation, and success of students with disabilities. This finding is aligned with the study by Vincent & Chiwandire (2019), that maintains that, limited public funds have historically been blamed for the difficulties that students with disabilities (SWDs) have in entering Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Thus, the researcher advocates that the issue should be tackled by national, and local government, in concert with colleges, before it is handover to colleges. Both national and local government should set up functioning departmental processes with budgets that can be used by colleges to help students with

disabilities. Ideally departmental processes should work with and be accessible to students through Disability Units within colleges.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter presented the biographies of the participants in this study by presenting key aspects of how participants identified themselves. Data was drawn from the biographical section of the semi-structured interview as well as from the photovoice method to illustrate participants' background.

The second part of the chapter focused on participants' experiences of gaining access to post school education and training and the TVET College they were registered at. The final section presented the key findings in relation to participants' experiences of participation and success.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Limitations and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This narrative inquiry study, which was grounded on decoloniality theory and the transformative paradigm, examined the educational experiences of Black underprivileged students with disabilities in one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college. The study was carried out through the exploration and comprehension of the experiences of seven students at a TVET college in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Photovoice which was incorporated in focus group interviews, and one-on-one interviews were used to gather research data. The information from the interviews was recorded, transcribed, coded, and then categorized into themes by the researcher for use in the data analysis process.

The student's experiences at the TVET College, and their participation and success, were also determined using document analysis. An analysis of the data revealed that in terms of access, the participants described it as a smooth process. However, the participants were not able to make a clear difference between access to college as in acceptance and registration and access to the curriculum.

The research problem was outlined in the first chapter, with a focus on characteristics that affected or assisted the experience of students with disabilities to access, participate, and achieve their academic goals in a TVET.

The second chapter analysed the pertinent literature about factors that support or hinder students with disabilities' access, engagement, and achievement in higher education in general, and the TVET College under study in particular, and it highlighted the research gap. The study's aims, research design and methods, and theoretical framework, which guided the study's justification, were all highlighted in the third chapter.

Transcripts from semi-structured interviews with the seven TVET College students were utilized to present and analyse data in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter summarises the key research findings and offers suggestions that the institution under consideration can put into practice over the long-term to improve the experiences of students with disabilities at TVET College KwaZulu-Natal.

5.2. Summary of Main Findings

In this study, three main areas of analysis revealed elements that, either restrict or promote, the experience of access, participation, and success of students with disabilities. These are academic, socio-cultural, and access.

According to information obtained from the seven students, the three areas mentioned in above have a significant impact on how the majority of the TVET College's students with disabilities perceive their educational experience. A thorough investigation into the experiences of students with disabilities revealed that factors such as their social positioning, class status, the college's infrastructure, peers and faculty support, self-motivation, the college's proximity, the influence of their families and friends, the nature of the curriculum, and the attitudes of peers and/or college staff toward their disabilities all played a role in whether they had a positive or negative experience at TVET college.

According to Stephen (2003), cited in Nzembe (2019), the majority of students who enrol in tertiary schools are unprepared to handle the intellectual rigour involved in attending a higher education institution. According to Bourdieu, cited in Nzembe (2018), underprivileged students are less successful not because they have lower intelligence, but rather because the curriculum is "biased in favour of those things that middle-class pupils were previously accustomed with," not because they are less intelligent. Academic support systems have also come to light as a crucial element that can make or break the ability of students with a disability to successfully participate in the academic programs of the TVET College.

According to information gathered from the seven students who took part in the in-depth interviews and photovoice, academic support systems could enhance the experience of students with disabilities at TVET College. In addition to this advantage, academic support may help improve academic performance, foster institutional engagement, and offer learning assistance specifically designed to address the requirements of students with disabilities. According to Couzens, Poed, Kataoka, Brandon, Hartley and Keen (2015), higher education should include a more robust student support system for students with disabilities.

Seven students who described their participation and success in the TVET College provided responses that emphasised institutional elements, including the management of the registration procedure. Although they claim the registration was a smooth process. The registration process was done without

any preparation. The college should always prepare students for the registration, since it is usually their first experience.

According to Becker and Palladino (2015), interactions between faculty and students with disabilities can aid learning and provide chances for them to share their knowledge. Gallagher (2013) asserts that strong connections between lecturers and students help students feel safe and secure in their learning environments, and serve as a support system for critical academic abilities.

Another factor that emerged is the relationship between the participants, their peers, lecturers and college members. Social relations with peers and the staff appear to be of utmost importance. Vlachou and Papananou (2015) claim that social relations with classmates of students with disabilities were one of the most important components of their lives. The findings of this study reveal that participants' relationships with their peers were difficult at first as classmates (collegemates) were using name-calling to describe them. Participants claim that the relationship improved with time. This can be due to the fact that other students were not used to or educated about disability.

Disability disclosure, disability resource unit support services, and facilities that meet the needs of students with disabilities, facilitate their experience of access, participation, and success in learning (Majoko, 2018). Infrastructure is overarching element that proved to be problematic for TVET students with disabilities in their academic endeavours. - Inadequate infrastructure is a barrier to improving students with disabilities access, participation, and success was identified by students who were interviewed.

Additionally, they said that because the college did not provide the infrastructure that enables easy navigation of students with disabilities, learning was very challenging for them because they arrived in the lecture hall already exhausted. Students with physical disabilities face significant obstacles due to the architectural accessibility of educational facilities (Vlachou & Papananou, 2014).

The inaccessibility of the school's buildings from an architectural standpoint, significantly limited the participants with autonomy and safety of student, especially for students with disabilities. According to Moria and Morgado (2018), the numerous architectural impediments and infrastructures are challenges that students with disabilities are left on their own to overcome.

Wilson-Strydom (2015) urges colleges to adopt a more thorough and multifaceted concept of access and participation. This knowledge should permeate all aspects of TVET College operations, including administrative, academic, architectural, and extracurricular activities.

One of the factors, which emerged from the seven students' narratives, is inadequate lab materials namely, computers, and chairs in the labs. The participants claim that the materials in the lab do not facilitate effective learning. Despite these challenges in the lab, participants were still motivated to succeed. Furthermore, participants complained that they are not given extra time during exams despite their disabilities. This is due to some of the lecturers not being observant of the students' disabilities. It is crucial to include college workers and administration in training about students with disabilities. This foster inclusive and cordial relations that are mindful of persons living with disability (Murray, Lombardi, & Wren, 2011).

Participation in extracurricular activity may increase college students' interest in their coursework, support their long-term educational objectives, and lessen behavioural problems, while also enhancing psychological wellness (Nzembe, 2019, P. 101). The findings reveal that five out of seven participants do not participate in any extracurricular activity due to a lack of facilities that accommodate them.

The transformative paradigm and its underlying philosophical presuppositions offer a framework for tackling social injustice and inequality. The understanding that social, political, cultural, economic, racial and ethnic values construct and shape realities that lend credence to power and privilege as significant factors. This reality must be given preference in a study environment to mitigate its undue influence and impact on academic learning and social experience of all students, and in particular, students living with disabilities.

Based on these findings, while highlighting the factors that facilitate or impede access, participation and academically successful performance of Black, poor, students with disabilities in a TVET College; I strongly advocate the college to implement measures that facilitate academically and socially inclusive experiences, particularly for students with disabilities.

Despite factors that impede their experiences, which the participants identified, participants also revealed that self-motivation helps them navigate these impeding factors. Education is considered by them as a ticket that can help them to change their social position. Hence, participants are motivated to better their lives through education.

5.3. Significance of the Study

This study examined experiences of access, participation and success of seven students with disabilities in a TVET institution in KwaZulu-Natal. The objective of the study was to examine the elements that either impede or facilitate the experience of students with disabilities to access, participate, and achieved at TVET colleges.

Against the backdrop of related UN provisions, citation of studies in other countries, and the South African legislation and policies, on the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in institutions of higher learning, the significance of the study is that:

- There are gaps between the South Africa constitution, national legislation and policy implementation, UN provisions, and related work in other countries; that South Africa needs to bridge to advance the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in institutions of higher learning in the country. There is urgency to educate and provide necessary support for professional persons at institutions of higher learning and society in general on the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in education and social activity. There is the need to advance social activities, infrastructure and curricular that are inclusive of persons living with disabilities in institutions of higher learning to address social, cultural, economic and medical stigma associated with disability.
- It is a lens through which South Africans, and the world, will be inspired towards an inclusive and egalitarian society, in which the agency of education is to mould persons whose aspiration and service in society is to live in a “world” with “a more human face” (Biko, 1987, P. 46).

5.4. Limitations of the Study

One significant limitation of this narrative investigation is the small number of participants in the study. Only seven students with disabilities voluntarily took part in the study. As a result, it is impossible to generalize the findings to other TVET colleges because different TVET colleges may have different dynamics and varied experiences for the participants. It would, therefore, be unjustified to generalize from this small-scale study to all TVET colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa as a whole.

In this study, English is the publication language that is different from the source of data which required what Nurjannah, Mills, Park, & Usher (2014) call forward and backward translation. Interviews were conducted in isiZulu as all participants are isiZulu first language speakers. Translation might, therefore, be considered a limitation, even though it was done by a professional court interpreter. I functioned as a “translation moderator” in support with a professional court translator to enlighten to the translator the “intended meaning and its context in the source language” (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010, P. 315). I did this to uphold the reliability of the study (Nurjannah, Mills, Park, & Usher, 2014). As a linguistic issue, I hoped it is not treated as unimportant (Santos, Black, & Sandelowski, 2015).

5.5. Recommendations

It is crucial for the college leadership and management to analyse the findings and attempt to develop solutions that directly address the issues raised by the study. Therefore, the leadership and management of the college should develop processes and put into place some adjustments that aim to solve the difficulties that students with disabilities encounter when it comes to their academic endeavours.

Analysis of student-related aspects, including socio-economic status of students, residence, subject preference, post-secondary preparation, and motivation, is also significant. In order to achieve this, it is advised that the college leadership pay attention to the following:

Since the majority of the students with disabilities who attend the college come from low socio-economic backgrounds, the college should offer them accommodations that can allow them to navigate with ease:

- The college should have a Disability Unit to handle complaints and feedback from students with disabilities.
- The college should have infrastructure that allows easy navigation of students with disabilities on campus.
- The college management should have a registration induction at the beginning of each year to prepare students for post-school life and college experience.

- The college leadership should provide students with disabilities with proper lab materials that allow them to learn effectively. The current materials are not disability-friendly.
- The management should have extracurricular activities and encourage all students, including students with disabilities to attend such events.
- College management should add activities that will allow students with disabilities to participate. Moreover, college management should raise some these shortcomings with relevant government departments and engage with corporate South Africa for assistance.

5.6. Suggestions for Further Research

Further empirical research on a large sample of students from various colleges is recommended in light of the research findings achieved in this study. This is significant because the findings of such a study can be extrapolated, giving national authorities useful information for designing better policies and following through on their implementation. Another topic of study, possibly at the PhD level, could be a thorough examination of the impact of social capital on the academic performance of underprivileged and students with disabilities. Such studies can also highlight the type of disabilities that are affecting performances and how they affect student with disabilities as well as institutions of higher education. Further studies can also do a comparative study of the post-school experience of underprivileged students with disabilities and mid-class students with disabilities

5.7. Conclusion

In South Africa's post-apartheid and democratic era, the introduction of the technical, vocational and training curriculum innovation has provided opportunities for previously underprivileged people. However, a barrier to effective student engagement in TVET programs continues to be the lack of alignment between policy design, execution and evaluation. The findings of this study suggest that the management team of the college should pay close attention to institutional, academic, and aspects connected to students with disabilities, that either encourage or discourage participation in the college.

Indicators of far deeper issues in the college under examination include lack of adequate infrastructure, inadequate induction, support and no Disability Unit for students with disabilities. In order to develop students who will assertively take part in the South African economy through employment, the TVET College must take a proactive approach. As a result, the college management team must develop and implement college-based policies that support access, participation, and success of Black, underprivileged students with disabilities. First-year student-focused induction programs should be created and implemented by the college management team. First-year students may experience excessive stress due to the huge changes in life from high school to college before they have even finished their first year of college because they are overwhelmed by the adjustment. The college leadership and administration should create and implement an integrated strategy in training staff members in supporting students with disabilities, as well orientating students without disabilities to be mindful in their relations with students with disabilities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Letter to Gatekeepers

R%202/Ethical%20Clearance%20Application/GATEKEEPERS%20LETTERS/Principal/Approval%20to%20cc



higher education & training
Department
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Mthashana College
Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Central Office
266 South Street, Vryheid, 3100 Private Bag X 94 24, Vryheid, 3100

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

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1.1. | Title (Dr /Mr /Mrs /Ms) | Mr. | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2 | Name and surname | Thabani Comfort | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3 | Postal address | 3 Biggarsberg Street Village 7 Durnacol 3082 | | | | | | | | |
| 1.4 | Contact details | <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Tel</td> <td>034 2711 513/4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cell</td> <td>082 3823 149</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fax</td> <td>034 2710 050</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Email</td> <td>thabanicomfortnkosi@gmail.com</td> </tr> </table> | Tel | 034 2711 513/4 | Cell | 082 3823 149 | Fax | 034 2710 050 | Email | thabanicomfortnkosi@gmail.com |
| Tel | 034 2711 513/4 | | | | | | | | | |
| Cell | 082 3823 149 | | | | | | | | | |
| Fax | 034 2710 050 | | | | | | | | | |
| Email | thabanicomfortnkosi@gmail.com | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.5 | Name of institution where enrolled | University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) | | | | | | | | |
| 1.6 | Field of study | Education (Social Justice Education) | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7 | Qualification registered for | <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Please tick relevant option:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Doctoral Degree (PhD)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Master's Degree</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (please specify)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> | Please tick relevant option: | | Doctoral Degree (PhD) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Master's Degree | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) | |
| Please tick relevant option: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Doctoral Degree (PhD) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | |
| Master's Degree | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | | | | | |

2. DETAILS OF THE STUDY

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|--|
| 2.1 | Title of the study | An Investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) |
| 2.2 | Purpose of the study | |

R%202/Ethical%20Clearance%20Application/GATEKEEPERS%20LETTERS/Principal/Approval%20to%20cc


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:

- I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the said College/s and participants in order not to interrupt the programme of the said College/s.
- I agree that involvement by participants in my research study is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate in my research study.
- I will obtain signed consent forms from participants prior to any engagement with them.
- I will obtain written parental consent of students under 18 years of age, if they are expected to participate in my research.
- I will inform participants about the use of recording devices such as: tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.
- 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 results of my research, unless written consent is obtained otherwise.
- I will not include the names of the said College/s or research participants in my research report, without the written consent of each of the said individuals and/or College/s.
- I will send the draft research report to research participants before finalisation, in order to validate the accuracy of the information in the report.
- I will not use the resources of the said College/s in which I am conducting research (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones), for my research study.
- Should I require data for this study, I will first request data directly from the Department of Higher Education and Training. I will request data from the College/s only if the DHET does not have the required data.
- I will include a disclaimer in any report, publication or presentation arising from my research, that the findings and recommendations of the study do not represent the views of the said College/s or the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- I will provide a summary of my research report to the Head of the College/s in which I undertook my research, for information purposes.

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 |  |
| DATE | 22 April 2021 |

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APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Letter by Participants

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I (Name), a student in NCV/NATED

have been informed about the study, “*An Investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu Natal (KZN)*”, by the researcher, Mr Thabani Nkosi.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time if I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

I hereby agree to the following:

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Voice-recording of interviews | Yes | No |
| Voice-recording of photo-voice workshop and meeting. | Yes | No |

Signature of Student

Date

APPENDIX C: Interview Schedule

1. Biographical Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Name, Department, Qualification (Please note that this is for record purposes only. Your name or the name of your institution will not be divulged in any way in any communications emanating from this project.) | Name: College Qualification registered for: |
|---|---|

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Disability | |
|-------------------|--|

| | |
|------------|--|
| Age | |
|------------|--|

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Gender (Tick one) | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|

2. Interview Questions

2.1 Career Choice and Access

1. What informed your decision to go to college?
2. What influenced your decision to study at this college?
3. Was this college your 1st choice? (Probe: If not, what was your first choice of study and why did you change?)
4. Was the qualification you are registered for your 1st choice of study? (Probe: If yes, why did you choose this field of study? If not, what was your first choice of study and why did you change?)
5. What preparation did you receive for study at this college and for college life? Explain. (Probe –did your schooling prepare you for post school studies? Were there other sources of preparation for college studies that you had access to?)
6. What was your experience of gaining access to this college? (Probe: was this the 1st college you applied to? If no, how many institutions did you apply to and what was the response from these institutions? How did you feel when you were accepted or not accepted for study at the institutions you applied to?)
7. What was your experience of registration? (Probe: Was there an orientation programme that you attended? Was it useful, and in what ways? If not, why do you say it was not useful?)

2.2 Access to & Participation in the Curriculum

8. Is there a disability support unit within the college? If so, what support do they provide and how effective is the support provided?
9. How accessible is the college campus and buildings? (Probe: What measures has the College taken to accommodate you in relation to your disability? How effective are these measures?
10. Have you achieved success in your subjects? If, yes what are the reasons for your success?
11. Have you experienced any barriers to learning in any of your subjects? If yes, what barriers have you experienced? How have you dealt with these barriers?

12. Have you received academic support in the college to address the barriers you have experienced?
Explain (Probe: Was it effective? Explain)
13. Do lecturers provide academic support when you experience barriers to learning? (Probe: If so, what support do they provide and how effective has this been?)
14. How would you describe your relationship with your lecturers? (Probe: Have lecturers made you feel welcome at this campus? Do you feel included by your lecturers? Explain. Do you feel comfortable to seek their assistance and support when you experience barriers to learning? Explain)
15. How would you describe your relationship with students? (Do you feel included by other students socially and academically? Explain.)
16. How would you describe your relationship with administrative staff at this college? (Probe: Do you get the necessary support from the administrative staff in terms of administrative issues related to your studies? Explain.)
17. Do you have access to all resources that are available to students (library, learning materials, computers etc.)?
18. How have you been assessed in your subjects? Have you experienced any challenges in terms of how you were assessed? Explain. (Probe: Are there ways in which you have been accommodated in the assessments in terms of your disability, e.g. being given extra time to complete tasks/ tests/ exams? Has this helped)
19. Are there other ways in which you have been supported to achieve success in the college?
20. What are ways in which you think students with disabilities should be supported in the college to achieve success in their studies?
21. Do you participate in non-academic activities, like sport at this college? Do you belong in any organization in this college? (Probe: If yes, describe your experiences of participating in non-academic activities. If not, why not?)
22. What do you think can be done to make this campus more inclusive of people with disabilities?

2. ImibuzoYezingxoxo

2.1 Ukukhetha Umsebenzi Nokufinyelela

1. Yini eyazisa isinqumo sakhosokuya ekolishi?
2. Yini ethonye isinqumosakho sokufunda kulelikolishi?
3. Ingabelelikolishi wawulikhethekuqala ukufisa ukufundakulo? (Cwanninga umakungenjalo,bekuyiliphi owawulikhethe kuqala ukufundakulo futhi kungani ushintshe?)
4. Ngabe iziqu ozibhalisele wawuvele ufuna ukubhalisela zonakokuqala? (Cwanninga umakunjalo, kungani ukhethe lo mkhakha wokufunda? Uma kungenjalo, yiziphi iziqu owawufuna ukuzifundela futhi kungani ushintshe?)
5. Ikuphi ukulungiselelwa owakuthola ngokufunda kulelikolishi nangempilo yasekolishi? Chaza. (Probe ingabe imfundo yakho emazingeni aphantsi wakulungiselelwa ukuzofunda emazingeni aphezulu? Yayikhona eminye imithombo yokukungiselela izifundozasekolishi okwazi ukufinyelelakuzo?)
6. Kwabanzima noma kwabalula kanganani ukuthola isikhala sokufunda kulelikolishi? (I-Probe ngabe leli bekuyikholishi lokuqala ofakeisicelo kulo? Uma kungenjalo, ufake izicelo ezingaki ezikhungweni futhi ibeyimpendulo enjani kulezizikhungo?)
7. Wabanjani umuzwa wakho wokubhaliswa? (Probe Ngabe belukhona uhlelo lokuzijwayeza owafakwakulo? Ngabe belusizo, futhi ngaziphi izindlela? Uma kungenjalo, kungani uthi belungasizi?)

2.2 Okuhlangenwe nakhokokubamba iqhaza (Ukufundanokufundisa)

8. Ingabe lukhona uphiko lokuxhasa ukukhubazeka ekolishi? Uma kunjalo, yiluphi usizo abalunikezayo futhi lusekelwa kangakanani usizo?
9. Ufinyeleleka kanjani ekolishi nezakhiwo zasekolishi? Lukhona uncedo olutholile ekolishi lokukusiza ukuthi ubhekane nalezimo ebezenza ukufunda kubenzima? Chaza (Probe: Kwenza usizakale? Chaza)
10. Usuzuze impumelelo ezifundweni zakho? Uma, yebo yiziphi izizathu zokuphumelela kwakho?
11. Ngabe ukewabanezithiyo ekufundeni kunomayisiphi isifundo sakho? Uma kunjalo, yiziphi izithiyo osukewabhekana nazo? Ubhekane kanjani nalezizithiyo?

12. Ngabe ukutholile ukwesekwa kwezemfundo ekolishi ukubhekana nezingqinamba osuke wazibona? Chaza (Probe Ingabe bekuyimpumelelo? Chaza)
13. Ngabe abafundisi bayanikezana ukusekwa kwezemfundo lapho uhlangabezana nezithiyo ekufundeni? (Probe Uma kunjalo, yiluphi usizo abalunikezayo futhi lokhu kube nempumelelo kangakanani?)
14. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudlelwano bakho nabafundisi bakho? (Probe Ngabe abafundisi bakwenze wazizwa wamukelekile kuloluphiko lwekolishi? Ingabe abafundisi bakho bakwenze wazizwa uyingxenywe yalelikolishi? Chaza. Ingabe uzizwa ukhululekile ukufuna usizo lwabo kanyenokwesekwa lapho uhlangabezana nezithiyo ekufundeni? Chaza)
15. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudlelwano bakho nabafundi? (Ngabe abanye abafundi bakwenza uzizwe ungomunyawabona kwezemfundo? Chaza.)
16. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudlelwano bakhona basebenzi bezokuphatha, kanye nalaba abasemah hovisi okweseka abafundi ngokuqhubeka kwezifundo zabo kulelikolishi? (Probe Ngabe uyaluthola usizo oludingekayo kubasebenzi bezokuphatha mayelanane zindaba zokuphatha atha ezihlobene nezifundo zakho? Chaza.)
17. Ngabe uyakwazi ukufinyelela kuzozonke izinsiza ezimayelana nokweseka abafundi (umtapo wolwazi, izintozokufunda, amakhompyutha njalonjalo.)?
18. Uhlolwe kanjani ezifundweni zakho? Ngabe uke waba nezingqinamba ezithile mayelana nokuthi uhlolwe kanjani? Chaza. (Cubungula Ngabe zikhona izindlela oyewabhekelelwa kuzo ekuhlolweni mayelana nokukhubazeka kwakho, isbonelo. Ukunikezwa isikhathi esengeziwe sokuqedela imisebenzi / izivivinyo? Ingabelokhukukuncedile)
19. Ngabe zikhona ezinye izindlela oyewasekelwa ngazo ukuthola impumelelo ekolishi?
20. Yiziphi izindlela ocabanga ukuthi abafundi abaphila nokukhubazeka kufanele basekwengazo ekolishi ukuze baphumelele ezifundweni zabo?
21. Ingabe ubamba iqhaza emisebenzini engeyona eyezemfundo, efana nemidlalo kulelikolishi? Ngabe ukhona kunoma iyiphi inhlangothi kulelikolishi? (Cwaninga umakunjalo, chaza ohlanganyela kuko ngokubamba iqhaza emisebenzini engeyona eyezifundo. Uma kungenjalo, kungani?)
22. Ucabanga ukuthi yini engenziwa ukwenza abantu abaphila nokukhubazeka bazizwe beyingxenye yaloluphiko lwekolishi?

APPENDIX D: PHOTO-VOICE SCHEDULE

This study will incorporate photovoice exercise as stimuli in the focus group interview, the following explains steps this will unfold:

Training will use the tools (Presentations) taken from:

The PhotoVoice Manual; A guide to designing and running participatory photography projects.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photovoice>

| DAY1 | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|
| TIME | TOPIC | PRESENTATION |
| 8H00 – 9H00 | Energizer & Getting to know each other | |
| 9H00 – 9H15 | Ground rules | |
| 9H15 – 10H00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What is Photo Voice?➤ How will we use Photo Voice?➤ Aim of the training➤ Program overview➤ Practicalities | |
| 10H00 – 10H30 | Break | |
| 10H30 – 11H15 | How do we perceive photographs | Presentation 1 |
| 11H15 – 12H00 | Linking images; finding a common story | Presentation 2 |
| 12H00 – 13H00 | Lunch | |

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13H00 – 13H45 | Composition in pictures | Presentation 3 |
| 13H45 – 14H00 | ‘Composition’ practice | Presentation exercise 2 |
| 14H00 – 14H15 | Break | |
| 14H15 – 14H30 | Feedback exercises on Composition | |
| 14H30 – 15H00 | Reality & Symbolism in pictures | Presentation 4 |
| 15H00 – 15H30 | Practice ‘Flash & Light’ + feedback | Presentation exercise 1 |
| 15H30 – 16H00 | Practice ‘Focus’ + feedback | Presentation exercise 3 |
| 16H00 – 16H15 | Closing & Evaluation | |

This will begin with getting to know each other

Introductions

Welcome. I would like to first thank you for taking the time to participate in a photo-voice training about “An Investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu Natal (KZN)”

The purpose of this study is to explore the post-school educational experiences of Black students with disabilities from low socio-economic backgrounds at one Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Northern KwaZulu Natal. The study aims to investigate the factors that facilitate or impede their access, participation, and success as how they navigate these factors.

Before I begin, let's take just a few minutes to introduce ourselves to one another.

I should introduce myself through and then have participants reveal their first names, describe the type of courses they study, and say how long they have had their disabilities.

Ice Breaking Game

Stand/sit in a circle whilst observing a 2-metre social distance Covid-19 protocol, ask participants to think of any adjective that describes them, ask them to take turns to shout that adjective very loud and elaborate why it describe them better. In the next round each participant should repeat what other participants shouted, this should be done in a clockwise direction. I will also take part in this game.

Ground Rules for Participation (draw on the ethical issues & include consent for use of the photos.)

All of your comments will be confidential. No names of individuals will be revealed in the summary of the information collected during the session or in any findings developed for the study. Your participation in this photo-voice is voluntary, meaning that you are free to choose not to participate or withdraw at any time.

Other Ground Rules

- Confidentiality: In case of sharing sensitive or personal issues

- Never disclose who said what, outside this training room

Listen to each other and give each other enough time to speak up

- Respect differences in opinions: 'We agree to disagree'

- Be on time!

- Turn cell / mobile phones off or to silent mode

- Time management

- Active participation

➤ Learn from each other

➤ Have fun

Introduction to Photovoice as a Research Method

Photovoice is a visual research technique that places cameras in the hands of participants to assist them in documenting, reflecting on, and communicating topics of concern while also encouraging social change (Wang, 1997). Photovoice participants define, record, and reflect their community's strengths and concerns through the use of a particular photographic technique, which is typically used for marginalized groups (Wang, 1997). The Photovoice method was chosen as it will improve student with disabilities engagement, raise their awareness, and boost research partners' self-efficacy to foster social change.

This kind of collecting data will encouraging your self – determination as you will be responsible to choose photographs.

What?

When? and Why?

This process will also allow you:

Autonomy – What to photograph.

Self-regulation – when to take photograph.

Self-realisation – story to tell in your own way.

Psychological empowerment – you tell a story and be listened to.

Expert position – tell a story about your life instead of being questioned.

Reflect – check if the barrier is still there, what has been/ can be done to remove it, if it's a success, what has been/ can be done to promote it

Facilitate – you take a facilitation position instead of being facilitated.

-111-

Basics of Photography

First explain to the group how images can be perceived: pictures can be misleading and not everyone sees the same things. Secondly, elaborated upon: pictures are interpreted in different ways by different people. Thirdly, you go more in depth in how groups of pictures can tell a story. Furthermore, explain how certain photography techniques can make a picture more interesting to the viewer. Lastly introduce the concept of symbolism to the group.

Ethical Issues (dos & don'ts)

Participants should be aware that by taking photographs, they automatically become co-researchers in the study which requires them to abide to ethical issues. Shooting landscapes and scenery, not people to avoid

informed consent forms is strongly advised (Hannes and Parylo, 2014, p. 265). All photos and comments will be confidential but published in the actual theses. No names of individuals will be revealed in the summary of the information collected or in any findings developed for the study (Babbie, 2015, p.35; Coffelt, 2017; Lancaster, 2017; Babbie, 2020).

The pictures selected in the accompanied PowerPoints can be used in training because of user rights. Beware when replacing photos in these presentations: if you use photos from the internet remember to check user rights.

In Photo Voice the research question aims to find something out about the individual. This focus on the individual derives from the view that Photo Voice is a tool to give participants a voice. So the research question is always defined in a reflective way and asks for the participants' meaning, experience, change, view or opinion.

In this case it is a research tool. Answering a research question which may or may not be directly linked to a program/ intervention. Make sure the research question is personal.

Guidelines on what to capture (in relation to the key research question)

| | | |
|---------------|--|---------------------|
| DAY2 | | |
| 11H00 – 11H30 | | |
| TIME | TOPIC | PRESENTATION |
| 8H00 – 11H00 | Filed work | |
| | Evaluating Filed Work -112- | |
| 11H30 – 12H00 | Lunch | |
| 12H00 – 12H30 | Writing captions | |
| 12H30– 15H30 | Individual discussion and selection of 7 best photos | |
| 15H30 – 15H45 | Closing | |
| 17H00 – 19H00 | Process pictures and captions of participants in documents | |

Participants are requested to take photographs that they feel have significant values in their lives, factors that impede their academic, participation and success (academic and social experiences, e.g. barriers to academic success)

Instructions

1. Participants will work in their campuses in groups of 3 since they come from 2 different campuses.
2. I will facilitate in each session since it will be on different dates.
3. The participants work individually during fieldwork.

4. Check the progress by walking around and providing assistance where needed, also check pictures that participants have taken.

Selection of Photographs, Captions and Narratives on Each of the Selected Photos

Instructions

1. Each participant must choose a maximum of 10 pictures from those taken and follow this exercise to understand each picture well. Participants have to write down answers themselves in order to cut down to 5 best pictures.

| |
|--|
| |
| What do you see in this photo, what is this an image of? |
| |
| How does that make you feel? |
| |

What do you think about this?

What can we do about this?

How can a support system help you in learning?

Adapted from Beger, N. J., & Beger, N. J. (2004). Tensions in the Struggle for Sexual Minority Rights in Europe: Que (e) rying Political Practices. Manchester University Press.

2. If you are facilitating this training together with a co-facilitator, it is best to make a timeframe of who is sitting with what facilitator at what time. Both facilitators can sit with photographers in parallel activities.

3. Make a folder with the name of the photographer on your laptop. Upload the selection of the photographer into this folder. You keep the selection of photos.

4. In this activity, the photographer is going to give background information on the photos they have taken. Decide on how you can capture the story as completely as possible. For some people this is typing, for others prefer writing.

5. With the photographer you select the five pictures most relevant to the research question. This means it is not always the most beautiful picture! At this stage of the activity, it is quite possible that the facilitator and the photographer disagree. Pictures need to represent the individual's answer to the research question, so if the photographer picks pictures and stories that are not representative or relevant try to lead them back to the question.

6. Immediately save the pictures to the chosen document and write the captions. You could do this later, but the details of the captions are easily forgotten after discussing so many pictures!

7. Ensure that both facilitator and participant agree and understand the caption, as the participants will present his/her pictures to the group, telling the story with it.

8. Bear in mind, it is not about a beautiful picture, it is mainly about the story belonging to the photo.

Sharing Individual Photos

Instructions

1. Introduce the presentation of the selections of five best pictures of all participants
2. Have the participants present and explain their five pictures one by one. The participants can have no longer than one minute per picture. The participants can present their pictures according to the following questions:



What do we see in the picture?

What does this represent?

How does this answer the research question?

3. Tell the other participants that they must keep a record of the meaning of the pictures from the presenting photographer. They must decide for themselves if the picture and the story are also applicable to them.

Grouping the Photographs and Working Towards an Exhibition

4. Ask the group to work together. Have them put their five photos up on the chart, one in turn.

5. Every participant can decide for each photo if the photo and the caption are in line with a category that's already on the chart. If so, then the participant moves the picture to form a group. If not, the participants can start a new category. all pictures are on different charts, ask participants to work together to see if everyone agrees with the categories and if there are any changes to be made.
6. Ask the participants to name the categories. You assist in this process. It is the group's decision, but always have your own ideas ready if you see the process is going awry. Remind participants that the categories must always relate to the research question.

Top 3 Categories: In-line with the Research Question

Instructions

1. Ideally, this process should be led by one of participants. He or she should be looking after the group's opinion.
 2. Check the group is happy with the decision on what categories to include in the exhibition.
 3. Start with the category rated first and work your way down the list.
 4. Separate the selected categories and their pictures from those that were not selected. Don't take the non-selected pictures off the wall yet. You never know if you might want to include one of those in the end.
- Explain how the participants should select pictures for the selected categories. Discussion needs to be well facilitated and decisions should either be unanimous, or democratic (a majority). Pay attention to the following:
- Variety in message: Tell the participants they have to pay attention to the captions. In the selection, participants need to think about the variety of issues that fall under the category and try to capture that. Again, it is not about the best picture, it is about the strongest message.

➤ Variety in pictures: A good exhibition will have a variety of pictures (symbolic, portraits, landscape etc.) The number of photos selected depends on the breadth of the categories (a general category or more specific). Take into account the exhibition should have no more than 20 - 25 pictures in total.

6. If someone has no picture in the selected categories, the individual and the group should see if any of their remaining pictures would fit. In the final selection you can swap pictures if necessary.

7. Explain the non-selected pictures are not bad pictures and might still be used or mentioned in a report, though not as a major outcome of this research question, or in the exhibition. By the end of this activity, you will have achieved the final collective selection of this PhotoVoice training course! Focus some attention on this. Determine whether participants are happy, proud, relieved etc. If the energy is good then end the activity here. If you feel participants are somehow not satisfied with the final selection, try to figure out why. Have time for discussion and more explanation of the final selection if needed.

Exhibition

Exhibition will only be limited to 6 participants.

1. Prepare the exhibition room. Participants will have good ideas themselves, so leave it up to them. But you can give them some useful tips and tricks:

➤ Hang the pictures at eye level of the visitor (not too high, not too low)

The same goes for the captions

➤ Balance the display, evenly spread across the room, ensure it is well lit and aesthetically attractive.

2. Give the participants an important role during the exhibition: they can show the guests around, explain their pictures, officially open the exhibition, give a speech, take pictures, et cetera. It is their exhibition after all.

Sample Consent Forms follow-up to the training.

Consent type 1 & 2

The undersigned:

Surname: _____

First name: _____

Date of birth: _____

Address: _____

1. Is recognizable on the images (moving or still) taken during the process of a Photo Voice training states:

- a. That all portraits on these images are made with his/her explicit authorization;
- b. That the copyrights (including portrait rights) and other intellectual property rights concerning these images belong to <name organisation/organiser>;
- c. Grants <name organisation/organiser>the unconditional rights to use, publish, reproduce, alter and distribute the images, for non-commercial purposes only, by all means and through all media;
- d. To indemnify <name organisation/organiser> against all possible claims concerning those rights;
- e. To be legally and unconditionally bound to this statement.

2. Is further authorizing that photos taken by undersigned during the Photo Voice training, may be used for multimedia publishing by <name organisation/organiser>.

Seen and approved:

City: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E: Principal's Approval

conduct re: X + v

/MODULES/YEAR%202/Ethical%20Clearance%20Application/GATEKEEPERS%20LETTERS/Principal/Approval%20to%20conduct%20research

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

FOR OFFICIAL USE

DECISION BY HEAD OF COLLEGE

Please tick relevant decision and provide conditions/reasons where applicable

| Decision | <i>Please tick relevant option below</i> |
|---|--|
| 1 Application approved | <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Application approved subject to certain conditions. <i>Specify conditions below</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Application not approved. <i>Provide reasons for non-approval below</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| NAME OF COLLEGE | [REDACTED] Tvet College |
| NAME AND SURNAME OF HEAD OF COLLEGE | Mr. Mhlanhla Dindaba |
| SIGNATURE | [REDACTED] |
| DATE | 01 September 2021 |

THE PRINCIPAL
[REDACTED] Tvet College
CENTRAL OFFICE
TEL: 034 980 1010
FAX: 034 980 1012
PRIVATE BAG X9424
VRYHEID, 3100
mhashana@feta.co.za

APPENDIX F: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



19 November 2021

Thabani Comfort Nkosi (206503389)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear TC Nkosi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003368/2021

Project title: An investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu Natal (KZN)

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 12 November 2021 to our letter of 21 October 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

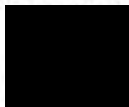
This approval is valid for one year until 19 November 2021

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

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

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

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)



/dd


Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8358 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX G: TURNITIN REPORT

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APPENDIX H: Editor's Declaration

07 January 2023

To whom it may concern

Editing of dissertation for Mr. Mabule Phaladi Zini D. Mokhine

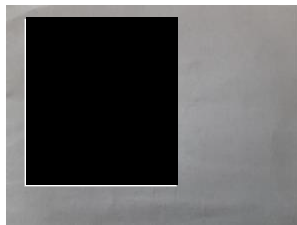
I am often consulted for editing inputs to students' work, particularly in the fields of mathematics and sometimes in physics, and have helped edit and proof read a PhD thesis. I have a university background up to second year Computational Mathematics. Due to health circumstances beyond my control at the time I was unable to pursue studies further. My first break of tertiary study was at the University of Cape Town.

I hereby confirm that I have edited the dissertation titled:

"An Investigation of the Post-School Educational Experiences of Black, Poor Students with Disabilities in One Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)."

Corrections were made in respect of grammar, tenses, spelling and language usage using track changes in MS Word 2016. Once corrections have been attended to the dissertation the dissertation should be correct.

Yours Sincerely



.....

Mabule Phaladi Zini D. Mokhine

Please note:

Should the student not attend to the suggested changes by the editor and made additions to the dissertation after editing has been completed, the editor cannot guarantee the language, grammar and tenses are correct.