



Exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among North West TVET college students

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DECLARATION

I, Alukombetshedzwi Nkate hereby declare that the research report submitted for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Business school at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) is my original work. This report has not been submitted previously by me or any other individual for a degree at this or any other institution. All sources and references utilised in this project have been appropriately cited and acknowledged.

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Mrs A. Nkate

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends who have never failed to offer me support, encouragement and understanding in this academic process.

It is also dedicated to the lecturers at X TVET college, whose perseverance and commitment reflect constant striving to develop vocational education towards a more enlightened and professional future.

It is hoped that this piece of work will make a positive difference and enhance ongoing growth in technical and vocational education and training.

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This success is not my personal success, but the success of all of you who believed in me and helped me to go through.

ABSTRACT

This research paper discusses the views of lecturers regarding enhancing employment market preparedness amongst students in a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) college in South Africa's North West province. The study was inspired by ongoing issues on graduate unemployability and the seeming lack of links between TVET curricula and labour market demands. Based in a constructivist paradigm and following a qualitative approach and exploratory research design, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 17 lecturers and professors working in different fields, to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of their experiences and gather suggestions.

The findings show that there are four significant issues that influence the capacity of lecturers to equipping students for the job market, namely curriculum misalignment and low relevance, lack of resources and infrastructure, poor integration with industry, and barriers at the student level, e.g., low motivation and poor soft skills. The lecturers offered several solutions, such as curriculum change, consolidation of practical and work-integrated learning, industry-college partnerships, and life-long learning amongst lecturers. The study also found a lack of management support, poor opportunities for professional development, and poor oversight to be the institutional obstacles to effective teaching and learning.

The findings also revealed that graduates usually have rich theoretical knowledge, but lack practical and employability skills, including communication, problem-solving, and professionalism, rendering them less competitive in the labour market. Human capital theory, constructivist learning theory, experiential learning theory, institutional theory, and transformative learning theory were used to interpret the findings, showing that a sound vocational education must be conducted on a systems level, bringing together the curriculum, industry, management, and the development of human capital.

Key words: TVET education, lecturer perspectives, job-market readiness, challenges, skills development

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DHET Department of Higher Education and Training

NDS National Skills Development (Strategy)

SETA Sector Education and Training Authority

Stats SA Statistics South Africa

TVET Technical and Vocational Education and Training

NCV National Certificate Vocational

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CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Governments across the globe, but specifically on the African continent, are prioritising technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to improve the efficiency and sustainability of skills development (Kirior, 2017:22). South Africa's Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) created policies that emphasise TVET colleges as essential tools for closing the skills gap while in order to drive national economic expansion (DHET, 2014). According to Top African News (2023, April 8), the primary purpose in establishing TVET colleges was to address the immediate need for a skilled labour force that matches market needs across sectors vital to the country's economic development.

The DHET also emphasises the vital role of TVET colleges in addressing South Africa's need for a skilled workforce that is aligned with economic demands (Papier *et al.*, 2020:9). Established as an alternative education pathway, TVET colleges aim to equip students with practical, job-ready skills to prepare them for the modern workplace (Mtshali, 2021:89).

TVET colleges were established to provide vocational training aligned with specific industries through a balanced approach of combining theory and practical application, to ensure graduates are workforce ready (DHET, 2014).

The DHET highlights that TVET colleges are vital in promoting lifelong learning and economic growth (Papier, Matenda, McBride & Needham, 2020:9). These colleges empower individuals, boost employability, and play a key role in South Africa's overall economic development (Mabunda & Frick, 2020:90). According to Magadza and Mampane (2024:1), TVET colleges are vital in preparing sustainable human capital to combat unemployment.

Based on the above, it is vital to explore the challenges TVET college graduates and lecturers face with regard to students' employability (Lange, Hofmann & Di Cara, 2020:32). Reports highlight issues with the quality of education and the alignment of graduates' skills with industry standards, particularly with regard to critical thinking,

problem-solving, and technical competencies (DHET, 2021). Employers have expressed concerns about graduates being unprepared for practical job demands, leading to a skills mismatch that impacts students' ability to secure employment (Yong & Ling, 2023:25).

Prior research underscores specific barriers encountered by lecturers in TVET colleges including lack of sufficient resources, out-dated curricula, insufficient professional development, language and communication obstacles, technological change resistance, poor infrastructure, deficient industry involvement and institutional policy issues. A study by Van der Bijl and Oosthuizen (2019:205) found that outdated curricula and insufficient resources hinder lecturers' abilities to effectively prepare students for the workforce. (Joynes, Rossignoli, & Amonoo-Kuofi, 2019:40) highlight gaps in industry collaboration that contribute to the disconnect between education and employment.

It is thus essential to also understand industry requirements for TVET college graduates' employability. Employers seek graduates with both technical skills, such as machinery operation, Computer-Aided Design (CAD), electrical installation and information technology proficiency as well as soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and adaptability (Kraak, 2018:6). Crawford (2016:8) noted that the problem is exacerbated by efforts to transform educational policy being complex and often resistant to input from non-experts.

Based on the above, the aim of the present study was to explore the perspectives of lecturers' at a TVET college, to gain a comprehensive understanding of employers' expectations and identify skill deficits, aimed at enabling TVET colleges to better meet labour market needs and prepare students to meet industry expectations.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

TVET colleges play a crucial role in South Africa's economic restructuring and transitioning from historically dominant sectors such as mining and agriculture to a more diverse manufacturing industry (Mbewe, 2020:4). The South African government established these institutions with a clear vision: to develop a skilled workforce capable of meeting the evolving demands of the labour market. This is encapsulated in policies such as the DHET's (2013) White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET,

2014), which outlines the imperative for TVET colleges to provide relevant, competency-based training tailored to industry needs (DHET, 2014).

The primary purpose of TVET colleges is to equip students with practical skills across various fields (DHET, 2014). These institutions are expected to ensure that graduates possess the necessary competencies to gain employment and contribute effectively to economic growth (Dixit & Ravichandran, 2023:67). However, for graduates to possess the desired employability attributes at the point of exit, it is essential that TVET colleges implement comprehensive training programmes, industry collaborations, and updated curricula that are aligned with market demands.

Despite government efforts to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of TVET colleges, such as increased funding and infrastructure development, these institutions face significant challenges. Research indicates that many TVET colleges struggle with outdated curricula, which fail to align with current industry requirements (Hanapi & Nordine, 2014:1060). Additionally, resource constraints, including a lack of qualified lecturers and insufficient training materials, further hinder the quality of education provided (Kraak, 2018:21). There is also a notable deficiency in partnerships with industry, which impedes the practical training that is critical to enhancing students' employability (Kraak, 2018:24). Furthermore, lecturers at TVET colleges often experience challenges related to administrative burdens and limited support systems, which affect their ability to deliver effective education (Atukunda & Maja, 2022:156).

To ensure that graduates possess the relevant employability attributes upon exiting TVET colleges, it is vital that these institutions undergo significant reform (Selane & Odeku, 2024:296). Solutions may include enhancing industry collaboration, updating curricula to reflect labour market needs, investing in resources and training facilities, and providing professional development for lecturers (Mocanu, Zamfir & Pirciog, 2014:605). By addressing these challenges, TVET colleges could better fulfil their role in preparing students for successful careers and respond effectively to the skills demand in the South African economy.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2014), there is a demand for a skilled workforce to enhance South Africa's competitiveness in the global market, which necessitates regular alignment with labour market needs and the advancement of

technology through apprenticeships. Vocational training is becoming increasingly essential, particularly in areas of emerging technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and machine learning (Ghosh & Ravichandran, 2024:47; Joynes *et al.*, 2019:67). Furthermore, students' learning and course completion at TVET colleges are highly influenced by the quality of support services such as career guidance and counselling (DHET, 2014).

Research indicates that one of the primary shortcomings in vocational training is the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application (Van der Bijl & Oosthuizen, 2019:215). Many students struggle to translate the information they learn in classroom settings into the real-world skills required in the workplace (Ferm, 2021:15). This disconnect not only hampers students' abilities to master vocational skills, but also undermines their employability upon graduation (Okolie *et al.*, 2020:301).

This research was aimed at exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness amongst TVET college students in North West province, South Africa, by presenting their views of the challenges facing TVET colleges in the province. In addition, the study was aimed at exploring lecturers' suggestions to improve the quality of education and facilitate skills training.

The study focused on a TVET college, referred to as 'X TVET College' for purposes of anonymity, located in Ngaka Modiri Molema district, North West province, a map of which is shown in Figure 1.1. This region was chosen because of its diverse population and challenging socio-economic conditions Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2021), which play a role in employment opportunities available to graduates, underscoring the importance of high-quality and relevant education to ensure their employability.

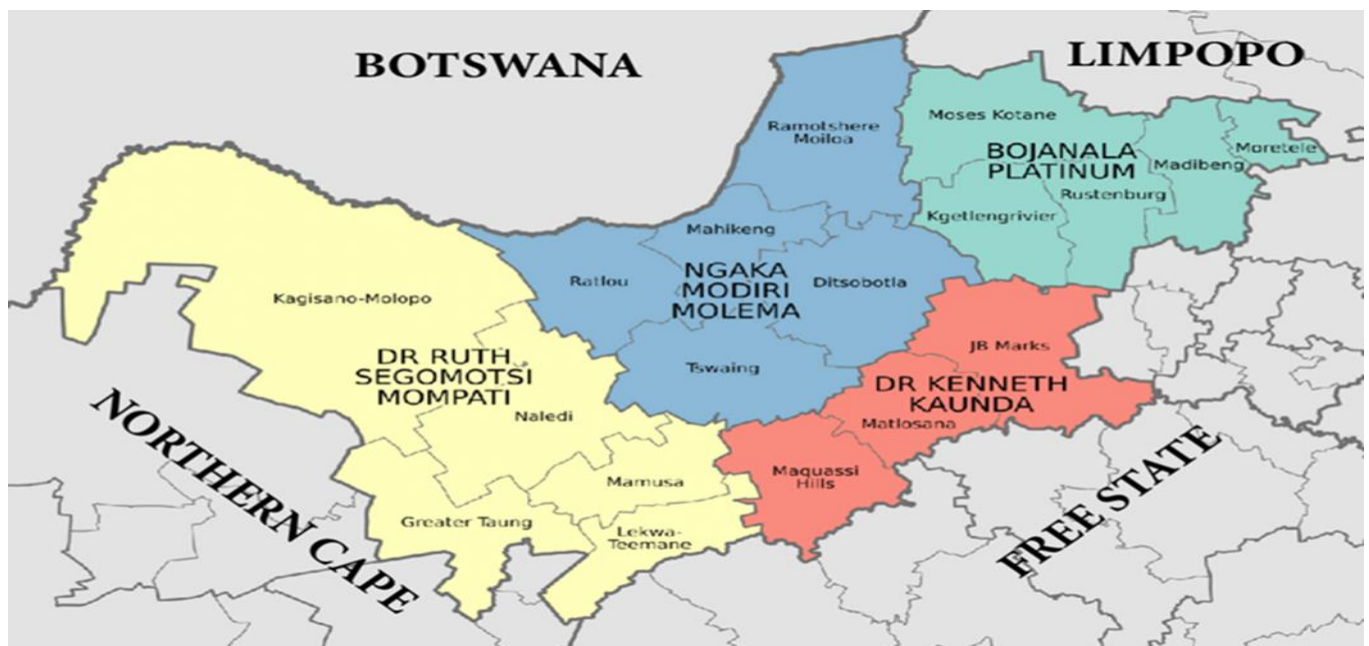


Figure 1.1: Map of the North West province's districts. Source: Wikipedia (2016).

The next section presents the study's problem statement, followed by the rationale for the study and its significance.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the context of South Africa's ongoing struggle with high unemployment rates, particularly in the North West province, the practical readiness of TVET college students for the labour market has emerged as a pressing concern (Njengele *et al.*, 2024:53). The overall unemployment rate in SA has been recorded at 31.9%, with the North West province facing a staggering expanded unemployment rate of 51.5% (Stats SA, 2024). This alarming figure highlights the urgent need for effective vocational education that equips students with relevant skills that align with current labour market demands. Many students leave these institutions without the required skills or experience needed to succeed in the labour market, exacerbating youth unemployment in the province.

The implications of inadequate job market readiness are significant, not only for individual graduates, but also for the broader socio-economic stability of the region (Njengele, Engel-Hills & Winberg, 2024:54). High unemployment, particularly amongst the youth, perpetuates cycles of poverty, economic disenfranchisement, and social unrest,

undermining the region's potential for growth and development (Eze, Chikeleze & Okwueze, 2024:258). As TVET colleges play a crucial role in training a skilled workforce, their effectiveness in preparing students for employment opportunities must be critically explored.

Furthermore, if graduates job readiness challenges in TVET colleges remain unresolved, graduates are likely to face continued unemployment, underemployment, and skills mismatch (Beyene, 2022:3). This weakens the ability of TVET colleges to produce work-ready graduates, reduces employer confidence in TVET qualifications, and limits industry collaborations.

1.4 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, the present study addresses a gap in knowledge regarding the state of the TVET sector through a focus on a TVET college in North West province, and presents details of the difficulties that lecturers encounter, which have not been captured by previous studies. The study enhances existing knowledge on vocational education theories by incorporating localised views and comparing current theories of employability skills, competencies, graduate employability attributes, and curriculum responsiveness. Practically, the study provides valuable recommendations for the principal and management of the TVET college under study to enhance the capacity and training of lecturers. The study also identifies specific professional development training needed for lecturers to equip them as training providers able to meet industry demands. The research addresses the necessity of adopting and allocating resources effectively. At the policy level, the study explores potential reforms to the curriculum to ensure greater alignment with the requirements of the province's labour market.

The research contributes to attainment of both the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), as well as Agenda 2063 (Assefa, 2025:2). The latter envisions a prosperous and integrated Africa through education, skills development, and economic growth. Furthermore, the National Youth Development Agency of South Africa emphasises the importance of equipping the youth with the skills necessary for employment and entrepreneurship (Dube, 2024:330). By focusing on improving employability for TVET

students, this research resonates with the objective of the National Youth Development Agency to foster a future where the youth are actively engaged in the economy and society.

It is hoped that the lecturers and students at the TVET college under study and members of the local community will benefit from the findings of the study as inputs that will help to improve the quality of education in order to enhance graduates' employability. The findings may also assist policy-makers in education through enhanced knowledge of the issues in and prospects of TVET colleges. The next section outlines the study's aims and objectives.

1.5 RESEARCH AIM, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This section details the study's primary aim, together with the secondary research objectives and research questions that guided the study.

1.5.1 Overall aim of the study

The overall aim of the research was to explore lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness amongst TVET college students in North West province, South Africa. The study aimed to uncover the obstacles lecturers face that may be related to graduate unemployability, together with suggestions for improvements for practice and policy. To achieve the study's overall aim, the study was guided by the following research objectives and related research questions.

1.5.2 Research objectives

The research objectives (ROs) were:

RO1: To explore TVET lecturers' perspectives on the employability readiness of students at X TVET College at the end of an academic year, with specific reference to curriculum implementation and institutional constraints.

RO2: To evaluate the extent to which the TVET curriculum equips students at X TVET College with relevant technical skills, soft skills, and graduate attributes required for employability in the labour market.

RO3: To present best practices and actionable recommendations for educational institutions and policymakers in the vocational training sector.

1.5.3 Research questions

The research questions (RQs) were as follows:

RQ1: What challenges do lectures at X TVET College face in preparing students for the job market?

RQ2: What strategies could be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of TVET education curricula to address these challenges?

RO3: How do lectures at X TVET College perceive the support available to them in their teaching role?

RO4: What levels of graduate skills do the students have at the point of exit?

The next section provides definitions of the key concepts of interest in the present study

1.6 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET): TVET is a form of formal and informal learning that prepares students with the skills and knowledge they require to succeed in the workplace (DHET, 2014). In the present study, TVET is conceptualised as formal education offered by colleges in South Africa offering practical skills and vocational training to ensure graduates are employable in the related sectors.

TVET lecturers: A TVET lecturer is a teacher at a TVET college who specialises in teaching students theory and practical skills, preparing them for a career in a specific field.

Employability: McQuaid and Lindsay (2013:199) explain employability as possessing the knowledge, skills, and qualifications required by the workplace.

Curriculum: A curriculum comprises the contents of courses offered by a learning institution (DHET, 2014).

The next section provides a brief overview of the research methodology followed in conducting the study, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.7 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHODOLOGY

The present study was based in a constructivist paradigm, which philosophical approach holds that reality is not objective, but is constructed by individuals based on their experiences and perceptions (Bryman, Hirschsohn, Santos & Toit, D 2014:30). Aligned with the constructivist paradigm, the study followed a qualitative approach, which entails the collection of qualitative data, in this case, in the form of participant narratives, to enable the gathering of rich and detailed insights into a complex phenomenon, rather than quantitative numeric data for purposes of generalising the results (Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Ranfagni, 2023:13). The data were gathered at a single point in time; thus, the study's time horizon was cross-sectional (Kesmodel, 2018:388). The research design, which is the plan for conducting the research, was exploratory, which is suitable for research on a topic that has not been extensively researched (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:58). The study population comprised lecturers at X TVET College, from which a sample was drawn using purposive sampling, to ensure participants were able to contribute rich, nuanced insights (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:225). In alignment with the qualitative approach, the data were gathered via semi-structured interviews (Ruslin, Mashuri, Rasak, Alhabsyi & Syam, 2022:22) and analysed using thematic analysis, specifically the process proposed by Williams and Moser (2019:46), which follows three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

The next section provides an overview of the structure of the dissertation

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is structured into five chapters, described below.

Chapter 1 provided background and context to the research, focusing on TVET colleges in South Africa, specifically X TVET College, in North West province. It highlights the study's importance and the research aim, together with the research objectives and research questions that guided the study and the methodology employed.

Chapter 2 reviews extant literature on TVET education, the policies governing this domain, and challenges faced by lecturers. The chapter also highlights gaps in knowledge and presents the study's theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the study's methodology, the strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations that were considered pertinent to the study.

Chapter 4 provides details on the data analysis and presents the study's findings, which are discussed alongside relevant literature.

Chapter 5 reviews the study's main findings and offers recommendations for practice and policy. The chapter concludes with a review of the study's limitations, together with recommendations for future research.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study through background on the study context and the focus on TVET colleges, specifically X TVET College, in South Africa's North West province. This was followed by the statement of the study problem, namely the challenges faced by lecturers in ensuring graduate employability. This informed the rationale for the study and the formulation of the research objectives and -questions. Key concepts of interest to the study were defined, followed by a brief overview of the methodology followed in conducting the study. The chapter concluded with an overview of the layout of the dissertation. The next chapter provides a review of extant literature in the domain under study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The ability of TVET colleges in Africa to prepare their graduates for the job market has attracted a lot of interest amongst scholars (African Development Bank, 2023). TVET institutions face countless difficulties in equipping students with industry-ready skills (Nkunya & Mwila, 2024:708). The gap between the subjects taught in school and the skills relevant to industry is not appropriately addressed by these colleges, with a direct effect on graduates' employability (Yong & Ling, 2023:25).

The current skills gaps in most industries are a considerable hindrance to South Africa's economic growth. According to Arends, Powell, Bhorat and Reddy (2016:9), the need of skilled workers, particularly in the most important industries like engineering, technology, and health sciences, is urgent and persistent. Such deficits inhibit operations of businesses, lower overall productivity, and slow down economic growth. A survey by Stats SA (2024) highlights that numerous companies face challenges in hiring qualified personnel.

Skills shortages have significant implications for employment opportunities for the youth. According to Virk, Nelson and Dele-Adededeji (2023:321), a large number of young jobseekers face difficulties in securing employment due to lack of alignment between their skills and qualifications and the changing demands of employers. This disjuncture contributes significantly to the country's high rate of youth unemployment, which intensifies socio-economic inequalities (Habiyaemye, Habanabakize & Nwosu, 2022:787).

Patterns of skills shortages are aggravated by the rapidity of technological change and shifting industry expectations, and the current education system struggles to keep abreast of such developments (Daka, Minjale, Kakupa, Kaani, Tembo, Mukuka Mulenga & Musonda, 2023:1590). The qualifications and training currently provided are often not aligned with the demands of industry (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021:1146; Daka *et al.*, 2023:1590). This mismatch causes long-term unemployment and discouragement amongst graduates (OECD, 2019). The rate of youth unemployment is especially high in rural and marginalised communities (Stats SA, 2024). Inequalities related to gender and

region also limit the development of talent, with disadvantaged groups experiencing bottlenecks in acquiring the skills that are demanded by industry (Habiyaemye *et al.*, 2022:79).

The pace of technological advances, changing industry requirements, and automation and digitalisation require that TVET institutions take the initiative to update their curriculums and training strategies to ensure their graduates meet the market requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Habiyaemye *et al.*, 2022:79). TVET should be extensive and progressive and constantly be aware of the development of new technologies and the soft skills required by organisations (Gebhardt, Grimm & Neugebauer, 2015:123). Sebola (2022:55) posits that the way policies are framed and institutional abilities determine whether TVET colleges are able to match their programmes with the needs of employers. The next section provides an overview of TVET education in South Africa.

2.2. OVERVIEW OF TVET EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

TVET in South Africa plays a crucial role in the country's educational landscape, serving as a pathway for students to acquire practical skills and knowledge directly aligned with industry needs (DHET, 2014). TVET colleges were established under government policies such as the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training and are governed by legislation, particularly the Skills Development Act 16 of 1998 (Needham, 2019:90). TVET colleges aim to address critical skills shortages and contribute to economic development (DHET, 2014). TVET colleges in South Africa traditionally focus on providing competency-based training across sectors such as engineering, business, health sciences, and hospitality, emphasising both theoretical understanding and practical application (Selane & Odeku, 2024:299).

TVET colleges in South Africa emerged as an alternative educational pathway for youths who may not wish to pursue a traditional academic education. These colleges emphasise skills that facilitate immediate labour market entry and lifelong learning (Needham, 2019:92). The South African government has prioritised the development and expansion of TVET colleges to combat high unemployment rates, especially amongst the youth, and to support the country's economic restructuring towards more diverse industrial sectors (Makole, Moeti & Ntshangase, 23:58).

In summary, South Africa's TVET system is positioned as a vital instrument for social and economic development (Selane & Odeku, 2024:293). However, addressing systemic challenges is essential to realising its full potential in producing a skilled workforce capable of responding to national economic objectives and reducing youth unemployment (Selane & Odeku, 2024:293). The next section details the government policies and legislation governing TVET colleges in South Africa.

2.3. GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND LEGISLATION GUIDING TVET IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African government recognises the critical role of TVET in fostering economic growth and reducing unemployment, particularly amongst the youth (Selane & Odeku, 2024:296). To this end, several key policies and strategic frameworks have been implemented to improve the effectiveness, relevance, and responsiveness of the TVET sector.

One of the foundational policies is the Continuing Education and Training Act No.16 of 2006, aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of further education and training institutions, including TVET colleges. This Act formalised the governance and operational structures of these institutions, ensuring that they could deliver high-quality, industry-relevant skills training. It emphasises the importance of creating a unified system that promotes lifelong learning and skills development, aimed at aligning institutional outputs with national economic needs (DHET, 2019:74).

The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) (DHET, 2015) has been pivotal in setting national priorities for skills development. The latest iteration, NSDS III (DHET, 2011), underscores enhancing skills training to address existing skills shortages across various sectors, such as engineering, health sciences, and technology (DHET, 2020). Key to the NSDS is fostering partnerships and collaboration amongst TVET colleges, industry stakeholders, and government agencies. This multi-stakeholder approach aims to ensure that training programmes are market-responsive by equipping students with relevant technical and soft skills that are necessary to secure employment (DHET, 2019:56).

The Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998) seeks to promote broader access to education and training opportunities, particularly amongst marginalised populations. It established Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which play a crucial role in funding and co-ordinating skills training efforts (Mkhonza & Letsoalo, 2017). The Act emphasises creating an inclusive skills development environment that responds to socio-economic disparities and supports lifelong learning pathways (DHET, 2019:70).

Despite these policies and efforts, the TVET sector faces persistent challenges, including outdated curricula, insufficient resource allocation, inadequate infrastructure, and weak industry links, which hinder the effective preparation of graduates for current labour market demands (Chuene & Teane, 2024:1). The effectiveness of TVET colleges in equipping students with relevant employability skills remains compromised, highlighting the need for ongoing reforms to align educational offerings with evolving industry requirements (Yong & Ling, 2023).

Despite the comprehensive nature of these policies, challenges remain in aligning education outcomes with labour market needs. According to Bennett (2019:47), there is a persistent gap between the skills provided by TVET colleges and the actual demands of employers. This misalignment is partly due to outdated curricula, limited industry engagement, and insufficient focus on practical competencies within training programmes (El Baradei & Kadry, 2022:8). These gaps undermine the employability of graduates and compromise the overall effectiveness of the policies intended to address youth unemployment and skills shortages (Selane & Odeku, 2024:296). For example, the integration of industry-relevant competencies into curricula often lags technological advancements and evolving industry standards (Shevyakova, Munsh, Arystan & Petrenko, 2021:125). Shortcomings are reflected in North West province's high youth unemployment rate (Stats SA, 2024) but have not been fully explored in research.

The problem is exacerbated by insufficient resources and weak institutional capacity impeding the achievement of policy objectives, causing persistent skills mismatches in the labour market (Comyn & Strietska, 2019:24). Policies such as Skills Development Act for TVET Colleges in South Africa have improved through various initiatives to enhance buildings, update curriculum and build more teamwork among stakeholders (Njengele *et al.*, 2024:59), yet their achievements are usually stalled by major systemic obstacles such

as infrastructure constraints (Needham, 2019:89). A more co-ordinated approach is needed to see improved results in training and graduates' employment. The challenges faced by TVET colleges is elaborated on in the subsequent section.

2.4. CHALLENGES FACED BY TVET COLLEGES

TVET colleges are essential in providing the youth with relevant skills for the labour market. However, despite their pivotal role, these institutions face a multitude of systemic barriers that represent a significant hinderance to their effectiveness in producing graduates who are adequately prepared for industry demands (Makola & Tabane, 2023; Omar & Kamaruzaman, 2024; Zickafoose *et al.*, 2024:60).

Mokoena and Mesuwini (2023:416) highlight outdated curricula devoid of the current best practices as one of the most crucial problems facing TVETs. These programmes also depend on outdated training methods that do not integrate current technological advancements (Mokoena & Mesuwini, 2023:416). This gap leads to graduates lacking competitiveness and failing to add value to the actual workspaces (El Baradei & Kadry, 2022:1). The inability to regularly update curricula in fields such as engineering and health sciences, where the pace of change in technology is fast, is a significant contributor to unemployable graduates and, thus, the country's growing skills gap (Song, 2024:10). Inflexible and overloaded curricula also constrain the ability to tailor programmes to suit regional and industry-specific requirements (Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020:80).

Moreover, TVET colleges face debilitating resource constraints, including poor training equipment, limited access to modern technology, poor infrastructure, and a lack of teaching- and learning materials (Tini, 2024:40). According to Papier *et al.* (2016:90), the skills gap is intensified by colleges lacking adequate facilities and resources necessary for experiential learning, which is essential to preparing students for employment, thereby worsening the country's skills deficiency. The lack of essential infrastructure limits colleges' ability to conduct practical training, which is essential towards building competencies fit for the contemporary workplace (Makola, Dube, Tabane, 2023:441).

The absence of meaningful partnerships between colleges and industry stakeholders further hampers the relevance of curricula, due to these colleges' inability to understand and interpret industry requirements (Mokoena & Mesuwini, 2023:416). These

collaborations are vital factors to make sure that training meets the demands of the labour market and that students will be provided with flexibility in learning, including practical experience, which may also enhance their chances of placement (Yoto, Marsono, Suyetno, Mawangi, Romadin & Paryono, 2024:15).

According to Yende (2021:77), inadequate funding has a considerable negative effect on TVET colleges. Mbatha, Buthelezi & Ajani (2024:209) also note that most colleges operate with limited funding, restricting their ability to modernise facilities, acquire advanced equipment, and attract qualified personnel, with a direct impact on the quality of training offered. Furthermore, Tshibangu and Sikosana (2023:85) highlight that the lack of lecturers with industry-related skills, TVET teaching qualifications, and pedagogical experience is a critical issue. Moreover, colleges are unable to provide meaningful training related technological improvements because of a lack of skilled personnel (Sebola, 2022:54).

Bacchetta, Cerra, Piermartini and Smeets (2021:4) note that poor governance systems and practices obstruct strategic planning and reforms in TVET colleges. Ineffective leadership in TVET colleges may lead to poor resource allocation, the absence of accountability, and poor implementation of policies. This causes a collapse in service delivery and a loss of trust, culminating in a failure to attain TVET objectives (Rafique, Rehman & Rahman, 2025:71).

Students' socioeconomic status, geographic location, and gender also influence access to quality TVET, especially amongst marginalised groups in rural settings (Blanden *et al.*, 2023:1). According to Philip, Tsedu and Zwane (2014:10) socioeconomic status hinders talent cultivation and entrenches social injustices. The lack of support systems such as mentorships and academic assistance stand in the way of motivated students and their effective transition into work environments (Hryshchenko, Artemchuk, Zavhorodnya, Tymoshenko, Purhani, 2025:2). According to Omar, Khambari, Ma'arof and Razali (2022:359) these support service plays a paramount role in meeting the needs of individuals in their learning, as well as in promoting employability.

Continuous improvement is hampered by weak systems of assessment of colleges performance and the relevance of curricula (Tran, 2019:100). The lack of sufficient

monitoring and evaluation means that colleges are unable to determine areas that require transformation and maintain quality standards (Nkonki-Mandleni, 2023:151).

According to the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP), the challenges that the TVET sector is facing, including outdated curricula, poor resources, lack of industry engagement, and inadequate infrastructure, have to be minimised through specific and targeted reforms (Akash & Suganya, 2024:11; Cheng, Liu, Wang, Cui & Li, 2021:6461). The strategy suggests that graduates be technologically proficient in addition to being qualified in critical thinking and problem-solving. However, curricula are not updated, and industry involvement is lacking, without which the mismatch of skills will continue to stifle industrialisation and adoption of technology (McKee & Gauch, 2020:280).

The changing environment of the employment opportunities, which is characterised by technological innovation, highlights the imperative of enhancing the national skills training system (Goos, Arntz, Zierahn, Gregory, Gomez, Vazquez, Jonkers, 2019:20). It is necessary to develop flexible curriculum programmes that include new technologies, coupled with the development of relationships with industry partners. According to Jubane (2020:10), only with such strategies will South Africa be able to successfully resolve skills shortages, decrease youth unemployment, and accelerate sustainable growth of the economy. The next section takes a closer look at the role of TVET lecturers and the challenges they face.

2.5. TVET LECTURERS: ROLE AND CHALLENGES

Lecturers play a pivotal role in shaping the quality of vocational training. Their perceptions, experiences, and teaching practices influence student preparedness and motivation (Smith, 2018:20). TVET lecturers thus have a direct impact on the quality, relevance, and results of vocational training (Papier & Mawoyo, 2024:84). Their role goes beyond mere teaching; they also play a role in curriculum relevance, development of students' practical skills, the involvement of industry, the design of pedagogy, and the overall development of the TVET sector (Mahardhani, 2023:507).

In addition to theoretical teaching, lecturers provide practical training, simulations, and real-life problem-solving sessions. However, they lack the necessary resources, including facilities and equipment (Eyadat, 2023:28). The importance of the involvement of industry

cannot be understated in this context. Industry could provide resources such as guest lecturers, site visits, and internships, thereby close the gap between classroom education and real business conditions (Rafiq *et al.*, 2024:359).

Aside from hard skills, TVET lecturers are also required to teach soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and professionalism, as these are valued by employers (Wedekind, Russon, Liu, Zungu & Li, 2024:132). According to Malawu and Waghid (2024:162), lecturers also function as mentors, career counsellors, and advisers, teaching students how to approach the job search, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning. Efficient mentorship builds students' confidence and motivation, and it assists in the move from students to employee (Peretomode & Ikoya, 2019:23).

Exposure to digital pedagogical tools, including e-learning platforms and virtual laboratories, enhances engagement and skills transfer (Murana, 2025:164). Murana (2025) explains that technical innovations increase teaching efficiency and allow lecturers to change their approaches to accommodate students' changing needs. According to Rafiq *et al.* (2024:365) the adoption of the e-learning programmes, online modules, and digital tools increases the use of up-to-date industry standards. Digital tools help lecturers to introduce variety to the processes of teaching and address various learning styles (Adaramola & Akinleye, 2025:70).

Continuous professional growth allows lecturers to keep up to date with pedagogical innovations, emerging technologies, and current industry practices (Mahlangu & Mtshali, 2024). Munna and Kalam (2021:1) state that professional development has the potential to ensure that students' skills gaps are identified and relevant training is developed. Omar *et al.* (2022:345) add that the continuous development of lecturers requires institutional support.

Mahardhani, Nadeak, Hanika, Sentryo and Kemala (2023:508) note that lecturers' involvement in sector research impacts the development of curricula and instructional methods. Their understanding of industry trends allows constant advancement of curricula, ensuring that TVET programmes do not lose the focus on national economic and skills development agendas (Papier *et al.*, 2020:9).

However, numerous challenges impede TVET lecturers' optimal performance, including class sizes, insufficient budgets allocated to professional development, and administrative workload (Ayeni & Olowe, 2016:67; Hadisaputra *et al.*, 2024:25), despite capacity development, resource provision, and fostering a culture of innovation being crucial to the overall relevance of TVET education (Papier & Mawoyo, 2024:94; Wedekind *et al.*, 2024:122).

A study by Montenegro (2022:145) showed that the perceptions of lecturers concerning the relevance of curriculum determine their instructional methods and, accordingly, students' achievements. TVET lecturers in South Africa are demotivated by the perception that curricula are outdated and unrelated to the needs of industry and have noted that they have no desire to train students using outdated materials that will not lead to employability (Murana, 2025:156; Nkunya & Mwila, 2024:708; Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018:114). Lecturers have to play an active role in reviewing, revising, and updating the curricula in line with technological changes and best practices to meet market demands (Teis & Els, 2021:81). Where the curriculum fails to capture current trends in the industry, changes in technology, and the contemporary work practices, it creates a mismatch between student's acquired knowledge and skills and employers' requirements, with students possessing skills that are no longer needed (Melesse, Haley & Wärvik, 2023:182).

Lecturers are also handicapped by a lack of access to state-of-the-art laboratory equipment and facilities, which play a critical role in hands-on training (Hanapi *et al.*, 2015:485) to bridge the gap between theory and practice, leaving students poorly equipped to deal with real-life job situations (Gumede, Sithole & Gumede, 2023:225; Nkunya & Mwila, 2024:708; Parveen & Ramzan, 2024:2031). These issues are compounded by limited industry collaboration, which could otherwise ensure curriculum relevance and facilitate practical exposure for students (Mabungela & Mtiki, 2024:300; Mesuwini & Mokoena, 2023:418; Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018:112).

Wahab, Rahman, Mahat, Hudin, Ramdan and Mohd Yadi, (2024:2549) state that lecturers are often given heavy administrative workloads that hinder their ability to engage teaching and new teaching technology, curriculum development, industry collaboration, and professional development. According to Mardiana (2020:277), many lecturers have

limited exposure to industry, leaving them able to introduce modern trends and practices into their lectures. This disengagement affects their ability to provide relevant vocational training experiences to meet the changing demands of the workplace (Nzimakwe & Utete, 2024:82).

Lecturers also have few opportunities to advance their careers, and many are dissatisfied with their remuneration (Bainton, Barrett & Tikly, 2016:21). According to Smith and Wyness (2024:17), once lecturers perceive that they are undervalued, their desire to keep improving their professional abilities and to innovate the curriculum diminishes.

In the multilingual TVET setting, where teaching often requires the use of technical vocabulary, student's different home languages may inhibit effective communication (Erling, Adinolfi & Hultgren, 2017:13). Another concern is that many lecturers are either resistant to or not sufficiently familiar with digital pedagogical tools and e-learning programmes, which are becoming crucial in vocational teaching and broadening access to a larger student population (Kovalchuk & Sheludko, 2019:131).

Partnerships between TVET colleges and industry play a critical role in increasing the relevance, quality, and responsiveness of TVET programmes (Sebola, 2022:56), ultimately creating a skilled workforce and decreasing youth unemployment (Omar & Kamaruzaman, 2024:1583). Maintaining strong industry connections ensures curriculum relevance and provides students with practical experience, thereby increasing their chances of employability (Mahardhani *et al.*, 2023:501). Njengele *et al.* (2024:59) notes the importance of the practical exposure students gain through practical training via apprenticeships, internships, and industry-based projects. Such first-hand knowledge prepares students with both practical and soft skills (Maake-Malatji, 2021:143). Collaborative initiatives may also include co-investment in resources, infrastructure, and training programmes (Dixit & Ravichandran, 2023:62).

Despite the benefits, TVET lecturers face a number of challenges in establishing and maintaining effective industry collaborations. Pucciarelli and Kaplan (2016:312) note that colleges on education standards, while industries are more concerned with immediate productivity and competitiveness. In addition, such collaborations tend to lack formal agreements and processes of sustained engagements, disrupting their long-term sustainability (Baral, 2025:5).

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Based on the extensive review of the literature, it is clear that South Africa's TVET colleges are confronted with several deeply rooted challenges, including outdated curricula, inadequate resources, weak industry engagement, and infrastructural deficits. These issues collectively hamper TVET colleges' ability to deliver relevant and state-of-the-art education in order to enhance graduates' employability. The pivotal role of lecturers is further undermined by limited professional development opportunities and dissatisfaction with remuneration. From the review, it is clear that addressing these systemic shortcomings would require a multifaceted approach that involves curriculum modernisation, increased investment in resources, stronger partnerships with industry, and targeted capacity-building for lecturers.

The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methodology employed in conducting the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for the study. It begins by describing the study's philosophical foundation, followed by an explanation of the research approach and research design. The chapter then details the methods used to select participants from the study population, as well as the procedures for data collection and data analysis. It concludes by discussing the strategies employed to ensure methodological rigour and the ethical considerations observed throughout the research process.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The constructivist paradigm in which the study was based holds that reality is subjective and developed based on individual and social experience (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:30). According to Saarsar (2018:718), constructivism focuses on insights, meanings, and interpretations by the participants in the study context. Since the aim of the present research was to explore the viewpoint of lecturers about issues in the process of preparing students for the labour market, the constructivist approach helped the researcher to gain an in-depth perspective on their personal experiences, attitudes, and perceptions (Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

This paradigm was considered appropriate because the aims of the study were to obtain the subjective and nuanced opinions of lecturers, and not to gather objective, measurable data. It allowed the researcher to explain and make sense of the compound social phenomenon in the TVET college setting through detailed and contextual information (Shah, 2019:3).

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Aligned with the constructivist paradigm, the present study followed a qualitative research approach, which involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data to gain in-depth insights into individuals' perceptions, experiences regarding a social phenomenon in a particular context (Naeem *et al.*, 2023:13; Shah, 2019:3). This approach emphasises

understanding the meaning and significance attributed by participants to their lived experiences, emphasise that a qualitative inductive approach develops new ideas grounded in data, rather than relying on existing theories, allowing flexibility as the research evolves (Kana & Letaba, 2024:164; Naeem *et al.*, 2023:13). The approach yields detailed insights that are not accessible through other methods (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:58).

The choice of a qualitative approach was guided by the necessity to understand the subtle perceptions and lived experiences of lecturers at X TVET College. The qualitative approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how the lecturers perceive their roles and the difficulties they face in efforts to ensure graduate readiness for the labour market, which perceptions are context-specific and subjective in nature.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study followed an exploratory qualitative research design, which is suitable for a topic that has received little research attention and about which there is a lack of knowledge (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020:2). Existing literature on the topic in the context of the North West province is especially limited. An exploratory design allowed the researcher to become immersed in the world of subjective experiences of lecturers and grasp the specifics of their job and their struggles, with an emphasis on gathering detailed, descriptive data (Kesmodel, 2018:388).

3.5 METHODS

This section provides a description of the study population and the methods employed to select participants and gather and analyse the data.

3.5.1 Population and sampling

The target population in the study was 75 lecturers employed by X TVET College in South Africa's North-West province who were directly engaged in the provision of TVET to students. Purposive, a non-probability sampling method, was employed to select participants, which means not every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected for participation in the study. In using purposive sampling, participants were selected based on the researcher's judgement of their relevance to the topic under

study and their ability to contribute meaningful data in order to address the study's goals (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:225). This technique is suitable for qualitative research, as it allows for the selection of individuals with specific knowledge or experience, enabling deeper insights (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022:9; Naderifar & Ghaljaie, 2017:2).

To be included in the study, participants had to be lecturers and meet the criteria of at least two years' experience and active involvement in teaching at X TVET College. Management and administrative staff were thus excluded. The realised sample comprised 17 participants. To ensure data saturation, the point at which no new data emerge from additional interviews had been reached (Naeem *et al.*, 2024:1), which was after 15 interviews, the researcher conducted an additional 2 interviews to confirm saturation. This sample size is considered sufficient for qualitative research, based on Ahmed's (2025:3) recommendation of between 5 and 30 participants. The researcher aimed to include lecturers from a variety of disciplines offered at the college, such as engineering, business, and hospitality, to ensure a balanced view of the educational practices and challenges across different fields.

3.5.2 Data collection

Methods commonly employed in qualitative research include interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis, as the aim is to collection rich, descriptive data (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:58; Ruslin *et al.*, 2022:22). In the present study, the data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured format offers flexibility to explore emergent themes while allowing participants to express their views in their own words. This face-to-face approach also enables the interviewer to observe non-verbal cues, which can enhance the richness of the data collected (Kakilla, 2021:1).

The researcher used an interview guide containing open-ended questions to allow participants to express their views freely while ensuring that the interviews did not stray from the topic and that all participants were asked the same questions (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:58). The interview questions were based on a review of literature in the domain under study. Probing questions were asked to encourage participants to elaborate on their answers and clarify any ambiguities (Ruslin *et al.*, 2022:25).

Campus management served as a mediator, facilitating introductions and providing access to the lecturers (Atibuni, Olema, Ssenyonga, Karl & Kibanja, 2017:107). To enhance objectivity, and because the researcher was employed at X TVET College at the time the study was conducted, a field worker who was not an employee of the college was recruited and trained to conduct the interviews. The field worker was an MBA graduate who had experience in conducting research. The individual underwent an orientation programme to ensure the person was aware of the research goals, ethical considerations, and appropriate and neutral participant interactions, which is essential to minimising variability during data collection (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:224). The use of an independent interviewer ensured that the researcher could not influence participants' responses, and allayed fears of reprisal due to negative comments about the institution to the researcher. This method also prevented researcher bias from influencing the collection of data. Participants were also not informed of the identity of the researcher.

The interviews were conducted face to face, to allow the establishment of a rapport, promote clarity, and allow the interviewer to note non-verbal behaviour (Kakilla, 2021:1). The appointments were made at a time and place at the college that suited participants. The interviews' duration ranged from 45 to 60 minutes, allowing sufficient time to explore participants' perspectives while maintaining participant engagement. To ensure data accuracy, the interviews were recorded, with participants' permission, and the interviewer also made notes (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:273). The data were transcribed verbatim using turboscribe after every interview and analysed (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:273).

3.5.3 Data analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, specifically the steps recommended by Williams and Moser (2019:46). The aim of thematic analysis is to identify patterns or themes in the data (Kana & Letaba, 2024:164) in an inductive approach, this moving from detailed data to higher-order concepts (Skjott & Korsgaard, 2019:3).

The researcher read the interview transcripts multiple times in order to become familiar with the information. The coding process, which was performed using ATLAS.ti, followed three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Williams & Moser, 2019:46).

In Step 1, open coding, the researcher identifies meaning data related to the research questions, including similarities and differences in participants' responses (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:275). In Step 2, axial coding, the researcher groups related codes into broader categories by identifying relationships between the codes. This also involved ensuring that the categories represented the data (Naeem *et al.*, 2023:5). In Step 3, selective coding, the researcher identifies overarching themes that represent the data contained in the categories, which are then labelled with a concise, descriptive label (Dawadi, 2020:20).

3.6 TIME HORIZON

Research could follow either a cross-sectional or a longitudinal time horizon. Cross-sectional research explores a phenomenon at a specific point in time, while longitudinal research entails collecting and comparing data at various points over time (Kesmodel, 2018:388). Due to time- and resource constraints, the present study followed a cross-sectional time horizon.

The next section discusses the strategies employed to ensure rigour.

3.7 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

The quantitative criteria of validity and reliability in quantitative research are represented by trustworthiness in qualitative research, which is enhanced by meeting four criteria, namely credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs, & Jinks, 2018:1904; Stahl & King, 2020:26).

Credibility refers to the believability of the truth of the findings and whether the findings are a true reflection of the views of the participants (Stahl & King, 2020:26). To enhance credibility, the researcher used member-checking, whereby the participants were requested to read and confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts and the researcher's interpretation of their data (McKim, 2023:47; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Credibility was further enhanced by ensuring data saturation (Saunders *et al.*, 2018:1904). In addition, the findings are supported by verbatim quotations from the interview transcripts.

Dependability relates to objectivity with regard to the findings being based in the data and not influenced by the researcher's biases, assumptions and motivations (Taherdoost, 2021:12). To enhance dependability, the interview guide was pilot tested with a small sample of lecturers similar to the study population. This procedure revealed any ambiguous or unclear questions, allowing modifications to be made prior to data collection (Tate, 2023:21). The researcher also kept an extensive audit trail of all research decisions, methodological procedures, and analytical steps. This detailed documentation enables external auditors to scrutinise and verify the uniformity of the research process. Additionally, the researcher employed peer-debriefing, whereby colleagues examined and challenged the analysis process, provided a neutral assessment of the study, and identified possible biases and inconsistencies that needed to be addressed (Taherdoost, 2021:12).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings could be applied in a different context (Bryman, 2021:62). To facilitate this, the researcher provided detailed and rich descriptions of the research context, the characteristics of the participants, and the research process (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:62).

Confirmability is enhanced by ensuring that the findings reflect the responses of the participants, rather than by the interests and biases of the researcher (Ahmed, 2024:2; Stahl & King, 2020:27). The researcher kept a reflexive journal in which personal thoughts, decisions made during the research process, and possible biases were recorded (Kunkler & Roy, 2023:6; Stahl & King, 2020:27). The data were coded and analysed systematically using ATLAS.ti, and an audit trail documenting the coding decisions was maintained, thereby supporting the objectivity and confirmability of the findings (Ang, Embi & Yunus, 2016:1864).

The next section reviews the ethical considerations that were considered pertinent to the study.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Maintaining ethics in research is vital, especially in research on sensitive topics that involve humans. The study received ethical clearance (Annexure A). From the ethics committee of the researcher's academic institution, and permission to conduct the study

was obtained from X TVET College (Annexure B). The researcher complied with the Protection of Personal Information Act No. 4 of 2013 throughout. The interview transcripts were anonymised by replacing participants names with a pseudonym (e.g., Participant A), and personal identifiers were removed in the reporting of the findings (Williams & Moser, 2019:45).

Participants were fully informed of the aim of the study and what participation would entail (Hwang, 2023:3) and had to sign an informed consent for (Annexure C) prior to commencement of the interview (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:169). Participants were assured of anonymity and that participation was voluntary (Hwang, 2023:3). They could withdraw from the study at any point prior to analysis of the data, without any negative consequences (Florea, 2023:107; Xu, Baysari, Stocker, Leow, Day & Carland, 2020:1).

The data are stored on a password-protected device to which only the researcher and study supervisor have access and will be destroyed after completion of the study. The research findings will be shared with participants and X TVET College upon request, following ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality and responsible data-sharing (Okorie, Udeh, Adaga, Dara, Ojimba & Oriekhoe, 2024:10).

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter described the methodology followed in conducting the study, starting with the constructivist paradigm in which the study was based, together with justifications for the methodological decisions. The study followed a qualitative approach and an exploratory research design. Participants were purposively selected from the study population, which comprised lecturers at X TVET College. Primary data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis, assisted by ATLAS.ti. The subsequent section detailed the strategies to enhance the study's trustworthiness according to the criteria of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The chapter concluded with a review of the ethical principles that were upheld throughout the study. The next chapter reports the study's findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter extends the discussion of the analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the interview with 17 lecturers (Participant A to Q) at X TVET College. As detailed in Chapter 3, the data were analysed using thematic analysis (open, axial, and selective coding), performed using ATLAS.ti (Gupta, 2024).

The findings are reported according to the study's four research questions:

RQ1: What challenges do lecturers at X TVET college face in preparing students for the job market?

RQ2: What strategies could be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of the TVET education curriculum in addressing these challenges?

RQ3: How do lectures at TVET college perceive the support available to them in their teaching role from college manage?

RQ4: What levels of graduate skills do the students have at the point of exit?

The chapter started with a presentation of the profiles of participants and a description of coding process, presentation of the key themes and an interpretation of the findings with verbatim quotes.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

This section describes the demographics and the professional profile of the 17 participants. Their professional details were considered important in understanding their perceptions and experiences. The participants profile is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Participants profile

Participant	Qualification	Lecturing subjects	Years' experience	TVET qualification
A	Advanced Diploma in Accounting Science	Accounting	3	No
B	BA honours	Communication	17	Yes
C	Masters in sociolinguistics	English	12	Yes
D	Advanced Diploma in Industrial Technicals	Electrotechnics and Electronics	9	Yes
E	Advanced Diploma in Engineering	Construction Planning	15	No, but Post Graduate Certificate in Education
F	National Diploma in Fashion Design	Management practice	24	No
G	Diploma in quantity surveying	Building and Civil Construction & Quantity Surveying	17	Yes
H	National Diploma in Electrical	Electrical Practice and Principle	15	No
I	Master of Business Administration	Labour Law & Economics	29	Yes
J	Diploma in hospitality	Hospitality Service	4	In progress
K	Diploma in secondary technics	Welding and Drawing	12	No

Participant	Qualification	Lecturing subjects	Years' experience	TVET qualification
L	Degree in administration	Business Practice	15	No, but Post Graduate Certificate in Education
M	Diploma in civil engineering	Plant and Equipment	3	No
N	Master's in international relations	English and Communication	14	Yes
O	National Diploma in Building Science	Building and Structural Construction	15	No
P	Advanced Diploma in TVET Teaching	Information Processing	8	Yes
Q	Diploma in Information Technology	Computer Skills and Office Data Processing	13	Yes

All the participants were experienced X TVET lecturers who held various qualifications and taught a variety of subjects. Their qualifications included diplomas, honours degrees and master's degrees, and some had undergone special training on TVET pedagogy. Their areas of instruction encompassed accounting, engineering, construction, hospitality, and computer skills. Their experience ranged from 3 to 29 years; the majority had more than 10 years' experience. The difference in qualifications and levels of experience served to determine the variation in pedagogical readiness, which offered the holistic perspective of lecturing practices and issues in the college. Participants' years of experience is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

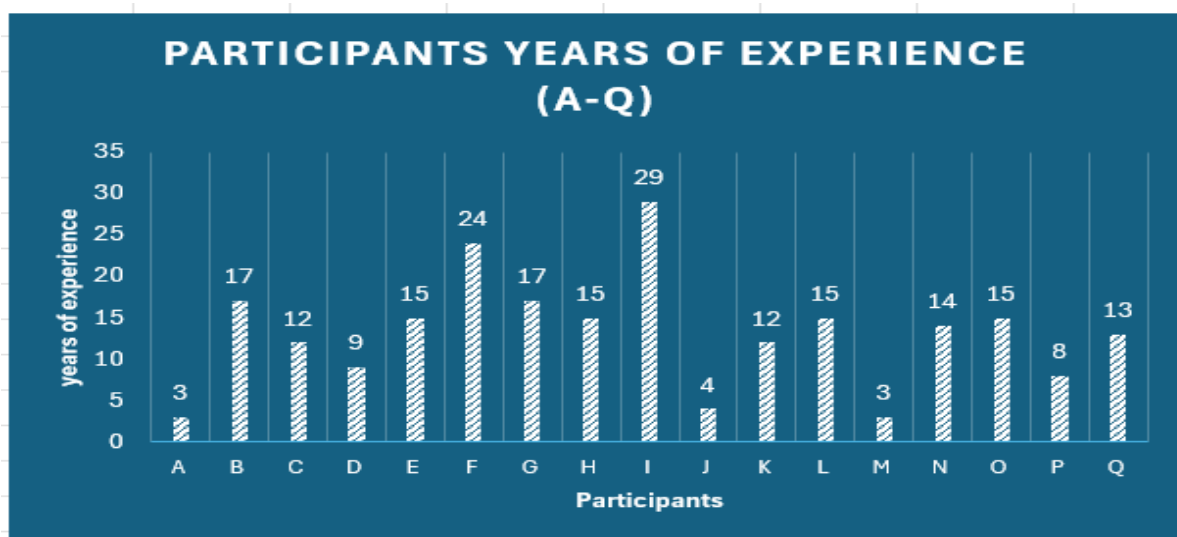


Figure 4.1: Participants' years of experience

The percentage of participants' who held a TVET teaching qualification is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

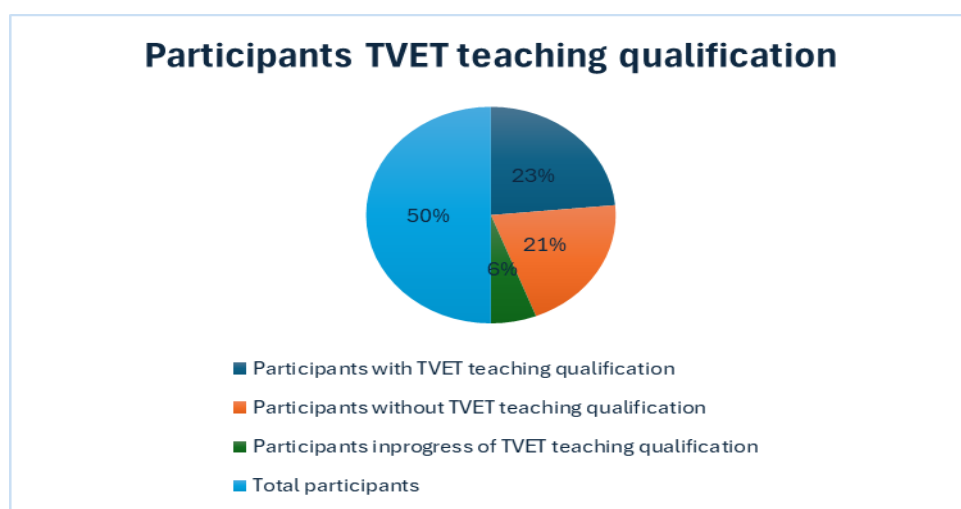


Figure 4.2: Participants' TVET teaching qualification

This analysis showed that 23% held a formal qualification in TVET teaching, 21% had no theoretical qualification, and 6% were pursuing one. This may indicate a need for capacity-building programmes that would allow all lecturers to obtain the necessary pedagogical and technical expertise in accordance with the TVET requirements.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

As noted, the data were coded using ATLAS.ti. Figure 4.3 is a representation of the Word Cloud generated using the software, which illustrates concepts represented in the data.

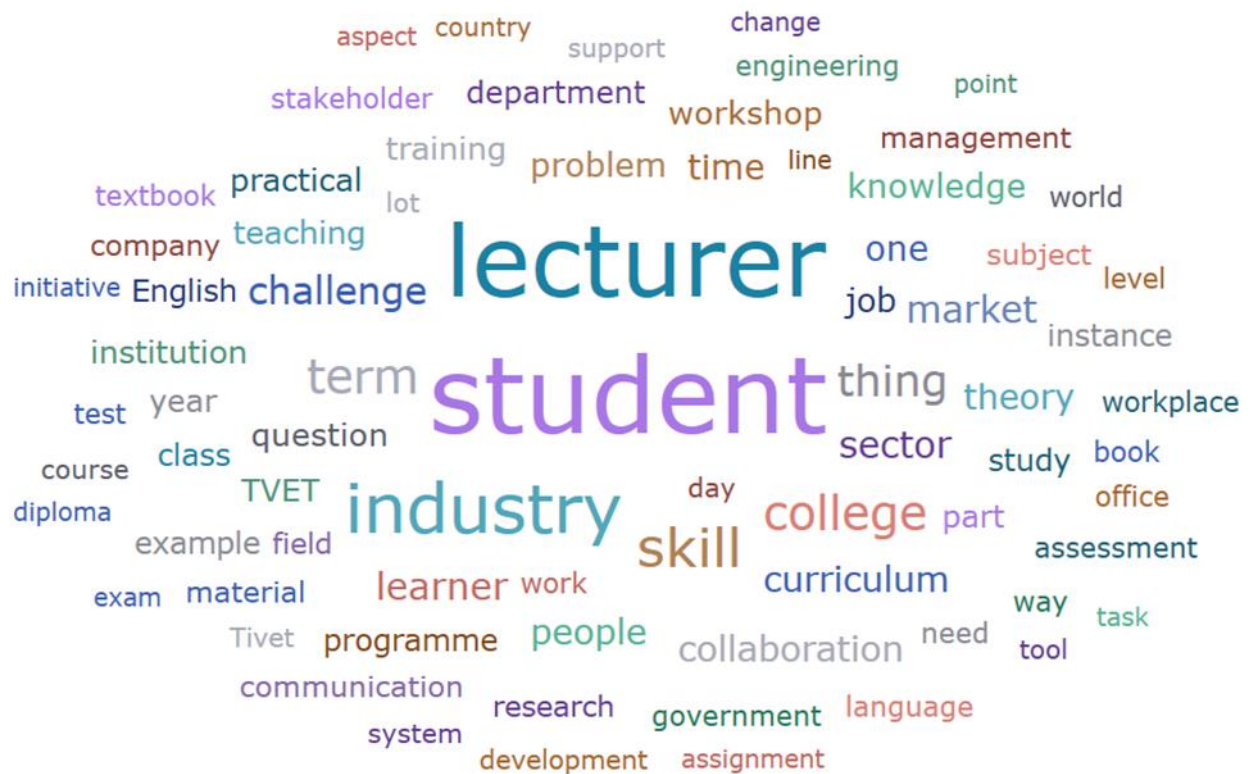


Figure 4.3: ATLAS, ti Word Cloud

The word cloud indicates the most frequently used words in the responses of participants. Words that are larger indicate a higher frequency and emphasise a dominant idea, and included, e.g., *students*, *lecturers*, *industry*, *skill*, and *college*. The Word Cloud provided a brief preview of discussion areas of significance before proceeding to Step 1: Coding, Step 2: Axial coding, and Step 3: Identification of themes. The next section presents the findings of the thematic analysis.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings are presented according to the study's research questions.

4.4.1 RQ1: What challenges do lecturers at X TVET college face in preparing students for the job market?

Four themes related to this research question emerged, namely *Curriculum relevance and alignment*, *Resource and infrastructure constraints*, *Weak industry integration*, and *Student-related barriers*. These are discussed below.

4.4.1.1 Theme 1: Curriculum relevance and alignment

Most lecturers noted that the National Certificate (Vocational) curriculum is outdated and not aligned with industry demands. Participants mentioned that the course material is generally not practical, and that it does not adequately prepare students to work in real-life situations.

“The curriculum we presently have is obsolete. Part of the content is no longer relevant to what is required in working environment, particularly in the field of engineering” (Participant B).

“Students are studying theory which is not recognised by the employer. Majority of companies do not even accept the NCV [National Certificate (Vocational)] qualification itself” (Participant E).

“We receive an established syllabus, which does not leave a lot of room to go with the industry demands” (Participant H).

Lecturers held a strong perception that there is a wide gap between the National Certificate (Vocational) curriculum and the demands of employers. The inflexibility of centrally structured curricula limit innovativeness and responsiveness to industrial change. This results in graduates who are highly learned in theory but lack marketable practical skills.

4.4.1.2 Theme 2: Resource and infrastructure constraints

Participants across disciplines lamented the scarcity of resources and the institution's poor infrastructure. The lecturers complained of inadequate teaching resources, faulty

apparatus, the absence of information and communication technology resources, and overcrowded classes.

“We do not have contemporary instruments and working machines to practise on by the students. In most cases, we simply expound theory” (Participant D).

“Even textbooks arrive late. Last time books arrived when the year is nearly over” (Participant F).

“The computer laboratories that we have are not up to date, and not all students can afford their own computers. This makes it tough and annoying to teach” (Participant K).

These issues suggest that resource deficits are significant constraints to the practical aspect of teaching. The lack of functioning workshops, technology infrastructure, and simulation tools compel lecturers to focus on teaching theory. This strengthens the theory–practice gap, which hampers achievement of the objective of X TVET college, which is to generate job-ready graduates.

4.4.1.3 Theme 3: Weak industry integration

The lack of collaboration between the college and the industry was raised consistently by participants. They noted restricted means for student placement and minimal employer input in curriculum development.

“The work-integrated learning is supposed to have partnerships with companies, but this happens very rarely” (Participant G).

“Our management does not act upon this, even when we establish the potential partners in the industry” (Participant M).

“Students complete their qualification with not having stepped in a real job premise” (Participant P).

The absence of collaboration with industry hinders students’ exposure to real workplace conditions and makes them less employable. This finding also indicates institutional

disconnection. Lecturers strive to develop relationship with industry, but are blocked by structural obstacles within the college that prevented the development of sustainable relationships.

4.4.1.4 Theme 4: Student-related barriers

Attitudes and skills deficits were cited by several lecturers as causes of poor job readiness amongst students. Participants noted an over-dependence on memorising material, poor communication, low confidence, and inadequate professional discipline.

“students are relying on memorisation of notes instead of conceptualisation”
(Participant C).

“They have difficulties speaking up when giving a presentation or interviewing” (Participant I).

“Others are unprofessional in their simple skills, such as lateness, deadlines, and not taking their work seriously” (Participant K).

The findings show that students’ under-preparedness extends beyond technical skills. Many students lacked essential employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, and self-discipline. This suggests a need for integrated soft-skills development within the curriculum to complement technical training.

4.4.2 RQ2: What strategies could be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of TVET education curricula to address these challenges?

Participants offered suggestions to make the TVET curriculum more relevant and improve students’ employability. Four themes address this research question: *Curriculum reform, Strengthening practical training, Industry–college collaboration, and Lecturer development and capacity-building*. These are discussed below.

4.4.2.1 Theme 1: Curriculum reform

Lecturers stressed the necessity of a critical review and revision of the National Certificate (Vocational) and Report 191 programmes. They asserted that the curriculum has to be

constantly synchronised with labour market requirements and technological developments.

“There should be more regular updates of our syllabus, and industry professionals must be consulted in the design of curriculum” (Participant F).

“The material is too outdated and monotonous. It should be changed according to what businesses require now” (Participant A).

“Employers are requesting new proficiency such as digital literacy, and we are educating them on outdated information” (Participant H).

This finding indicates the necessity of a responsive and flexible curriculum that could change with shifts in industry and technology. The curriculum would be reviewed regularly, including by stakeholders, and should include analyses of the labour market.

4.4.2.2 Theme 2: Strengthening practical training

Lecturers focused on the combination of theoretical instruction with practical activities using simulation, workshops, and work-based learning.

“Students have to practise something they have learned; otherwise, new knowledge goes out of their minds after the exams” (Participant L).

“The lecturer needs to employ simulation labs and expose the students to real-life situations” (Participant K).

“Handing them more practical projects will assist them in remembering and learning” (Participant D).

This theme reveals that experiential learning is critical in addressing the gap between theory and practice. Extending workshop hours and practice help to increase students' competence, confidence, and employability.

4.4.2.3 Theme 3: Industry-college collaboration

Participants suggested that stronger interaction between the college and industry is essential in ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and effective.

“The collaboration with corporations will enable students to have internships and real experience working” (Participant G).

“Guests can be invited to teach some modules and mentor students” (Participant N).

“The involvement in industry aids us in knowing what skills to teach, and how to teach them” (Participant M).

Participants viewed proper industry–college co-operation was a win-win situation, as employers assist in preparing graduates who will meet their need while students gain real-world experience of the workplace. This strategy will help close the gap between education and employability outcomes.

4.4.2.4 Theme 4: Lecturer development and capacity-building

Participants identified their professional development as key to enhancing the delivery of the curriculum and student performance.

“This is because we require lifelong learning as a professional exercise to be abreast with new technologies and teaching strategies” (Participant C).

“The lecturers ought to be continuous in training; the methods of teaching are evolving very rapidly” (Participant B).

“We should have access to lecture digitally and workshops” (Participant O).

This theme indicates that lecturers appreciate the fact that their ability has a direct influence on student performance. Lecturers’ training by the institution could enhance the quality of teaching, innovation, and responsiveness to changing educational requirements.

4.4.3 RQ3: How do lecturers at TVET college perceive the support from management of their teaching role?

Participants shared their perceptions of management support around three themes: *Limited responsiveness by management*, *Weak support for professional development*, and *Inadequate oversight and recognition*.

4.4.3.1 Theme 1: Limited responsiveness by management

The majority of lecturers complained that management does not listen to their grievances and does not involve them in decision-making.

“We have never been consulted whenever new policies or changes are instituted” (Participant H).

“Decisions made by the management are made at the top; we are told what to do” (Participant F).

“We are disregarded when it comes to issues of curriculum” (Participant J).

This centralised decision-making makes lecturers feel disempowered. The lack of participatory governance lowers morale, hinders innovation, and reduces ownership amongst lecturers.

4.4.3.2 Theme 2: Weak support for professional development

According to the lecturers, professional training opportunities are scarce, and are mostly self-financed.

“We are required to finance our workshops ourselves in case we wish to do it better” (Participant D).

“No staff development programmes are in place” (Participant P).

“Yearly. Lecturer training should be included in our annual plan, although it is not one of our priorities” (Participant G).

The unstructured development of lecturers is indicative of an institutional failure in terms of improving the quality of teaching.

4.4.3.3 *Theme 3: Inadequate oversight and recognition*

Participants stated that performance assessment is minimal, feedback is poor, and that there is little reward for good work.

“We do not receive any feedback or appraisal, and only criticism when things go wrong” (Participant N).

“There has been some priority given on certain departments over others; this is not fair” (Participant E).

“We work hard, but these attempts to do better are not noticed” (Participant G).

This theme reveals that inefficient leadership styles and the absence of recognition cause low motivation and engagement amongst lecturers, which eventually reflect in the performance of students.

4.4.4 RQ4: What levels of graduate skills do the students have at the point of exit?

Participants raised concerns about graduate competence and employability. Three themes were identified, namely *Strong theory*, *weak practical application*, *Employability skills gaps*, and *Student motivation*.

4.4.4.1 *Theme 1: Strong theory, weak practical application*

There was agreement amongst the lecturers that students are leaving the college with deep theoretical knowledge and poor practical skills.

“They are able to explain the way to do it, but not do it” (Participant C).

“Students are familiar with definitions, but they do not really have technical capability” (Participant F).

“They write exams and fail in the area” (Participant I).

The excessive focus on theory-based teaching produces graduates who are theoretically prepared but not job-ready. Participants noted that this could be addressed through the incorporation of more hands-on learning and work-integrated learning.

4.4.4.2 Theme 2: Employability skills gaps

Lecturers reported that students have deficiencies in key soft skills, including communication, teamwork, flexibility, and confidence.

“Students are not versed on how to communicate effectively in interviews”
(Participant K).

“They have a problem in working in a team and in solving problems”
(Participant O).

“There is low confidence, even among high-performing students” (Participant G).

This finding shows that employability and soft skills need to be incorporated into all programmes in a critical manner.

4.4.4.3 Theme 3: Student motivation

Participants noted different degrees of student engagement and motivation.

“Some of them are keen on learning, and the majority of students want to pass and receive the certificate” (Participant Q).

“Few students and not the majority; some of them demonstrate passion”
(Participant D).

“Motivated students tend to be more successful during the WIL [work-integrated learning] placements” (Participant L).

The difference in motivation amongst the students reflects the larger teaching environment. Active learning and mentorships could be encouraged to improve the engagement and results.

This concludes the reporting of the findings. The findings are discussed in alignment with extant literature in the next section.

CODES, CATEGORIES, AND THEMES

The axial coding phase was conducted by linking similar open codes together to determine higher-order categories that described relationships amongst concepts (Williams & Moser, 2019:50). These themes were then collated into themes that corresponded to the four research questions. The process revealed common themes in the responses of lecturers concerning curriculum issues, resource imbalance, management support, and graduate employability.

Table 4:2: Codes, categories, themes, and related research questions

Open codes	Axial categories	Theme	Research question
Outdated syllabus Content irrelevant Modules overloaded Employer reject NCV students	Misalignment of curriculum and limited resources	1. Curriculum relevance and alignment	RQ1: Challenges in preparing students for the job market.
Limited workshops Insufficient equipment Late textbook delivery	Resource and infrastructure deficiency	2. Resource and infrastructure constrain	RQ1
Internships Guest lecturers' partnership Co- design curriculum	Industry and partnership and co-operative training	3. Industry-college collaboration	RQ1
Rote learning Poor confidence Weak problem-solving Poor time management	Student learning and behavioural barriers	4. Student-related barriers	RQ1
Curriculum update Content reform Industry involvement in curriculum design	Curriculum reform and labour market alignment	5. Curriculum reform	RQ2: Strategies to enhance curriculum effectiveness.

Hands on projects Simulations Workshops	Practice based learning	6. Strengthening practical training	RQ2
Internships Guest lecturers' partnership Co-design curriculum	Industry and partnership Co-operative training	7. Industry–college collaboration	RQ2
Continuous training Digital upskilling Modern teaching techniques	Lectures professional development	8. Lecturer development and capacity building	RQ2
Top-down decision Lack of communication Exclusion from consultation	Centralised and unresponsive leadership	9. Limited responsiveness by management	RQ3: Perception of management support.
Self-funded training Lack of workshops No formal developmental plan	Insufficient institution support	10. Weak professional development	RQ3
Poor monitoring Lack of recognition Uneven department treatment	Weak governance and staff motivation	11. Inadequate oversight and recognition	RQ3
Theoretical strength but weak practical Limited application	Theory–practice imbalance	12. Strong theory, weak practical application	RQ4: Graduate skills at the point of exit.
Poor communication Lack of confidence Weak teamwork	Soft skills deficiency	13. Employability skills gap	RQ4
Low engagement Exam-focused mindset Lack of passion	Student motivation and engagement	14. Student motivation	RQ4

4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the main findings with reference to existing literature and theoretical perspectives.

4.5.1 Curriculum misalignment and limited relevance

The present study's findings indicate a significant misalignment between curricula and industry needs due to limited relevance of what students are taught. Findings indicated that the lecturers perceive the current NCV curriculum to be outdated and not properly aligned to meet the needs of the modern labour market. The finding concurs with Terblanche and Bitzer (2018:107), who further added that South African TVET curricula are usually centrally designed without sufficient employer input.

The rigidity of the curriculum limits contextual responsiveness, creativity, and adaptability to technological change. Thus, graduates possess high theoretical ability but weak applied ability, with a negative effect on their employability.

The description of the outdated curricula by lecturers reflects research in which numerous TVET colleges in developing countries are characterised by curricula development without paying adequate attention to employers' needs (e.g., Terblanche, 2017:106). The strict centralisation of curriculum design restricts adaptation to the local context, leading to graduates who are knowledgeable about theory but have low employability, as found by Khambule (2019) in a study on South Africa. Thus, curriculum updating must become cyclical and collaborative to ensure it addresses industry's current needs, including digital competencies and innovation requirements.

4.5.2 Resource- and infrastructure deficiencies

Lecturers reported a debilitating lack of teaching tools, the degradation of workshop facilities, obsolescence of information and technological tools, as well as crowded classrooms. Thus, practical learning is compromised by a lack of investment in the infrastructure required to support the main activity of vocational learning.

This finding is consistent with the view of Ndubuisi *et al.* (2021:2) who note that the quality of skills training is enhanced by adequate physical and digital infrastructure. Systems theory holds that a lack of resources manifests in disrupted communication between the subsystems of an institution (Chuene & Teane, 2024:2). This implies that a good curriculum cannot fulfil its goals if lecturers and students do not have operating facilities.

Enhancing skills acquisition therefore depends on initial investments in simulated laboratories, virtual classrooms and maintenance of equipment.

In line with the postulation of systems theory by Khuzwayo (2020:8), highlights that all education subsystems (curriculum, infrastructure, management, and stakeholders) should be working in a coherent manner, as a lack of resources interferes with the provision of quality education. The experiences of the present study's participants of broken machinery and insufficient information and communication technology tools support the findings of Munje and Jita (2020:264) in a study of African TVET institutions. The acquisition of learning skills needs proper facilities and equipment, which are often scarce due to lack of investment and delays in the process of acquisition due to bureaucratic procurement processes (Anindo *et al.*, 2016:108).

4.5.3 Weak industry integration

Another significant finding is that there was minimal interaction of X TVET College with the industry partners. The lecturers noted deficiencies in student placements, employer involvement in curriculum design, formal work-integrated learning programmes.

This confirms the finding of Papier (2017:40) that weak college–industry collaboration is a prominent systemic issue in South African TVET colleges. Kolb's (2014) experiential learning theory holds that the experience of the real-life workplace is of critical importance in converting classroom learning into practical competence. The lack of exposure translates to students leaving college with only theoretical knowledge and no real-life experience.

To overcome this, more effective industry relationships and collaborative education models should be institutionalised (Ergun & Bayer, 2015:61). Frequent interaction with the sector skills councils and private industries can help create jointly designed training aimed at enhancing students' employability.

The absence of industry alliances confirms the conclusion of Rikhotso (2025) that the irrelevance of TVET education is due to poor employer involvement in curriculum development. According to experiential learning theory (McCarthy, 2016), practical exposure is critical in the translation of classroom learning into competence. The lack of

organised work-integrated learning denies the students a chance to apply their studies in practice, which corresponds with the evidence provided by Mesuwini *et al.* (2023:102) that South African TVET graduates tend to face difficulties in securing employment because of this lack of hands-on training.

4.5.4 Graduate employability and skill gaps

Participants indicated that the majority of graduates lack soft skills like communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving. The Employability Skills Framework of UNESCO (2023) acknowledges the importance of soft skills as important supplements to technical skills. Mesuwini, Thaba-Nkadimene, Mzindle, Mokoena (2023:89) note that South African TVET graduates frequently have difficulties integrating into the workplace because they have limited opportunity to experience the real world. The constructivist experiential learning viewpoint holds that a lack of applied learning leaves the students incapable of gaining the confidence and flexibility needed by employers (Kolb, 2014:5). The finding of the present study suggests that TVET college programmes should include development of soft skills such as communication skills and teamwork.

The perception of lecturers that graduates have poor communication, problem-solving, and confidence skills is a global issue of concern. The Employability Skills Framework (Yorke, 2016), and constructivist learning theory (Kolb, 2014:12) promote the incorporation of soft skills and experiential learning into vocational programmes. Varma and Malik (2023:443) and UNESCO (2023) present similar evidence, and emphasise that adaptability, critical thinking, and professionalism should be developed in TVET institutions to address the needs of contemporary labour markets.

4.5.5 Insufficient management support and governance

The study participants perceived college management as ineffective due to it being unresponsive and centralised, coupled with a lack of initiatives of professional support. Numerous participants mention downward decision-making and a lack of consultation. This finding echoes that of a study by Badenhorst and Radile (2018:96), who observe that hierarchical structures and weak governance are to blame for the poor performance and low morale in TVET colleges. Based on organisational support theory (Hong, Yang,

Wang, Chiou, Su & Huang, 1915:11), the perception of being valued has a direct positive impact on employees' motivation and productivity.

The finding is consistent with the literature on the significance of participatory and distributed leadership in education (Kershner & McQuillan, 2016:11). The frustration of lecturers with the top-down approach to decision-making and the inability to develop is also reflected in the results of a study by Badenhorst and Radile (2018:3), who note weak leadership and governance as the primary challenges in South African TVET colleges. Organisational support theory (Caesens, Stinglhamber, Demoulin & De Wilde, 2027:31) suggests that undervalued or neglected employees are less motivated and have lower performance, which is supported by the current study's findings. Participatory management, open communication, and frequent performance feedback are essential to rebuilding trust and innovation in these colleges. Enhancing the leadership capacity in the TVET College sector is significant towards closing the gap that exists between policy formulations and their implementation processes. More effective leadership can guarantee that policies are converted into action correctly, they solve systemic issues and provide the coordination between different stakeholders. Even in cases with the well-designed policies, without the successful style of leadership they might not be fully implemented, which results in stagnation or unsuccessful reforms in the sector.

4.5.6 Suggested strategies for reform

Participants suggested curriculum reform, practical training, and lecturer's professional development, indicating an ability to be innovative and to adapt to the constraints of institutional structures. This is consistent with transformational leadership theory (Shor, 2024:14) and constructivist learning theory, which hold that empowered lecturers may become change agents by altering pedagogical practice. This is aligned with the view of David (2023:415) that the creativity of lecturers could alleviate systemic constraints within TVET colleges.

The initiative of lecturers to enhance teaching and learning is consistent with transformational leadership theory, which acknowledges the potential of individual agency to effect positive change in institutions (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016:454). Research conducted by Ghasemi *et al.* (2023:9) demonstrates that empowered lecturers can be

innovative in delivering the curriculum in a limited environment. Francis *et al.* (2020:156) posit that this agency needs to be facilitated by professional learning and managerial rewards.

To make such agency sustainable, institutional support in the form of investments in staff development and recognition systems is needed. Management should not only support lecturers' innovations but also be proactive in implementing the same support by offering funds, conducting workshops, and peer-learning.

To address these challenges and foster sustainable partnerships, several strategies could be employed. The college should enter formal memoranda of understanding and arrangement structures that establish obviousness jobs, duties, and natural resources (Baral, 2025:5). Industry liaison officers should co-ordinate the partnerships, enhance communication, and monitor advancements (Ghosh & Ravichandran, 2024:42). The continuous communication, the exchange of feedback, and curriculum validation could operationalised through stakeholder industry forums, advisory committees, and joint planning sessions (Goethel, Lucey, Berger, Gaichas, Karp, Lynch, Walter III, Deroba, Miller & Wilberg, 2019:1901). Tax benefits, recognition awards, or subsidies could serve as incentives to encourage industries to actively participate and invest in TVET colleges partnerships (Njengele *et al.*, 2024:55). Njengele *et al.* (2024) explains that such incentives may cover the expenses, decrease financial loads, and reward skill-building efforts. Embedding industry representatives into college governance bodies or advisory boards could promote strategic alignment (Jamaludin, Hamid & Alias, 2023:3073).

Schieffer (2016:122) notes that technology could be leveraged by using virtual meetings, online collaboration systems, and internet-based sharing of resources, which make engagement more achievable and less restrictive.

The next section presents a conceptual interpretation of the interrelationships amongst the key factors influencing graduate employability in X TVET College.

4.5.7 Conceptual diagram

The conceptual interpretation diagram presented in Figure 4.4 illustrates the interrelationships among the key factors influencing graduate employability in X TVET

college that were identified in the present study. The diagram positions curriculum, resources, industry collaboration, and management support as interconnected inputs that collectively determine the quality of teaching- and learning processes, which, in turn, affect graduate outcomes.

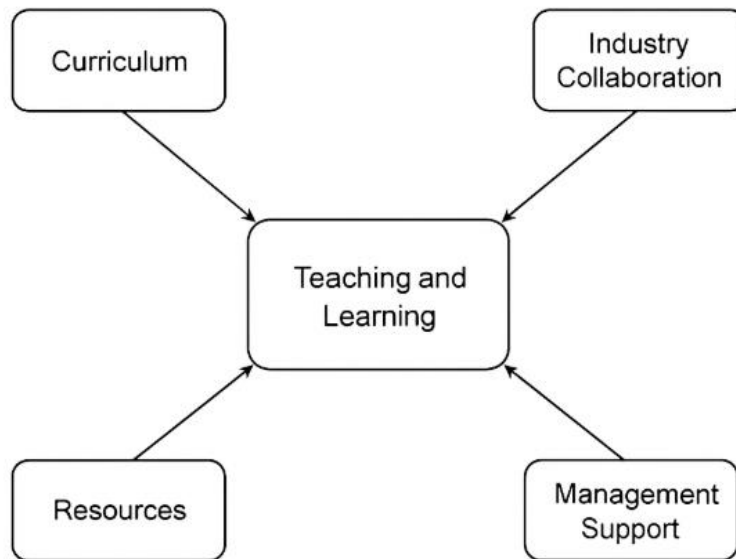


Figure 4.5.1: Conceptual interpretation diagram

The diagram conceptualises X TVET college education as an ecosystem rather than comprising isolated elements. As an example, a good curriculum will not be effective without resources or management support. In the same manner, powerful industry relations are based on high-quality institutional management and a responsive curriculum. The diagram supports systems theory and experiential learning theory which hold that meaningful learning and employability is contingent upon the interaction between institutional structures, resources, and experiential opportunities.

SYNTHESIS WITH LITERATURE AND THEORY

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory posits that education is an investment that can maximise productivity and national competitiveness if the needs of labour markets are met (Giziene & Simanaviciene, 2015:2438). The findings of the present study show that the curriculum

of the National Certificate (Vocational) is outdated and is not equipping students with skills that are valued by employers, thus compromising the return on investment in education. Participants noted that most of the graduates are qualified but not employable due to a lack of practical experience. Thus, the college's output is not effectively translated into performance in the workplace.

Ngcwangu (2015:86) and McGrath (2022:328) state that TVET colleges' programmes in South Africa do not meet their human-capital objectives due to the low correspondence between training and industry demands. The implication of this is that, unless the curriculum is regularly renewed, institution–industry partnerships are fostered, and programmes are designed based on data, education will not fulfil its economic role.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory (Narayan *et al.*, 2013) holds that students construct knowledge through interaction, reflection, and an understanding of the environment. Participants in the present study noted that students depend on memorising information rather than engaging in problem-solving and practical application. They also observed that there are few opportunities for students to participate in real-life projects and group work. This indicates that the existing model of teaching is still transmissive rather than constructivist.

Vimbelo and Bayaga (2023:311) also asserts that constructivist pedagogy in TVET involves active learning settings in which students combine theoretical learning with application. Learning activities should be restructured to include project-based learning, simulations, and peer-learning. The inclusion of constructivist concepts could assist in enhancing meaningfulness and transferability of knowledge to workplace conditions, thus enhancing graduate confidence and employability.

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory is a learning philosophy that embraces practical experiences and application (Oxley & Ilea, 2015:9). Experiential learning theory, developed by Morris (2020), holds that knowledge is generated in a loop of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Poor work-integrated learning and a lack

of workshops and equipment were recurrently pointed out by lecturers in the present study. These shortcomings deprive students of an opportunity to translate theoretical knowledge into competence through practice, a view that is supported by Mesuwini *et al.* (2021:107) in a study of South African TVETs. The incorporation of experiential elements like internships, industry mentorship, and simulation laboratories would close the divide between college education and job performance. Reform proposals based on experiential learning theory could thus form the pedagogic basis for the required reforms to ensure students master skills.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory (Dacin and Brown, 2002:256) outlines how formal organisational structures, policies, and norms in institutions influence organisational behaviour and performance. The effectiveness of institutions is attained through the involvement and active management of such crucial areas like legitimacy, resources, and stakeholder relationships. This entails such strategies as accreditation, effective resource management, and continuous involvement with partners and communities.

Participants in the present study raised the concerns of poor management support and centralised decision-making and communication, noting that it decreases their motivation and innovation. These organisational vulnerabilities do not allow for effective curriculum reforms or sustained industry partnerships. Robertson and Du Plessis (2015:7) and Robertson and Frick (2018:72) found systemic deficiencies in governance and leadership in the TVET college sector. The inflexibility of the bureaucracy at X TVET College negatively affects flexibility and responsiveness to changes. An increase in participatory management, coherent policy, and accountability systems could make the institution's structure consistent with its education mission.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory (Kitchenham, 2008:110) posits that adult learning results in a change of perspectives, values, and behaviours. According to the theory, critical thinking together with dialogue may result in deeper insights, problem-solving, and more rigorous knowledge since dialogue will enable several perspectives to be considered, and critical thinking will make sure that the perspectives are thoughtfully analysed. This

method is commonly practiced in learning and workplaces to support significant learning and decision-making. The findings of the present study show that lecturers at X TVET College have a high level of agency and engage in reflective thinking, implying that they could effect positive change if provided with necessary resources. Numerous individual reform agendas were cited, including the use of information and communication technology, encouraging practical learning, and supporting curriculum change.

The proactive approach of the lecturers confirms the work of Brown, White & Kelly (2023:3) and Finn and Feldhaus (2021:31), who found that leadership could enable lecturers to become change agents. Transformative learning theory therefore describes how reflection among lecturers and their permanent professional growth may result in institutional change and improved pedagogical performance. Lecturers could be not only the implementers of change, but the drivers of systemic change in TVET colleges.

An integrative framework for the application of these theories in TVET reform is presented in Figure 4.5.2.

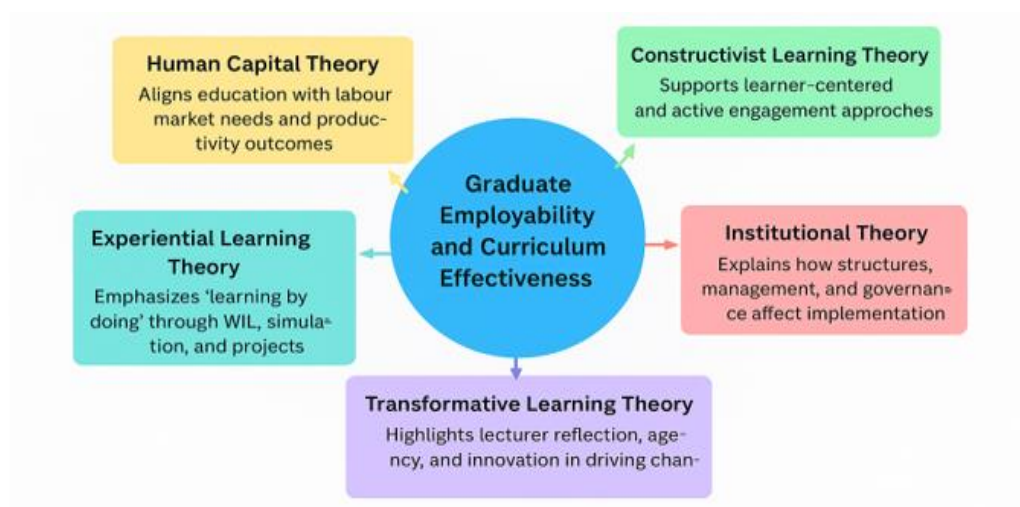


Figure 4.5.2: Integrative theoretical approach to TVET reform

The figure illustrates the five key theories that, in combination, could inform improvements in TVET colleges to achieve greater student employability. It depicts that the relevance of the alignment of curriculum (human capital theory), the design of learning (constructivist theory and experiential theory), the workings of the institution (institutional theory), and the transformation of lecturers (transformative learning).

This framework offers a comprehensive concept of TVET reform, as opposed to single interventions, based on a systems theory approach to policy, pedagogy, and practice interacting to enhance graduate readiness to enter the job market.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reported the findings of the study in alignment with the research questions. This was followed by a discussion of the findings and related literature and theory. The findings highlighted numerous systemic issues, such as outdated curricula, inadequate resources, ineffective industry integration, and inadequate management support. Notwithstanding these limitations, lecturers showed resilience and agency by suggesting realistic strategies to improve students' employability. The next chapter outlines the study's contribution to knowledge, together with recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the main findings and conclusions, together with recommendations expected to benefit curriculum delivery, management support, and the employability of graduates in X TVET College and the South African TVET system in general. The recommendations are aimed at providing practical interventions in institutional, policy and pedagogical reforms. This is followed by a review of the study's contribution to knowledge, as well as the study limitations and recommendations for future research.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study explored lecturers' experiences and perceptions related to preparing students for the labour market at X TVET College. The findings revealed multiple systemic, institutional, and pedagogical challenges that hinder effective curriculum delivery and limit the employability of graduates. The conclusions are presented according to the major findings.

The study concluded that the curricula of the National Certificate (Vocational) and Report 191 currently implemented at X TVET College are outdated, overly theoretical, and poorly aligned with industry demands. Lecturers perceive these rigid, centrally controlled programmes as failing to adapt to rapid technological and labour market changes. This results in graduates who are knowledgeable in theory but lack practical competence and employability skills. This conclusion aligns with human capital theory (Giziene & Simanaviciene, 2015:2438), which argues that education must yield skills valued by employers to contribute to economic productivity. Therefore, curriculum renewal based in labour-market responsiveness is fundamental to improving the impact of TVET education. Regular industry consultation and curriculum updates are necessary to ensure training remains relevant, flexible, and outcomes-based.

Another important finding is that practical training and involvement of students are compromised by severe deficiencies in teaching resources and non-functional equipment, poor information and communication technology, and congested classes. The research confirms that, in the absence of proper resources, experiential learning, which

is at the centre of vocational education, is not possible. This supports systems theory in education (Hitchchurch & Constantine, 1993:20), which espouses that subsystems of institutions, such as resources, curriculum, and human capacity, need to work in concert to deliver quality learning outcomes. Therefore, there is a need to make substantial investments in infrastructure, simulation laboratories, and up-to-date training equipment, to allow lecturers to close the gap between theory and practice.

The findings indicate that a lack of strong industry co-operation is a significant obstacle to ensuring the employability of students. Work-integrated learning at X TVET College is minimal, and employers rarely engage in curriculum design or working with students. As a result, they graduate without tangible exposure or job experience. Experiential learning theory (Morris, 2020:60), holds that practical competence can be developed through real-life interactions such as internships, fieldwork, and co-designed programmes. Sustainable collaboration between colleges and industry could aid the transition from institutional education to economic engagement by improving graduates' employability.

Despite their concerns, lecturers showed a great amount of initiative and commitment to change, proposing strategies such as redesigning the curriculum, implementing digital teaching tools, and incorporating more practical approaches into the learning process. This highlights the role of lecturers as agents of change in the institution. This finding aligns with transformative learning theory, pedagogical innovation can be achieved by empowering lecturers through professional growth and reflective practice (Finn & Feldhaus, 2021:31). Colleges can change teaching into a lifelong learning process that enables both students and teachers to acquire skills by investing in capacity-building, mentorship, and peer-learning.

The present study further found that top-down decision-making, poor communication, and weak professional support are aspects of weak institutional management that place a considerably restriction on teaching quality. Participants noted that they are not involved in decision-making processes, and that they are not adequately supported in their professional development. This is a case of structural and governance failure preventing innovation and responsiveness, aligned with institutional theory (Dacin *et al.*, 2002: 22). Regular lecturer appraisals, participatory management models, and open communications are essential to rebuilding lecturers' morale and improving the

performance of the institution. A culture of recognition and collaborative leadership must be prioritised to align governance practices with the objectives of education.

Lastly, the research round that X TVET College graduates are academically capable, but are deficient in practical and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, flexibility, and professionalism. This constrains their transition from college to a workplace. This observation is aligned with constructivist education theory and human capital theory, which both emphasise the role of integrating applied learning and the development of employability competencies into education systems. Integrating soft skills, simulators, and entrepreneurship courses in curricula could yield graduates who are competent, flexible, and committed to lifelong learning. The next section offers recommendations for practice.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides recommendations based on the conclusions of this research. The recommendations are aimed at enhancing curriculum relevance, teaching quality, management effectiveness, and the employability of graduates of X TVET College and other such institutions in South Africa. The recommendations are structured according to the areas requiring reform identified in the research.

5.3.1 Curriculum reform and alignment

Cyclical review of curriculum (every three to five years) should be instituted by the DHET and TVET institutions to align programmes to the industry requirements, new technology, and labour market trends. Representatives of sectors (e.g., engineering, hospitality, information and communication technology, accounting) should be included in curriculum development panels to ensure the relevance and quality of course content. TVET colleges should implement digital skills-based, entrepreneurial, and sustainability education courses in a modular format to enable ongoing updating and incorporation of these new areas into the curriculum, to align with the contemporary labour market.

5.3.2 Enhancing practical and important training

It is vital that colleges refurbish and upgrade workshops, laboratories, and information and communication technology facilities so that the students can acquire sufficient practical experience. Where no real equipment is available, simulation tools should be considered. Work-integrated learning should be at the centre of official collaborations with local businesses, municipalities, and industries, with the aim of offering students internships, apprenticeships, and mentorship programmes. Colleges should promote lecturers' use of project-based and problem-solving pedagogies to connect classroom learning and theory to practical use. The combination of digital simulation and case-based learning will aid in bridging the theory-to-practice gap.

5.3.3 Industry college collaboration

TVET colleges should establish a dedicated industry liaison office tasked with maintaining these partnerships, finding internship opportunities, and organisation joint development of the curriculum. Industry–TVET roundtables should be conducted annually, where employers, lecturers, and policymakers deliberate on labour market demands and skills gaps, to ensure the relevance of training. Colleges should co-operate with industry to establish co-branded certifications (e.g., Microsoft, SAGE, AutoCAD) that increase the employability of students and indicate that they are job-ready.

5.3.4 Lecturers' professional development

Colleges should implement a formal continuous professional development system to compel lecturers to annually attend an upskilling workshop, pedagogical innovation training, or digital literacy training, funded by institutional budgets. Colleges should promote activities that encourages lectures and interdisciplinary co-operation amongst lecturers through the promotion of peer observation, team teaching, and disciplinary learning communities. Management must encourage innovation in teaching, research work, and community projects, to ensure that lecturers develop a culture of excellence and motivation.

5.3.5 Institutional management and governance

Management ought to engage lecturers in decision making, particularly in areas that influence curriculum delivery, teaching resources, and professional development. They should create proper communication channels (upwards and downwards) to ensure that the concerns of lecturers are considered timeously and that the objectives and priorities of the industries are well set, known and accepted. Management should introduce balanced and positive performance appraisal models that focus on support, mentoring, and career development, instead of punitive assessment.

5.3.6 Graduate employability

Soft skills should not be optional modules but assessed as learning outcomes, and skills such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving should be embedded in all programmes. Colleges should establish a career services office that serves the need of students in writing résumés, interviewing, and job placement. They should also carry out tracer studies to monitor graduate employment levels and satisfaction of employers.

5.3.7 Policy and systemic interventions

The DHET needs to allocate more funds towards renewing infrastructure and developing lecturers. The department should promote lecturers and departmental action research and pilot projects to experiment with new teaching strategies and curriculum innovation.

The recommendations above highlight that the solution to enhancing TVET colleges' effectiveness and graduate employability is a system-wide change. The reform strategies should not be restricted to curriculum changes; institutional management, lecturer capacity, resource adequacy, and collaboration with industry should also be incorporated. With such strategies in place, X TVET College and other colleges could transition to innovative, responsive, and adaptive TVET that does not only equip students to be absorbed in the workplace, but also to play a significant role in the socio-economic development of South Africa. This concludes the discussion of the study's findings and recommendations. The next section summarises the study's contribution to knowledge.

5.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND THEORY

The study contributes to the area of TVET by offering a lecturer-focused view of curriculum implementation, institutional limits, and employability outcomes in a South African TVET college. It builds upon the theoretical debate by showing that employability is not just a product of human capital investments, but a systemic phenomenon that is shaped by pedagogical, institutional, and contextual processes. Furthermore, the research indicates that lecturers' agency and professional empowerment could position them as change agents in under-resourced education contexts. The findings of the study show that policymakers, college leaders, and curriculum developers should consider strategies to make TVET education more efficient in order to meet the demands of the labour market and assist in the development of both lecturers and students.

This study adds to theory by showing that human capital theory cannot be used in isolation to explain the outcomes of employability in South African TVET colleges. Rather, employability is the product of a systemic interdependence between human capital investment, experiential learning, institutional leadership, and transformative practices of educators. The finding thus builds on existing theories by indicating the contextual realities of the developing-country TVET systems, in which the environment is under-resourced and bureaucratic inertia disrupts the link between education and economic value.

The next section reviews the limitations of the study, together with recommendations for future research.

5.5 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study has some limitations, which indicate avenues for future research.

The present study followed a qualitative approach, and future studies could incorporate quantitative data on, for example, student outcomes and lecturers' and institutional performance. Variables of interest that could be measured through surveys or institutional datasets include lecturer satisfaction, student performance, adequacy of resources, and placement of graduates. While the use of semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study, interviewer bias may have influenced the

collection of data. Participants may also have withheld sensitive information for fear of retribution.

The research's transferability may be affected due to the uniqueness of the contexts of TVET colleges. Future research could include different regions' and provinces' TVET colleges and institutions abroad, and compare the findings. Such studies could also include input from local industries. Comparative may also uncover an effect of provincial management practice and local economic conditions on the employability of graduates.

The present study's sample was limited to lecturers. Future studies could incorporate the opinions of students, employers, college managers, policymakers, and alumni. These views would provide a more comprehensive picture of the problems TVET institutions face, together with successful strategies they employed to enhance students' employability. A comparison of lecturers' views with those of employers and graduates could inform curriculum design and policy to address incompatibilities.

The present study followed a cross-sectional time horizon; thus, longitudinal studies would uncover developments over time, including student outcomes and the results of curriculum enhancement. Since curriculum reforms are already being carried out at the national level by the DHET and Quality Council of Trades and Occupations, the effectiveness of these reforms and processes of their implementation should be assessed in future research.

Research needs to be conducted on the impact of new curriculum models or work-integrated learning policies on instruction, achievements of students, and collaboration with employers. This would provide evidence-based information for current curriculum improvement and policy formulation.

Considering the fact that lecturer agency and professional development were revealed as crucial elements in this study, future studies should explore how professional learning interventions can be used to improve the quality of teaching and student employability. This may involve research into digital pedagogies, competency-based training, and mentoring programmes, to determine whether and how lecturer empowerment leads to enhanced classroom practices and student interaction.

Scholarly research needs to explore the applicability of emerging technologies in TVET teaching and learning, including online-based learning and simulation software, as well as artificial intelligence. With digital transformation reshaping industries, there is a need to determine how to prepare lecturers and students with digital and technical skills, aimed at enhancing students' employability and the sustainability of the TVET sector.

Other issues that need to be examined in future research are the role of governance models, funding mechanisms, and policy frameworks in the performance of TVET colleges. Research on the participatory management, accountability systems, and resource allocation may provide insight into solutions to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of institutions. Research on the connection between leadership practices and lecturer motivation may also inform the reformation of management cultures in the sector.

Institutions' effectiveness in policy implementation needs further research. Despite policies and legislation such as the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 being aimed at modernising and further streamlining TVET education to meet labour market needs, there is a lack of evidence of how they could be translated into tangible gains in terms of infrastructure, curriculum relevance, and stakeholder interaction. Such studies could identify bottlenecks and enable policies to be implemented more effectively.

Another area that requires examination is TVET quality assessment and assurance. It is necessary to study how evaluation standards are sustained through an institution, how assessment data are used in crafting curricula, and how these activities affect students' competence and employability. The findings of such studies could inform practices to ensure alignment of students' skills with the demands of industry.

Partnerships in apprenticeships, internships, and contribution to curricula development have been recognised as imperative to relevant industry engagement models but have not been actively researched with regard to their effectiveness or sustainability. Assessment of the various models of collaboration could identify best practices and obstacles, which could be used to enhance industry partnerships.

Finally, there are new pedagogical tools, such as competency-based education, blended learning, and experiential pedagogy, which promise to revolutionise TVET delivery.

However, their adoption, applicability, and effectiveness in the South African context require further probing to establish best practices and address obstacles to their use.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conclusions of the study and offered recommendations for practice based on the findings. It highlighted the fact that graduate employability requires a systemic change to curriculum design, resource allocation, management practices, and industry collaboration. Of particular importance is the findings that lecturers, being the main actors of TVET policy, are not only observers of institutional challenges, but could be agents of change. This chapter also outlined the study's contribution to knowledge, followed by a review of the study's limitations, coupled with recommendations for future research. The proposed strategies could serve as a guideline to reform South Africa's TVET sector by positioning it in alignment with industry and enabling TVETs to deliver relevant, high-quality education, thus significantly enhancing students' employability in the contemporary labour market.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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5 August 2025

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **North-West University Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on 5 August 2025, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title:	Exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among TVET college students in North West Province.														
Study leader/Supervisor (Principal investigator/Researcher:	Dr H.A. Saurombe						University no.:	24078093							
Student:	Mrs A. Nkate						University no.:	16548485							
Ethics number:	N	W	U	-	0	0	8	1	9	-	2	5	-	A	4
Institution Study number Year Status Status: S = Submission; R = Re-submission; P = Provisional authorisation; A = Authorisation															
Application type:	Single study - Postgraduate research						Risk level:	Low/minimal risk							
Commencement date:	8/5/25														
Expiry date:	8/5/26														
<i>Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</i>															

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:*
 - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
 - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:*
 - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
 - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
 - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *EMS-REC can be contacted for further information or any report templates through the secretariat. Botlenyana Maluleka (Botlenyana.Maluleka@nwu.ac.za/ +27 18 2852436) or the chair Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout (Diana.Viljoen@nwu.ac.za / +27 16 9103403).*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Diana
Viljoen-
Bezuidenhout

Digitally signed by Prof
Diana Viljoen-
Bezuidenhout
Date: 2025.08.07
10:23:08 +02'00'

Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

ANNEXURE B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY



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

TALETSO
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE

SABS
ISO 9001

CENTRAL OFFICE

Taletso TVET College
Office of the Principal
Central Office
Private Bag X2008
Mmabatho, 2735
Tel: 018 384 2346

13 May 2025

To: The Research Ethics Committee
North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) Attention:
Chairperson

Subject: Approval to Conduct Research at Taletso TVET College – Mafikeng Campus

This letter serves to confirm that Ms. Alukombetshedzwi Nkate, a Mathematics lecturer at Mafikeng Campus and a final-year MBA student at North-West University, has been granted permission to conduct her academic research titled:

“Exploring lecturers’ perspectives on improving job market readiness among TVET college students in North West Province.”

The research will take place at the Mafikeng Campus of Taletso TVET College and will involve lecturers as participants. We understand that the study aims to explore challenges and opportunities in aligning TVET college training with job market demands.

This permission is granted on the following conditions:

- Participation by staff is voluntary.
- Informed consent will be obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be upheld.
- The research will not disrupt academic operations.

We support Ms. Nkate's efforts and trust that the findings of this research will contribute meaningfully to the advancement of vocational education in South Africa.

Should you require any additional information or clarification, kindly contact my office directly.

Sincerely,



MR MZ NKOMO
COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

CENTRAL OFFICE

LICHTENBURG CAMPUS

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| www.taletso.edu.za

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



22 November 2025

DEAR PARTICIPANT

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to take part in a research study that forms part of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to say no to participating. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the North-West University and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study.

Title of the project: Exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness amongst TVET college students in North-West Province.

Institution: NWU Business School

Ethics Reference Number: NWU-00819-25-A4

Names and contact details of project staff

	Supervisor	Researcher
Title, name & surname	Dr Hazvineyi Saurombe	Alukombetshedzwi Nkate
Full Names		
Function in Project	Principle Investigator	Researcher
Telephone	0840290454	0781020856

What is this research study all about?

This research investigates teaching faculty member views about preparing TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) college students for employment at X TVET college in the North West Province of South Africa. The examination reveals the elevated unemployment levels of the region so the TVET college system must work as a solution to skill deficiencies and enhance graduate employment prospects. The research will look at the unemployment problem in North West



ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

DATA COLLECTION TOOL: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Study Title: Exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among TVET college students in North West Province.

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. The purpose of this research is to examine exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among TVET college students in North West Province. This interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. All responses will be treated confidentially, and participation is entirely voluntary. Should you feel uncomfortable at any stage, you may choose not to answer a question or withdraw from the study at any time.

Section 1: General experience and background

1. What qualifications do you hold as a TVET lecturer?
2. Do you have a specialist TVET educator training qualification?
3. What subjects or disciplines do you teach, and how long have you been in this role?

Section 2: Teaching challenges

4. What are the biggest challenges you face in preparing students for the labour market?
5. Can you describe any specific difficulties you encounter related to the curriculum or teaching materials?
6. How do you find the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in your teaching?

Section 3: Student preparedness

7. In your opinion, how prepared are your students for the job market upon graduation?
8. What employability skills do you believe are lacking in students when (they complete their studies with this institution?)

Section 4: College support

9. Is there anything you feel could be improved within X TVET college to better support lecturers and students in their quest to enhance acquisition of employability skills?
10. What additional support or resources would enable you to better prepare students for the labour market?

Section 5: Professional development

11. Have you had access to any further professional development or training opportunities in the Technical Vocational Education and Training field? If so, how have these experiences influenced your teaching?
12. Are there specific resources or training you think would enhance your effectiveness as a lecturer in a TVET College?

Section 6: Feedback and assessment

13. How do you assess student performance, and what challenges do you face when evaluating student work?
14. What methods or tools do you use to evaluate students' practical skills and theoretical knowledge?

Section 7: Future perspectives

15. What changes would you like to see in the TVET system to better align with industry needs?
16. What strategies or initiatives do you believe would most effectively improve students' job market readiness in the coming years?

Section 8: Industries collaborations

17. Can you describe any past or current collaborations you have had with industry stakeholders?
18. How have these collaborations influenced your teaching?
19. How do these partnerships enhance the employability of students upon graduation?

Section 9: challenges in collaboration

- 20. What challenges have you encountered in establishing or maintaining collaborations with industry stakeholders?
- 21. How can these challenges be addressed to foster more effective partnerships?

Section 10: Industry involvement in curriculum design, implementation and industrial learning

- 22. In your thinking, how involved should industry stakeholders be in the development of the TVET curricular?
- 23. What specific skills or competencies do you believe should be prioritized based on industry needs?

Section 11: future collaboration opportunities

- 24. Are there any industries or sector you believe would be beneficial for X TVET college to partner with for student service learning opportunities in the future?
- 25. What action do you think the college should take to pursue these potential collaborations on service learning and curricular design?

Conclusion

Thank you for your engagement and interest in this vital topic. The insights shared will significantly enhance our understanding of lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among TVET college students in the North West Province. If you would like to discuss further findings or receive a summary of the study's conclusions regarding the challenges and strategies identified by lecturers, please feel free to let me know. Your input is highly valued as we work towards enhancing the employability of students in this region.

ANNEXURE E: LANGUAGE EDITOR CERTIFICATE

TERESA KAPP

Phone:
+27 82 789 7878
E-mail:
tekapp@mweb.co.za
info@teresakapp.com

This serves to certify that I duly edited:

Exploring lecturers' perspectives on improving job market readiness among North West TVET college students

A. Nkate

orcid.org/0009-0001-3342-6441

Please note that all editing is done in *Track Changes*, and I therefore have no control over what is accepted or rejected by the author. Furthermore, I have no control over text added at a later stage. Should there be any queries, please contact me on the number provided above.



Teresa Kapp

Independent researcher, editor, copywriter, qualitative data analyst

Clients include: Students and faculty of University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch Business School, University of Johannesburg, WITS, North-West University, NWU Business School, University of Pretoria, GIBS, University of Cape Town, Vlerick Business School (Belgium), UNISA, and Namibia University of Science and Technology (formerly Polytechnic of Namibia), and companies such as Namibia Independent Electoral Commission, Takealot, UN Women, UN Global Compact, FNB, and ABSA, amongst others.

Publications:

EE Elgaronline

Living wage

Anita Bosch and Teresa Kapp

Category: Chapter

Collection: Business 2025

Published: 21 Jan 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803922065.ch88>

Page Range: 283–287

Equal pay for work of equal value

Anita Bosch and Teresa Kapp

Category: Chapter

Collection: Business 2025

Published: 21 Jan 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803922065.ch39>

Page Range: 135–138

Gender pay gap

Anita Bosch and Teresa Kapp

Category: Chapter

Collection: Business 2025

Published: 21 Jan 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781803922065.ch61>

Page Range: 201–205

ANNEXURE F: TURNITIN REPORT

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