



M060070525

WU
RARY

Factors Affecting First Year College Students' Academic Performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture

PN Mngomezulu

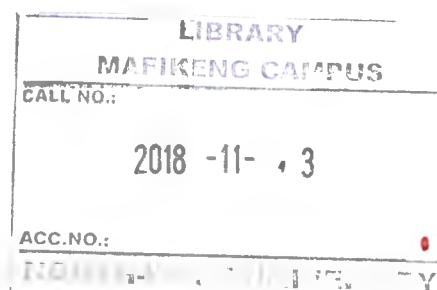
orcid.org/0000-0003-1813-0498



Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the *Master in Business Administration* at the North-West University

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ravinder Rena
Ravinder.Rena@nwu.ac.za

Graduation May 2018
Student number: 16483480



DECLARATION

I, Patricia Ntombizanele Mngomezulu, declare that this study titled, "Factors affecting first year college students' academic performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture", is my own work carried out under the supervision of Prof Ravinder Rena. This mini-dissertation has not been submitted for any degree at any other university. All sources used in the study have been strictly indicated and acknowledged through references.



Signed

05/12/2017

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for the wisdom, guidance and strength He provided for the production of this study.

I would also like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the following that have been the pillar of strength to me throughout the study:

It is with immense gratitude to acknowledge the support, guidance, motivation, constant patience and constructive suggestions of my supervisor, Prof Ravinder Rena.

I acknowledge the College of Agriculture management and staff for allowing me to conduct this study using their students as respondents and their cooperation when collecting data.

I am deeply indebted to my sister, Phindile Makoro and her husband, Mpho Makoro, for believing in me. Thanks for their love and support; continuous encouragement when it was tough and unceasing prayers, May God bless you.

I would also like to thank Mr Lufuno Thovhakale, for his constant encouragement to pursue my studies further and unyielding support throughout my study period.

I thank God for my kids, my son, Oarabile; my daughter, Sibusisiwe; and Reuben Mphasha, my partner, for constant support and understanding while I was away from home busy with this study. I love you very much.

Thank you to Charlotte Sekgapane, "Ausi Mmami" for your understanding and taking good care of my daughter while I was not home. You were always available. I thank you Mrs Boitumelo "Rosa" and Mr Joseph Jack for your love and support.

I also acknowledge my friends and sisters, Modiegi "Modie" Manonyane, Nobantu "Bantu" Ntsizwane, and Aus' Pinkey Stember; for their love, support and giving me accommodation when doing this study. Thank you all.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Onalenna Moalusi, Oupa Tabane and Nombulelo Xhalabile; for working as a team throughout this programme; you have a good heart and very supportive. I thank you all and God bless you.

Patricia Mngomezulu

5 December 2017

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my late mother, Suzan Rosalia Mngomezulu; who passed away on the 05 April 2012: May her precious soul rest in peace; my late father, Siphon “Msitho” Solomon Mngomezulu, who passed away on 08 July 2016: may his soul rest in eternal peace. You will always be remembered.

My late grandmother, Martha “Mayeye” and my late grandfather; David “Mkhulu” Mngomezulu; for instilling discipline and encouraged me to become what I am today.
I thank God for their lives.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the factors affecting college first year academic performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture (PCA). This study covered only 2017 academic year. It sought to determine the effect of inadequate admission and pre-course information on the performance of first year students; to determine the effect of teaching strategies on the performance of first year students; and to determine the effect of academic workload and social integration on the performance of first year students; and to determine the effect of financial and family problems on the performance of first year students. The literature review focused on the concepts, factors that affect students' performance. Thus, it afforded guidelines and laid the background of the study.

The study was carried out in a college of agriculture, Potchefstroom; in the J.B. Marks Municipality; Dr Kenneth Kaunda North West Province. It consisted of 87 first year students out of which only 72 were responded. Questionnaires and telephone interviews were used to collect data. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 24) was used to compute data analysed and presented in frequency tables, percentages and pie charts. Some of the major findings of the factors that contributed to students' academic performance of PCA were: Admission and pre course information marketing information to potential students was found to be helpful; the study found that the effect of teaching strategies include academic performance; the respondents' inability to cope with the school workloads; family and financial problems did not have influence on performance; and the average academic support they receive. The recommendations of the study include, the curricular, congested time table and examinations be reviewed and systematic monitoring of students' academic performance be in place to identify students at risk in time and introduce intervention measures. The results of this study will not only add to the literature on student academic performance, but will also provide the management of Potchefstroom College of Agriculture with the necessary material for intervening in the issues that affect student academic performance.

Key words:

Academic performance, Potchefstroom College, Social integration, Management intervention, Productivity; and Self-efficiency.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
DEDICATION	III
ABSTRACT	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES	VI
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	VIII
CHAPTER 1	1
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CORE RESEARCH QUESTION	4
1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES / SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	5
1.2.1 Main research question	5
1.2.2 Sub questions	5
1.2.3 Objective of the study	5
1.3 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.4 DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS	7
1.4.1 Delimitations (Scope)	7
1.5 ASSUMPTIONS.....	7
1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	7
1.7 CHAPTER SCHEME OVERVIEW.....	8
1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	8
CHAPTER 2	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	9
2.2 LITERATURE REVIEWED FOR THE STUDY	9
2.2.1 Admission and pre course information.....	12
2.2.2 Training / Teaching methods	14
2.2.3 Social integration.....	20
2.2.4 Financial and family problems	22
2.3 SUMMARY.....	25
CHAPTER 3	26
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	26
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	27
3.3.1 Sampling	28
3.3.2 Population	28
3.3.3 Data collection.....	28
3.3.4 Data analysis techniques.....	30
3.3.5 Reliability and validity	31
3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	31
3.5 SUMMARY.....	32
CHAPTER 4	33
4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	33
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	33
A) QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	33
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	33
4.2.1 Gender	33
4.2.2 Age group	34
4.3 ADMISSION AND PRE-COURSE INFORMATION	35
4.4 EFFECT OF TEACHING STRATEGIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	38
4.5 EFFECT OF WORKLOAD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.....	41

4.5.1 EFFECT OF FINANCIAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.....	43
4.6 EFFECT OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	47
4.7 COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND THROUGHPUT	48
B) QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	51
4.8 RESULTS	51
i) Category 1: Student's Academic Challenges.....	51
ii) Category 2: Lecturer attributes	52
iii) Category 3: Assessment.....	52
4.9 DISCUSSION.....	53
4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY	54
CHAPTER 5	55
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	55
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	55
5.2 SUMMARY.....	55
5.3 CONCLUSION	56
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	57
6. LIST OF REFERENCES.....	61
APPENDICES.....	I
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE	I
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	VIII
APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	IX
APPENDIX D: LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.....	X

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents.....	33
Table 4.2: Illustrate respondents age groups	34
Table 4.3: Marital Status	34
Table 4.4: Home language of respondents	35
Table 4.5: The Cronbach's test.....	35
Table 4.6: Respondents views on Agricultural College Marketing	36
Table 4.7: Agricultural College Marketing.....	36
Table 4.8: Admission criteria for respondents with agriculture background on academic performance	37
Table 4.9: Admission criteria for respondents without agriculture background on academic performance	38
Table 4.10: Teaching strategies Cronbach's analysis.....	38
Table 4.11: Respondents' academic performance and agricultural college lecture/teaching methods correlations analysis.....	39
Table 4.12: Impact of teaching strategies descriptive statistic	40
Table 4.13: Respondents academic performance and agricultural college lecture competency correlations analysis	40
Table 4.14: Respondents academic performance and ability to adjust correlations.....	41
Table 4.15: Respondents academic performance and commitment to studies, and student ability to cope due to school workload correlations analysis	42
Table 4.16: Impact of workload on academic performance	43
Table 4.17: Cronbach's analysis.....	43
Table 4.18: Family's ability to buy food; and respondents' extra work to make money for study fees on academic performance correlation analysis	44
Table 4.19: Impact of financial problems on academic performance	45
Table 4.20: Reliability statistics	46
Table 4.21: Respondents academic performance and academic and family support correlation analysis	47
Table 4.22: The level of support received by respondents	48

Table 4.23: Enrolment of students during 2013 to 2017	49
Table 4.24: Throughput rate of students during 2013 to 2017	50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Pie chart indicating gender of respondents	33
Figure 4.2: Indicate respondents' age groups	34
Figure 4.3: Marital Status of respondents	34
Figure 4.4: Represent respondents home language	35
Figure 4.5: Agricultural College Marketing	36
Figure 4.6: Scree plot for all 5 items on the teaching strategies	39
Figure 4.7: Scree plot analysis.....	43

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AgriSETA	Agriculture Sector Education Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
HET	Higher Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
IT	Information Technology
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PCA	Potchefstroom College of Agriculture
READ	Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development
SAET	Structured, Agricultural Education and Training
UNISA	University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The objective of this study was to identify and determine which factors have an influence on failure or successful achievement of the first year of study in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture (PCA). The issue that is addressed in this study is the nature of the influence of students' perceptions about the importance of academic and social goals on their self-efficacy expectations and the extent to which these beliefs and expectations influence perceived stress and first-term performance in college (Kennedy & Tukman: 2013). Tinto (1993) has shown that decisions to exit college early may be due to perceived academic or social conflicting between the student and institution. In addition to institutional integration, however, students' intrapersonal integration of their social and academic values upon registering at a college for a first time may also play an important role in academic achievement. A study that was conducted at institutions of higher learning from 2008, excluding the University of South Africa (UNISA), showed that 35 percent of enrolled students graduate in record time. "The first year is the biggest hurdle, and that is why it is essential to focus on new admissions to make it through the first year," said Van Zyl. The reasons for dropping out varied among students. "They include academic reasons where students do not fit into the environment of higher learning, logistics like transport and accommodation, finance and even inadequate food or poverty" (Africa News Agency; 2015).

This study is located in the directorate of Structured, Agricultural Education and Training (SAET) in the Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ), Potchefstroom College of Agriculture (PCA), where the researcher is working as a system administrator and is responsible for student administration process starting with the enrollment (intake), until the student exits the college (graduation). Selection of applicants according to the requirements of the college is done and the qualifying applicant is admitted and registers as a student of the college. The interest in matters to do with the first year students' persistence at tertiary institutions has arisen since the researcher is working for a college, with duties processing of student marks; produce progress reports and academic records and later the statistics to the college management.

The first year student throughput and the drop-out rate is a concern. There are those who fail, take transfer to other institutions, those who withdraw and those who cancel other courses to reduce the workload, as they cannot cope. Some of the reasons that contribute to poor performance of students from tertiary institutions are lack of motivation.

The college has been established to provide agricultural education within the South African higher education sector. It is a Higher Education and Training (HET) institution. Universities teach Agricultural Science with the focus on theoretical aspects, whereas the colleges use science to teach practical agriculture with curricular emphasis on production (Potchefstroom College of Agriculture Strategic Plan document, 2014:2).

There has been a range of studies exploring what impacts on students' academic success or failure at tertiary level in South Africa. This includes memorization learning at school level; poor career guidance, language of instruction, financial and economic issues, social integration (Chidzonga, 2014; Fürst, 2011; Little, 2015; Ngcobo and Pillay, 2010; Zhou and Zhang, 2014). Van Zyl stated in the conference held that in 2012, the University of the Free State found that 10 percent of its students went hungry. The "No Student Hungry" campaign was then launched by the institution to raise funds and feed needy students (Africa News Agent: 2015). However, the university came up with the intervention strategy to eradicate hunger that contributes to the students' poor academic performance. According to Davis (1999), an institution must create an environment that is conducive, transparent, and positive to help students feel that they are cherished members of a learning community. It is therefore important to address these factors that lead to the poor academic performance and dropping out of first year students at the PCA and provide some form of guidelines for helping students to reflect on their perceptions and expectations of tertiary study so that they could gain more control over their learning and approach their studies in ways that enhance their achievement.

According to Grayson and Grayson (2003); roughly 20-25% of all first-year students do not proceed to a second year of study. Finnie and Qiu (as cited in Zhou and Zhang, 2014) found that persistence rates vary between universities and colleges: roughly 22.6% of college students drop out after the first year in comparison to 15.1% of university students. Tinto (1993) has shown that the decision to leave College early is due to perceived academic or social incongruence between the student and the institution. According to Tinto (1993), college performance is the most significant factor to predict a student's decision to leave or stay; social integration influences a student's goal of degree completion and commitment to the institution. Social integration entails that a student fits into the social environment on campus; it is determined by factors such as informal peer group association, interaction with academics and staff, and semi-formal extracurricular activities. Although some students are too reserved and it is not easy for them to interact with others; they need good interrelationship skills.

Letseka and Breier (2008) revealed that the highest ranked reason for dropping out of university by Black African students was, running out of funds. In this context, given the historical social and political factors, finance must be considered a serious stressor among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Stress levels among university students are a matter of concern especially insofar as the extent to which they impact on students' levels of functioning and academic performance. According to Letseka and Breier (2008) nationally, there is much concern about the high failure and dropout rates among first year students, which may relate to one or more areas of challenge facing these young people. Ngcobo and Pillay (2010:234) confirm that it has been partly evidenced by the reports on the range of mental health and related problems with which students present them at university student counselling centres. The statement shows that there is a critical problem facing the students and the problem needs urgent attention, hence this was a reason to undergo the study. Yam (2010) revealed that the transition may be from high school, a working environment, or another social background. The researcher agrees with this issue because, in order for a person to be part of a different environment, processes should take place within that particular individual whether young or old; it does not matter. Briggs et al. (2012) outlined that the transition from high school to the university culture is often complex and difficult, with challenges for all parties involved.

They continue to say that students' academic success is largely dependent on a successful transitioning in the first year. Rhoden and Dowling (2006) agreed that transition is facilitated by the adoption of a teaching and learning strategy that facilitates student engagement. In view of the fact that academic staff play a major role in students' academic performance and also that they have direct contact with students, they should play a critical role during the transition period.

Archer and Cooper; Johnson and Nelson (1998) found that 25%-35% of college students come from divorced families. Fagan and Rector (2000) revealed that currently, children living with a divorced parent are over eight million and one million children experience divorce each year. Archer and Copper (1998) state that it seems as though the once typical nuclear family, with a mother and father living together with one income includes less than 10% of families today. Thus, it should not be surprising that 25%-35% of college students come from divorced families. According to recent studies, poor overall family functioning and divorce effects can have harmful effects on a child's psychological development, which can lead to a surfacing or resurfacing of excess of problems during the college years (Little, 2015).

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CORE RESEARCH QUESTION

The problem this study addresses is that Zhou and Zhang (2014) identified in an international study that about 50% of first year students who enrolled in colleges and universities drop out before completing their programmes and, furthermore, revealed that in North America, roughly 20-25% of all first year students do not proceed to a second year of study and at least 50% of students are dropping out and not graduating resulting in wasting resources in South Africa; both human and financially "It is unacceptable" (Ministry of Education, 2001: 21). As a result, the likelihoods of graduating are reduced, reflecting high failure and dropout rates (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010:234). Changes in the South African school system, with the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE), as well as policy and curricular changes at the South African Further Education and Training (FET) level, have further changed the landscape through which potential university candidates have to travel before reaching higher education (Basson, 2004; Naidoo & Parker, 2005; Swanepoel & Booyse, 2003). It is necessary for the lecturers to reflect on their teaching style when offering the academic lessons.

The implementation of the curricular was successful; it displayed positive outcome matrix results every year facilitated by Umalusi (Quality Assurance). Higher Education and training have amended the policies on community colleges accommodating those with historical black background; however, the college of agriculture PCA is governed by constitutes of CHE. In the researcher's personal view, the gap that exists is the value carried by the current's grade 12 results is low compared to of the then standard 10. There are instances whereby the grade 12 learner who obtained a bachelor, his or her points does not even qualify to a college or university entrance. This needs to be reviewed by the department of education. Not all students that are registered in an academic year graduate at the end of the programme. The same applies to PCA hence this investigation. Therefore, the factors contributing to college students' failure or success are not clear and thus cannot be addressed properly. The purpose of this study is therefore, to determine those factors that affect college students' academic performance.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES / SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.2.1 Main research question

The main research question is: What are the factors that affect academic performance and dropout of first year students at the Potchefstroom College of Agriculture?

1.2.2 Sub questions

- i) Does the college provide adequate admission or pre-course information?
- ii) Are the students able to adapt to college teaching strategies?
- iii) How does the college workload compare with student expectations?
- iv) What is the impact of family finances on student academic performance?

1.2.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to determine which factors impacted on the failure or successful completion of first year of study in the college and to derive from the data a socially orientated, supportive and a learning approach which could assist more students in a successful learning process.

The sub-objectives are:

- i) To determine the effect of inadequate admission and pre-course information on the performance of first year students;
- ii) To determine the effect of teaching strategies on the performance of first year students;
- iii) To determine the effect of academic workload and social integration on the performance of first year students; and
- iv) To determine the effect of financial and family problems on the performance of first year students.

1.3 IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the experiences of the first year students at PCA. It is necessary to investigate the factors that contribute to the academic performance of the first year students so that strategies should be set to promote active learning in an attempt to motivate students. The study will benefit the college management to know exactly what hinders them in the process of offering education and empowerment with knowledge and skills to students. The study will serve as a wakeup call to some students enrolled and to the lecturers to be aware of factors identified by various participants. College management will be informed and knowledgeable in taking informed decisions to improve active teaching methods if a need arises; look at the general academic and social context and the well-being of campus life (environment). The study will analyse the existing factors that contribute towards the academic performance and identify those factors that are not known, if any. The recommendations that will be therefore made at the end of the study will be of the great help to keep the management informed about the various situations or the challenges faced by the students and remedy the situation in working towards supporting better academic performance, higher pass rate and aiding students to complete the program on time. It will also assist students to do self-introspection and correct the way of doing things working towards productivity. Self-efficiency that will be gained by students after the completion of this study will motivate learners in holding on positively and complete the program successfully.

1.4 DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

1.4.1 Delimitations (Scope)

The proposed study is limited to the first-time first year students who are registered for 2017/8 academic year in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture (PCA). There are challenges in generalizing results from a single institution study. The majority of first-time, first year students are classified as traditional (ages 17-24) college students. The results may not be applicable to non-traditional students who tend to be more mature and have different life experiences.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS

The proposed study makes assumption that the first-time first year registered students enrolled in 2017 for the purpose of this study represent the general population of first year students at the campus. The study assumes that the first-time registered students enrolled with a goal to remain continuously enrolled and graduate from this college with a diploma in agriculture.

The questions framed in this study are based on the assumptions that there is a link or a relationship between academic and social integration of first-time first year students. These assumptions are based on the rationale that academic and social integration influences academic performance or achievement.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

College means a public or private further education and training institution that is established, declared or registered under this Act, but does not include: (Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act 25 of 2010).

Higher Education refers to post-school institutions that consist of traditional universities and universities of technology (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

Lecturer means any person, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services at any college, and who is appointed in a post on any lecturer establishment under this Act (Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act 25 of 2010).

Performance is the manner in which or the efficiency with which something reacts or fulfils its intended purpose (Dictionary.com).

Student: the term “student” refers to an individual who is registered at a higher education institution for a degree or diploma programme (Jansen, 2014:8).

1.7 CHAPTER SCHEME OVERVIEW

This research report is organised into the following chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the background of the study and a discussion of the problem being investigated. That is followed by the research questions, objectives of the study and the significance of the study. The limitations of the study, the definitions of terms and chapter divisions are also outlined.

Chapter 2 provides the literature review. It gives an overview of what is known in the literature; what other researchers have previously discovered in the area that the researcher investigated in this study.

Chapter 3 provides the research design and methods used in this study. The sampling strategies, sample size, and data collection strategies are discussed, such as interviews. The chapter also includes procedures of administering tools, validation of data, and method of data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses results of data that were collected from participants using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were presented, interpreted and discussed.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the study, summarises the findings, and gives the recommendations of the study and areas for further research.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provides the introduction and background of the study. The background and the purpose of the study were introduced. The topics presented include the problem statement, the aims and the benefit of the study, the research questions and the research objectives. The delimitations of the study and the assumptions and the key terms definition were done and finally, the chapter scheme explains the structure of the dissertation. The next chapter presents literature review pertinent to the study.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter focuses on a review of relevant literature to the study. The purpose of a literature review is to express what is presently known about a particular topic (Fürst, 2011:10). Literature review shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the undertaken one. The literature review was conducted to obtain information about the different factors that relate to the experiences of first year college students that affect their studies and even lead to some dropping out of their studies. The literature reviewed includes four areas: admission and pre-course information (used in tertiary institution); Training or teaching methods (used at the college); Social integration (at the campus); and financial and family problems (that pose pressure to the student).

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEWED FOR THE STUDY

In South Africa, the concern focuses on the impact of the country's aim to drive its economic expansion by increasing productivity. However, that can only happen if there are enough qualified workers to fill the needs of industry (Poh & Smythe, 2014). There are factors that have a strong influence on student performance, but these factors differ from person to person and country to country (Mushtaq & Nawaz Khan, 2012). Walberg, Fraser & Welch, (1986) have identified key variables that effect student outcomes: student ability or prior achievement, motivation, age or developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to mass media outside of school. In the current context, these variables; ability, motivation, and age reflect characteristics of the student. The aspects of the psychological environment are represented by variables namely quantity and quality of instruction, classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to media (DiPerna et al., 2002). It is revealed that the student characteristics are important for school learning.

Student performance is characterised by assessment on tests, assignments and practical evaluations associated with coursework and the performance of students on other types of examinations (Kyoshiba, 2009). According to Murray (2014:39), there are potentially a large number of factors that may have a contributing effect on the length of time that it takes students to graduate or dropout from college or university-based studies. Some of these factors such as a student's age, gender, race and financial status may be easier to measure than others, such as a student's level of motivation for studying, the level of academic integration and the type of living conditions that exist at the college or university where they want to study. The first year of higher education in either a college or university has been described as a critical year as it provides the foundation for successive years of study and persistence (Reason, Terenzini & Domingo, 2006).

This indicates that the first year of studies will determine if the student will cope with the programme registered for or not. It is stated in chapter one that Zhang and Zhou (2014:2) revealed that about 50% of the first year students who registered in colleges and universities drop out before completing their programmes. Hence it is a concern to higher education and even to the community at large and the researcher saw it a point to research on this topic. Modipane (2011:1595) reported that first year students who show signs of self-doubt and without skills to socialise are likely to reveal themselves in the sixth week. It is, however, caused by the fact that first year students are failing to perform a proper environmental scanning and adapting to the new (in their case) tertiary environment. Student retention and reasons for student drop out and implications for the individual student, the institution and community are reviewed and presented. The other literature reviewed on the same study seems to suggest that perceived school belongingness can have a toxic influence on academic performance, especially holding self-efficacy, perceived stress, performance-approach goal orientation, grade values, and standard ability measures constant. Specifically, its beneficial influence on academic performance may be due, at least in part, to the potential buffering influence it has on perceived stress and its positive influence on self-efficacy (Kennedy & Tukman, 2013).

Poh and Smythe (2014), outline that the ability to predict students' academic performance will involve a number of potential repercussions. Such a prediction can be incorporated into an online assessment system so that lecturers can prioritise teaching for students whose performances are predicted to be unsatisfactory or low. Introduction of interventions that reduce the risk factors that cause poor academic performance is possible. Although colleges can have little influence on certain socio-economic factors (e.g. employment of carers and those being cared for, running water at home, access to electricity at home etc.), this research suggests that simple, low cost interventions such as opening college libraries at night for self-guided studies ("homework"), or running study skills courses (only 55% had any experience of study skills) could have a significant impact on the retention and qualification rates.

Organisational and individual support is crucial to the success and improvement of students' academic performance (Mahlo & Taole, 2012); it takes contributions of a college as an institution by providing not only resources and skills, but also intervention programmes to nurture the success of the academic performance of the college students.

According to Balkrishen (2015), the campus manager of a college plays a similar leadership role to that of a high school principal as he/she is liable for the quality of teaching and learning, and student achievement. Research suggests that, of all factors that contribute to achievement, leadership together with classroom instruction is rated as being the most important aspects. As a result, campus managers must be conversant with how to provide leadership on curriculum matters in order for the college to excel at its core business of teaching and learning. College campus managers must make sure that the curriculum offered is reflected in the mission of the organization. It is therefore very important for the college campus managers to be aware of what leadership roles are; the organization's mission statement, and the necessity for them to improve their efficiency and effectiveness especially regarding teaching and learning and student accomplishment (Balkrishen, 2015). Consequently, the campus manager should be familiar with leadership skills which will enable him or her to direct, plan, supervises, monitor, control, organize and make proper decisions in the college.

Campus managers are the most influential individuals in the college. The decisions made by the manager and the college management may have effect on the performance either way. It is therefore advisable for the entire college management team to acquire leadership skills for the benefit of the organization and the students. The managerial skills are needed to set the benchmark, the direction, the tone and the rhythm of the college, the climate for learning and the level of professionalism. His or her managerial skills are pivotal for the moral of lecturers and set the degree of concern for what students may or may not become (Yarto, 2003). The academic rules and regulations of the college stipulate the admission requirements and the selection criteria that should be met by a qualifying applicant.

2.2.1 Admission and pre course information

The factors affecting academic performance include admission points, social economic status and school background (Geiser and Santelices, 2007). If the admission points are high, then the academic performance is likely to be high and if admission points are low, then academic performance may be low. This argument is supported by Geiser and Santelics (2007), Staffolani and Bratti (2002), and McDonald et al. (2001) whose studies showed that previous performance affects future performance. Academic access to the institution is difficult and only students who have excelled in their formal school examinations would be considered for admission (Pym *et al.* 2011:37). According to Garton *et al.* (2000: 46), the most important concern for the institution of higher education and training, universities and colleges is the student's academic performance and continuous enrollment. Fraser and Killen (2005:26) commented that "there is no point in universities admitting students if there is no reasonable probability that those students will succeed in the courses they are enrolled".

Admissions criteria, on the other hand, set out clearly and in detail what it is that students need to be able to demonstrate in order to be considered for admission to a particular institution (and within that institution, to a particular programme of study). Admission appropriateness should consider additional mechanisms in the selection of candidates and their placement into appropriate curricular routes where they are more likely to be successful (Bokana, 2011).

According to Potter and Vander Merwe (1994), the Department of Education has tried to facilitate access to tertiary institutions for students who are previously disadvantaged and willing to further their studies by giving bridging courses on language or mathematics deficiencies aiming to qualify for entry (De Villiers & Rwigema, 1998). However, the old practice to use matriculation results as the primary basis for university entrance is still dominating (Jawitz, 1995), and tertiary programmes enrollment is determined based on matriculation results. Nevertheless, it is believed that those results will be treated as the indicator to say that the student will perform at the institution of higher learning. Chances are high that pass rate would meaningfully improve if tertiary institutions admitted only students who have the potential to succeed. This would have a positive comporment on the pass rates.

However, in mitigating the enrollment of students who promise academically by institutions, students who show low chances of success should also be given support (Potgieter, Ackermann & Fletcher, 2010). Institutions of higher learning, universities and colleges have established the criteria used for student admission. A set of applications are considered by a college; qualifications are evaluated and the admission office decides which ones to admit. Admission requirements differ from one institution to the other. Admission for first-time-entering students is usually well managed when such students have the required funding for higher education. It has been realised that uncertainty on funding and poor financial background of students in the area, impact on the admission and the registration of new students. If payments from National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) could be processed prior to students' admissions to tertiary institutions, problems faced by new first years' (Department of Education, 2011:23).

The admission criteria were examined by Dyer and Breja (1999) as predicting student retention. It was revealed that the traditional criteria were not the best predictors of academic performance and retention of Agriculture students. However, it can also be argued, according to how the individual student is committed to his/her work, preparedness and the passion the student is having towards the course itself.

According to Mbithi (1974), administration is the means of a formal system, which is anticipated to control, supervise, plan and make decisions about different activities of an organization on the basis of established authority; therefore it plays a very important role at the colleges. The officers who are responsible for administration roles at the college are playing a very important role. They are the ones that have to make sure that the admission requirements are met by applicants and selection criteria are determined. Even though the systems can be implemented to monitor the fairness during the decision making of who qualifies to be admitted or rejected trustworthiness of employees is encouraged. Immediately after the admission process is done, the induction programme is introduced to the new intakes. The programme is conducted at the beginning of the year for all first year students and aims to forge a close family network which provides a sense of belonging and identity.

A well-developed website, communication network (social media), and newsletter enhance contact, news and information (Pym *et al.*, 2011). However, this intervention is a deliberate effort and it is very important because it creates a sense of belonging to a community which offers not only a safe space in which students can express their fears and insecurities, but also to help foster coping mechanisms. When the students are familiar with the environment where the college resources, like lecture halls are, they start with attending the lectures. This is where the dedicated and skilled college staff starts teaching these first year students. The training and teaching methods used is discussed below.

2.2.2 Training / Teaching methods

Walberg's theory of education and productivity determine how to make learning more effectively and productive (Walberg, 1981). The literature reviewed demonstrated importance of self-regulated teaching strategies and interpersonal or social abilities in facilitating academic performance. According to Fürst (2011:1), training has become the primary investment tool. The literature review revealed that more experienced personnel with better teaching and learning methods may produce further improvement.

The information communicated by lecturers to students has a great impact on how these students see their abilities and their achievements (Halawah, 2011:380). It is anticipated that the teaching force can be a factor that affects students' performance. It is fair to describe the new generation of students who live in the era of internet connection, social media like, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as being more accessible to the use of media for learning than the more traditional media such as printed reference books (Poh & Smythe, 2014).

Studies carried out by Eshiwani (1985) point out that education quality is subject to its teaching force quality in that professional teachers have been trained on best methods of organizing and presenting subject matter to the students. The other study (Factors that contribute to student's poor performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education (K.C.S.E) examination in Kabartonjo divisions, Baringo district) conducted in Kenya found out that most schools (83.3%) had insufficient teaching resources like lack of enough laboratory equipment, lab-room, textbooks, charts, maps, atlas and workshops. The campus manager should be held responsible for seeing that an appropriate learning environment is established and maintained. The resources should be planned properly and utilized in an effective manner to bring about efficient provision of quality and relevance in education.

PCA is governed by the policies of Council of Higher Education (CHE) whereby, the infrastructures, learning materials or equipment are a prerequisite to accreditation. Sikhwari et al. (2015) outlined that in the contact institutions, there is a consciously close interaction between students and their lecturers. Lee and Rha (2009) say that the method that could be utilised in terms of teaching and learning in the university should be facilitated in such a way that students are able to discuss with their lecturers (direct interaction), as well as their counterparts. This ensures that students will not only learn from lecturers, but from one another. It is sometimes simpler for other students to internalize what they have been taught when explained by the fellow students and peers. It is however up to the lecturers to notice the students who are struggling in class. Killen (2003) has specified that the factors contributing to student success according to lecturers' perceptions seem to influence their teaching approach and their relationship with students.

Lecturer attributes can affect the students' academic performance as and when the interaction occurs. It is very important that the way the lecturer conducts herself or himself can motivate or discourage the students. In most cases, students choose the lecturers and made them their role models by the mere fact that being motivated by their behaviour, the way they address them and do presentation and punctuality. Lectures are known to be the source of information. Students tend to rely on the information from their lecturers. To assist students with their motivation in the classroom, lecturers need strategies that will help students build their self-esteem and confidence. Shah (2009) found that when lecturers revisit the respect that they have to their students on regular basis, the students' academic performance can improve. Hence it is believed that the respect is earned and one will also be treated with respect. Students need to feel comfortable when their lecturers are present. Lecturers also should be encouraging and determine teaching strategies that well suites or are comfortable to their students' response.

College lecturers should not rely on lecturing as the primary method of teaching. Instead, they should use a variety of alternative teaching methods to capture students' attention and inquisitiveness by using experiments, case studies, video clips, role plays and buzz groups (Halawah, 2011:380). It is difficult however, for the lecturers to develop and implement support systems successfully without the students being known, at whom these systems are aimed at (Steenkamp et al. 2009). The lecturers have been trained on how to guide and counsel students who are not taking their studies seriously, at the same time such lecturers have been taught techniques on how to capture students' attention and sustain their interest in learning. The learning styles such as field dependent or field independent will determine the readiness of the student and the willingness of a student to perform. Physical engagement is a prerequisite when studying agriculture whereby practicals are needed in order to complete the course. This is where the passion and the willingness of the students will be revealed. Lecturers should be motivated to help enhance quality teaching. This can be done by meeting their social, professional and academic needs, like sending them for seminars or providing them with study leave with pay. The environment of teaching should be influenced by team work where support exists amongst colleagues. Below, the types of teaching methods are discussed.

a) Traditional lecture

According to Walberg's (1981) model which specifies that: "Classroom learning is a multiplicative, diminishing-returns function of four essential factors that is; student ability and motivation, quality and quantity of instruction; and possibly four supplementary or supportive factors; the social psychological environment of the classroom, education-stimulating conditions in the home and peer group, and exposure to mass media". Each of the essential factors appears to be necessary but insufficient for classroom learning; that is, all four of these factors appear required at least at minimum level.

Fürst (2011:25), views lecturing as a type of teaching encounter in which the teacher convey information to a group of students whose main function is to listen and is thus a teacher centred approach which features the teacher's direct instruction. Lecturers know the students by name in the classroom and much of the learning takes place using small group and collaborative work (Pym *et al.*, 2011). Too much relying on the lecturer may cause dependency on the part of the student, who is conditioned to expect all information to be handed to them by the lecturer (Fürst, 2011:26). High-quality interpersonal relationships are essential in improving students' capacity to function effectively in academic life (Allen, Robbins, Casillas & Oh, 2008; Martin and Dowson, 2009).

It takes good interpersonal relationship between the students and the lecturers in order to produce successive performance. Failure or not coping with the students' involvement in learning could be that the pace or the speed in which the lecturer offers the subject does not suit all students. Lectures are often long and tedious and students' attention may decrease (Fürst, 2011:26). However, the lecturer can take long and students will start losing concentration and not listen anymore.

If there is a good interaction between the students and lectures where the students are engaged during the lecture and the class is interesting, the chances for the students to get tired are slim.

b) Overhead projector with transparencies

The overhead projector is perceived as one of the most useful and versatile forms of educational media (Fürst, 2011:31). However, it enlarges the screen making the students to be able to view easily. Lights are switched off while projecting because it is clearer while the room is dark. Students who prefer to make notes' get their eyes strained and struggle to see properly what they are writing.

c) Whiteboard or ink board

According to Fürst (2011:31), the whiteboard or ink board is the most common type of board in the higher education teaching rooms. The purpose of the whiteboard is to record the key points and explanations during a lecture session that would enable the student to see, as well as hear the points and to copy them down as a source of reference for the future. However, some write with permanent markers and it does not easily wipe off. Other handwritings are not good and students struggle to see unless it is read out loud to students while writing.

d) Electronic whiteboards

E-boards such as the SMART board are an interactive whiteboard that operates as part of a system and comprises the whiteboard, a projector, a computer and whiteboard software (Fürst, 2011:31). The popularity of electronic and interactive whiteboards has intensified, creating a varied market for devices that take teacher training, student interactivity, and free-form collaboration over distances to a new level (Fürst, 2011:31); however it needs proper training for the lecturers to be knowledgeable to operate those devices. Cao and Hong (2011:298) advocate that a significant number of college or university members have adopted social media applications in their teaching. Cao and Hong (2011:299) report that "nearly two-thirds of teaching faculty have used social media in class and 30 per cent posted course content outside of class". However, social media encourages flexibility and it is used even when out of class. Internet applications such as You Tube play an important role in the learning of students. Videos are downloaded and make students' life easy in understanding certain concepts independently without assistance from the lecturers.

Social media applications utilized by students include social networking services, collaborative filtering, social bookmarking, social search engines, file sharing and tagging, mashups, instant messaging, and online multi-player games (Cao and Hong, 2011:299). Fürst (2011:14), mentioned that “the aging infrastructure and lecture tradition of colleges and universities may not meet the expectations of students who were raised on Internet and interactive games choose the lecture format to present the content; the other students either employed visual techniques such as PowerPoint presentations, posters, musical presentations, videotaped play or a theatrical presentation.”

However, as the electronic learning environment, students that may not normally speak in class might feel more comfortable and often actively share ideas and information in an open classroom setting, via the web (Black & Watties-Daniels, 2006; and Salter in Fürst, 2011:14). Video conferencing provides a means to get both students and teachers to a virtual, central location (Badenhorst & Axmann, 2002:291). Lecturers are easily facilitated via video conferencing. No need for one party to be in class. Lectures can commence anywhere for as long as there is internet connection. The advantage is that the video clip can be repeated as much as they can until the student understands the context.

Though teaching methods are always looked at in most of the time and taken an important aspect, people tend to ignore the learning styles among individual students. Individual learning styles depend on cognitive, emotional and environmental factors. It is important for educators to understand the differences in their student learning styles.

There are four types of learning styles:

a) Visual

Students prefer the use of images, maps, and graphics to access and understand new information. Student may replace important words by colour and pictures.

b) Auditory or Aural

Students' best understand new content through listening and speaking during lectures and discussions. Summarised notes can be recorded and listened to on tape. Class discussions are encouraged.

c) Read and Write

Students who prefer strong reading and writing learn best through words. Lecturers are encouraged to organise diagrams, charts and graphs into statements. Reword main ideas and principles to gain deeper understanding.

d) Kinesthetic

Some learn best by doing; by figuring out things by hand (physically).

A Lecturer is encouraged to use life examples, case studies and applications. Utilize pictures and photographs that illustrate your idea and redo projects and lab experiments. Therefore, it is true that indiscipline causes poor performance because when unrest occurs in a learning institution; definitely students are sent home, which means no learning takes place for their duration at home. It is perceived that first year college students are struggling to interact with other students socially. It is therefore a good idea to have a social integration that is discussed below.

2.2.3 Social integration

In South Africa, Higher Education is presently in a stage of transformation and under pressure to provide increased access, quality education and improved graduation rates (Pym, Goodman & Patsika, 2011: 35). There is currently an economic crisis where the country is on junk status. This is where the qualified graduates are to step in with more innovations to eradicate the economic problem.

A theoretical framework underpinning the study is understanding student behaviour (Tinto 1975; Tinto 1993). According to Tinto's theory the decision to 'drop out' arises from a combination of student characteristics and the extent of their academic, environmental and social integration in an institution. Tinto's original model, (Tinto 1975), contained five categories, with constructs interacting to determine a student's dropout decision. In many respects the three primary principles of Tinto's model are to describe processes whereby institutions of higher education were committed to the students they serve, committed to the education of all, not just some, of their students and were committed to the development of supportive social and educational communities in which all students are integrated as competent members

Morris-Compton (2013:2) revealed that few researchers have examined the relationship between academic and social integration and developmental education. In social perspective, the literature reviewed shows that the theories used are Vygotsky social cultural theory and Bandura's social cognitive theory (McGhie, 2012:17). Socialising is very important because students are given a chance to meet new and different people. Social networking on campus would help disadvantaged students who have limited social and cultural capital. The environment in which the individual Student lives influences how he/she perceives himself/ herself and shapes his/her aspirations, self-esteem and motivation. Eventually, the environment can either enhance or hinder a student's learning and educational attainment depending on the state the environment is in.

Vygotsky views learning as a social process that is centred round the notion that the environment in which human beings live and function is the source of development of their personalities and characteristics which ultimately reflects their historical and cultural contexts. However, this theory focuses mostly on the issues that this study will look at; the student's well-being and the environment the student lives in.

People have different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. There is a time whereby first year students have to share rooms at hostels. It does not sit well with most of the students due to shortage of accommodation. Their interests are also not the same. One might prefer to listen to the radio while studying, the other one not. That might have a negative effect on the other student. One prefers to study at night and disturbs the other one with light while sleeping. One believes in burning chunks before examinations. There is conflict of interest. That is one of the factors that affect student performance.

Bandura (as cited in McGhie, 2012:5) argues that learning is largely an information-processing activity and that human beings acquire behaviour patterns from people whom they observe the degree to which students can successfully integrate into an institution's social and academic systems ultimately will define a student's commitment to the institution and determine whether he/she persists according to Tinto (1993). Arguably, Tinto's most salient contribution to the study of retention is the introduction of the constructs of academic and social integration.

Mertes (2015:1053) agrees with Tinto (1993) by saying that academic integration occurs when students become attached to the intellectual life of the college or university. Social integration on the other hand occurs when students create relationships outside of the classroom (Tinto, 1993). However, students should learn to choose good friends. Some mislead others and encourage focusing on entertainment forgetting the main reason to be in school. Tinto (1993) acknowledges the fact that external commitments do alter a student's intentions (plans), goals and institutional commitments throughout the student's college career. External commitments such as employment or changes in family circumstances are largely independent of the institution.

It is true in a sense that; most of the students, especially whites, are working in their parents' farms and they fail to schedule their tasks accordingly not to interfere with their studies. Students are entitled to healthy food for healthy minds. One cannot concentrate with an empty stomach. Not all can afford to buy ready meals; they have to cook for themselves. There are small kitchens where they cook; they are opened according to schedules. If the student could not cook, he/she is denied to cook in their rooms. Student's hotplate stoves are confiscated if found cooking in the room and it affects the students negatively.

2.2.4 Financial and family problems

Family environment was also seen as a significant background variable that was expected to impact on students' academic performance (Malefo: 2000). Colleges should not underestimate the role that involving families and parents can play in gaining the trust of students. Parents' rate of school visits to check on their children's academic performance. Findings revealed that parents in Kabartonjo division (Kenya) rarely visit schools to check their children's academic progress; this problem can be attributed to the level of parental education which affects their (parents) attitudes towards education (Yator, 2003). This is, however, also happening in South Africa as well, whereby parents send children to tertiary institution without even knowing where the place is and how it looks like. They simply pay without knowing exactly what are they paying for. Sometimes this can be referred as to ignorance.

The research indicates that students whose parents are involved tend to fare better academically and socially than those whose parents are not involved (Mahlo & Taole, 2012). The term financial problem generally refers to a mismatch between financial resources and demands. For example, this may include such specifics as debt, the inability to meet obligations or buy essential goods and services, and even bankruptcy. The students' socioeconomic background is known to have an impact on university attendance: that is, a strong relationship exists between the lack of financial resources and becoming a university student (Machika & Johnson, 2014). Institutions of higher learning need to understand the full impact of the conditions of poverty under which students live, think and learn while studying for a degree or diploma and how these conditions affect their academic success (Machika & Johnson, 2014); hence this study.

The findings revealed that one way in which the socio-economic background impacts school achievement was through the types of schools attended. Parents, whose affordability is low in terms of finances, tend to take their children to cheaper, low performing schools regardless of their mental potential, whereas those parents whose affordability is average could take their children to well performing schools (Duncan & Savage, 1989). Hence, there is restriction on students with poor background. Dropping out for financial reasons ranks as the number one reason for leaving, (Malik, 2011:18). Spady (1970) sociological theory on student retention also underpins this study. The model clearly has a distinction between the students who are dismissed from the college by force due to academic disciplinary reasons or voluntarily withdraw from studies.

College is a time of change, new experiences, and independence. Along with these more enjoyable aspects comes the pressure of academia, the reality of being away from home, and the responsibility of taking care of one's self. However, one has to deal with the death or loss of loved ones. Some students cope with this better than others, however, stress is still a fairly universal experience despite the different circumstances that create it.

A study conducted in South Africa by Ngcobo and Pillay (2010:234), revealed that the highest ranked reason for dropping out of higher learning institutions by Black African students was running out of funds. In this context, given the historical social and political factors, finance must be considered a serious stressor among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, previously, there was no financial scheme like National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in agricultural colleges. It was introduced last year but funded few students, hoping more shall benefit from this scheme in future. There is the perception that blacks do not save enough for education. Students end up quitting studies because of lack of funding.

According to Little (2015:2), children from divorced families attending college have lower rates of graduation and complete fewer courses than their counterparts. Students who attend and remain at a college or university who have experienced family problems or parental divorce deal with a wide range of issues throughout their college careers, such as the inability to manage conflict between roommates; challenging relationships with partners and friends; and problems in the classroom. Other students face depression and end up trying to commit suicide. Family histories not only affect college students' development, but also spill over into other areas of their lives (Little, 2015:2). However, anger will be the main issue.

Dealing with this issue, needs an intervention strategy in which a qualified student affairs officer with the background of psychology and a social worker who will offer counselling to the affected students will be called in for counselling the affected student and motivate and encourage the student. It takes a healthy mind and problem free student to produce good results. The tension that is experienced in the families leads to vulnerable society. In most cases, the children are the culprits of the family problems. Children are affected the most due to insufficient finances in the household. They end up not well taken care of or limited



2.3 SUMMARY

The literature on the study of the same topic the researcher is researching on has been reviewed. There are factors that affect first year students' academic performance that were revealed but the researcher focused on the few aspects that are on admission and pre-course information inadequacy.

The researchers agreed that the outcomes of the performance of matriculation determine the future performance of the student. This statement is tested by this study to see the relationship and the accuracy of this statement. Teaching methods were discussed and some can also be the contributing factor to the problem.

The social integration aspect is also reviewed and found that students cannot switch from social to academic. Family and financial problems are also a critical issue because they disturb the focus of the students' studies. The next chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter reviewed literature for the purpose of trying to establish the relationship between existing knowledge and the research problem. This chapter outlines the research orientation, research design and methods that were applied in this study. It also focuses on the instruments that were used to collect data and details how data were analysed. Finally, it explains how data were managed and procedures that were used in this work and the ethical issues that had to be considered.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010:59) distinguish method from methodology thus, the term method relates mainly to data collection techniques such as questionnaires while methodology refers to the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:8). It encompasses the complete research process: the research approaches, procedures and data collection or sampling methods used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:8). This study is positioned within both quantitative and qualitative approaches (including interviews, literature, document reviews and desktop analysis). A qualitative analysis is undertaken in this study, through semi structured interviews with randomly selected PCA students who dropped out from the college to ascertain the perceived causes and reasons for their academic performance. The unit of analysis was to determine what students perceive as the highly influential academic success and or failure of first year students' in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture.

The sample consisted of 87 first year students for which detailed data was available at the time of finalising the sampling frame and sample population (Bayat et al. 2014:186-187). All questionnaires were checked for correct completion by the researcher before students left. Data were then captured in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 24) before data analysis commenced.

Inferential statistics were used to draw inferences about the population from a sample. The goal of the statistical analysis was to answer 2 questions:

1) Is there a significant effect, association, or difference between the variables of interest, that is, socio-economic background and the performance of the college's first year students'?

2) The research also examined if there were an effect, association or difference and how big it was?

The study used mean, median, mode and standard deviation techniques. The sampling frame aimed for the entire population which is the first year students registered for 2017 academic year. The sampling was purposefully selected to ensure representation of all first year students registered for the first time at Potchefstroom College of Agriculture.

A survey instrument (questionnaires) was developed and completed by the first year students of Potchefstroom College of Agriculture; Questionnaires were developed to measure a range of aspects shown by the literature to impact on the functionality of the college and thus the academic performance of its students.

Research methods are the various procedures, schemes and algorithms used in research. All the methods used by a researcher during a research study are termed as research methods. Research methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies (Creswell, 2009:15).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was focused within the interpretive paradigm and aimed to give a descriptive analysis of factors impacting the college first-year students' academic progress (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The factors affecting the college's first year students' academic performance were investigated empirically by means of questionnaires containing both quantitative and qualitative elements. Certain interpretations concerning the factors that hinder the academic performance were made from the results of the questionnaire.

3.3.1 Sampling

A sample is a subset of the population that is selected for the study. Sampling is a process of selecting subjects, who are representative of the population being studied. According to Bless and Kathuria (1993:53), what is required for a good sample is that each participant in the target population should have an equal chance of being selected. For quantitative dataset, a purposive sample was drawn for a questionnaire. The sample consisted of all 2017 students registered for diploma in agriculture at Potchefstroom College of Agriculture. Simple random sampling was used to allow each person to have an equal chance of selection without showing any biasness. It is indicative of a true representation of the population and it also allows the researcher to statistically calculate the relationship between the sample and the population (Creswell, 2009:148).

3.3.2 Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether people, objects or events that meet the criteria that the researcher is interested in studying (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 129; Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005: 52). For the purpose of this study the target population was the 1st year students that are registered for the diploma in agriculture at Potchefstroom College of Agriculture for the 2017 academic year, this case semester 2 which is 87. The entire population was targeted but there were instances whereby the participants were not reachable were due to absence from the college due to personal reasons e.g. sick, family matters were considered.

3.3.3 Data collection

A case study design requires the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to enhance reliability and validity (Stake 1995, 2006; Yin 2009). The researcher therefore used both quantitative and qualitative data gathering devices. The reason why the researcher used quantitative data gathering devices was to triangulate and validate the qualitative data sets. This study used questionnaires and telephone interviews to gather data. The telephone interviews were made instead of face-to-face encounter because the students were no longer around the College; therefore the telephone was a convenient means to get their contributions.



The other data collected from the student files whereby the matriculation results and PCA 2017 semester 1 results were retrieved to measure the other objective of admission and pre-information inadequacy and measure the academic performance.

Questionnaire is a list of questions, usually printed, submitted and can be found through the written responses of participants for replies and thereafter can be analysed for usable information [Dictionary.com]. The advantage of a questionnaire is that it offers the possibility of complete secrecy, which is vibrant in obtaining candidate responses from participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Primary sources of data collection for this research will be close-ended questions within a 4-point Likert scale in the questionnaire (Annexure A).

The following method was used to administer the questionnaire; Interactive procedure whereby the questionnaire was sent physically to the participants. The questionnaire consisting of three sections was distributed to the participants on the 25 of October 2017 during Animal Breeding revision class (formal) to ensure the best possible response rate. The researcher got permission from the lecturer of that particular subject to come and address the participants (first year students) about the study, its' purpose and the benefit thereof. A letter was handed out with the questionnaire, explaining the purpose of the research and providing instructions as to how the questionnaire should be completed. A register was marked to monitor if the participants answered properly and returned the questionnaire. The respondents who answered the questionnaire during class time were 60. On the 26 October 2017, the researcher sent one of the first year students as a co-ordinator to the hostels to distribute the questionnaires to those students who did not attend class. The students responded were ten (10). The researcher went on the 28 of October 2017 to make telephone interviews to the students who did not register (drop out) in the second semester. The people that were reached were three (3). The same questionnaire was used for the drop outs as well. Any comment that was made and not included as part of the objectives was written on the open space provided on the form. The researcher was writing down all the answers on the form as and when the respondent gave an answer to a question asked.

In order to gather data, a study guided by qualitative epistemology employs interactive data collection methods. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:145) state that qualitative interactive methods use face-to-face and focus group interviews to collect data from participant; in their natural settings. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate information from the students who dropped out of the college. The interviews were conducted telephonically. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that it enables probing and clarification of issues from the participants. Semi-structured interviews have that ability to gather descriptive data from a few participants who have knowledge of the phenomenon. The researcher's intention was to obtain rich, descriptive data to understand participants' perceptions on academic performance.

3.3.4 Data analysis techniques

Quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation techniques. The primary data was processed and analysed using of the Statistical Package Social Sciences version 24 for Windows (SPSS 24). The raw data were collected and captured as numbers. The software consists of a series of available statistics that can be able to handle large data sets and multiple variables easily. The researcher was able to summarise and display data in frequency tables, pie charts (used to present results in percentages), and cross tabulation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010: 283). Data was organised in variables on the computer. Each question in the questionnaire represents a variable. Meaningful data in the form of frequency table and pie charts or bar were displayed. Nominal variables were text names like headings and each given a unique number to allow entry on Excel workbook. Gender was given 1 and 2. The first analysis is Section 1 where the biographic information is analysed to determine the respondent in terms of gender. The second analysis is Section 2 whereby all factors are analysed and concluded with Section3. Before correlation analysis was conducted, exploratory factor analysis, which is Cronbach's alpha tests were used in respect of determining scale reliability and sampling size adequacy. Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. Interview transcriptions emanated from the questionnaire, were coded and categorized, and thereafter analysed for patterns that emerged as themes.

3.3.5 Reliability and validity

Fraenkel and Wallen (2010: 148) defined validity as information that is relevant, correct, meaningful, and useful of the specific inferences made by researchers based on the data that was collected. Best and Kaln (1998) defined reliability as the grade in which the instruments that are used are consistent or the procedures that it demonstrate. Whatever it has measured, it does so consistently. According to Maree (2010: 80), validity and reliability in qualitative research refer to “research that is reliable and trustworthy”. In order to ensure reliability and validity of the outcomes of the study, the researchers ensured that there were no biases and undue influence during the whole interviewing process. This process adhered to the recognized procedures, which ought to be followed when coding, categorizing and analyzing data.

For the purpose of this study, content validity and construct validity were used.

Content validity refers to the content and format of the instrument. In order to improve content validity Fraenkel and Wallen (2010: 148) point out that the content and format of the questionnaire must be consistent with the definition of the variables. An incomplete questionnaire is regarded as invalid. Furthermore, this study is comprised of primary data in the results to allow the reader to see the basis upon which the researchers' conclusions were made (Eisner and Peshkin 1990). For example, some of the participants' views were given with actual quotations as evidence. After the data were collected, they were then analysed. The researcher made efforts to reach the reliability and validity in enhancing the quality of the study by using Cronbach's Alpha.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:182) principles underlying research ethics are universal and concern issues such as honesty and respect for the rights of individuals'. Ethical clearance approval was obtained from North West University (Appendix C). According to Neuman (1997) informed consent is a statement of agreement by the participant declaring willingness to participate in the study. Informed consent letter was also given to participants (Appendix B). The researcher requested permission to conduct this study from the college's campus head (Appendix D).

3.5 SUMMARY

The chapter 3 provides the research method undergone by the study. The instruments that were used for data collection were covered in this chapter. The research design and research methodology that guided the study was explained in this chapter. The sampling and population targeted in this study is also discussed. Data analysis techniques employed by the study and the reliability and validity of data is discussed. Ethical considerations were detailed explained. The next chapter presents data analysis and interpretation of the results.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The data analysis in this chapter was aimed at addressing the purpose of the study, which was to investigate the factors that contributed to students' poor performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture. The analysis is divided into quantitative and qualitative. The first part of this chapter (quantitative): Section 1 starts with explaining the demographic and background information of the students. This includes gender; age, marital status and home language analysis, Section 2 follows the admission and pre-course information; the effects of teaching strategies on academic performance; the effect of workload on academic performance; the effect of finance and family problems on academic performance; and the effect of academic support on the academic performance. The second part (qualitative), the general remarks of the respondents in section 3 of the questionnaire and the experiences of the respondents (left the college) during the interviews are discussed.

A) QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

4.2.1 Gender

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were male 55.6% (n = 40); with female 41.7% (n = 30) as indicated by Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1. This implies that the male students are dominating in the agricultural college. Some of the respondents 2.8% (n = 2) did not indicate their gender.

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentages (%)
Missing	2	2.8
Female	30	41.7
Male	40	55.6
Total	72	100.0

Source: Primary data

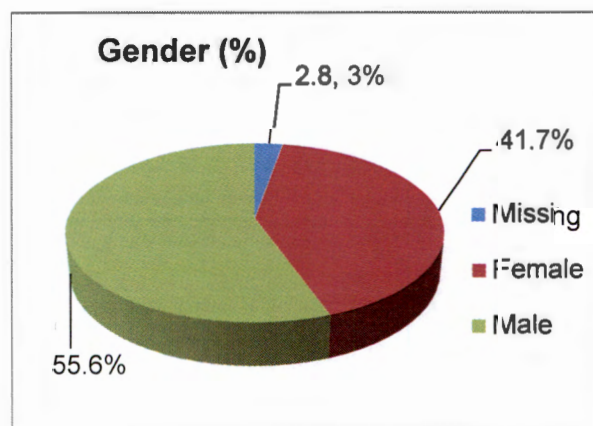


Figure 4.1: Pie chart indicating gender of respondents

4.2.2 Age group

As indicated in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.2, the majority of respondents 58.3% (n = 42) were within the age group of between 17 and 20 years; followed 40.3% (n = 29) by age groups between 21 and 25 (n = 29). Only one respondent was did not respond.

Table 4.2: Illustrate respondents age groups

Age Groups	Frequency (n)	Percentages (%)
Missing	1	1.4
17-20	42	58.3
21-25	29	40.3
Total	72	100.0

Source: Primary data

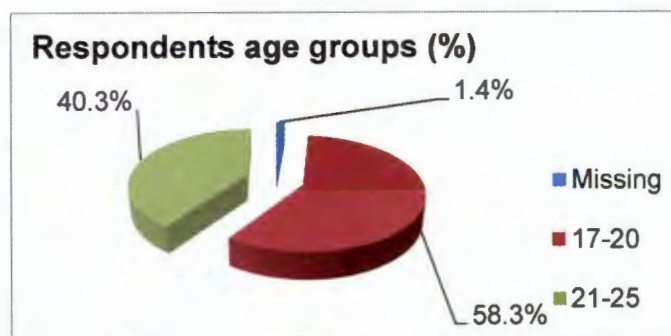


Figure 4.2: Indicate respondents' age groups

4.2.3 Marital status

The findings revealed that 98.6% (n = 71) of the respondents are single and one did not indicate 1.4% (n = 1) as indicated by Figure 4.3 and Table 4.31.

Table 4.3: Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency (n)	Percentages (%)
Missing	1	1.4
Single	71	98.6
Total	72	100.0

Source: Primary data

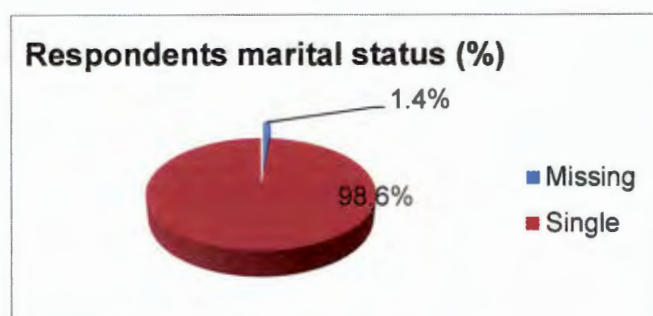


Figure 4.3: Marital Status of respondents

4.2.4. Home language

According to the analysis, the study revealed that most 27.8 (n = 20) of respondents are Setswana speaking as indicated by Figure 4.4 and Table 4.4. The Sepedi speaking respondents were 18.1% (n = 13). Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, and IsiZulu have almost equal number of respondents 9.7% (n = 7), 8.3% (n = 6), and 8.3% (n = 6) respectively as indicated by Figure 4.4. and Table 4.4. The lowest number of respondents were Ndebele, Swati, Tsonga and Sesotho with 1.4% (n = 1) each. Only two respondents (2.8%) did not indicate their home language.

Table 4.4: Home language of respondents

Home Language	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Missing	2	2.8
Afrikaans	7	9.7
English	3	4.2
IsiXhosa	6	8.3
isiZulu	6	8.3
Ndebele	1	1.4
Swati	1	1.4
Tsonga	1	1.4
Sepedi	13	18.1
SeSotho	4	5.6
Setswana	20	27.8
Tshivenda	8	11.1
Total	72	100.0

Source: Primary data

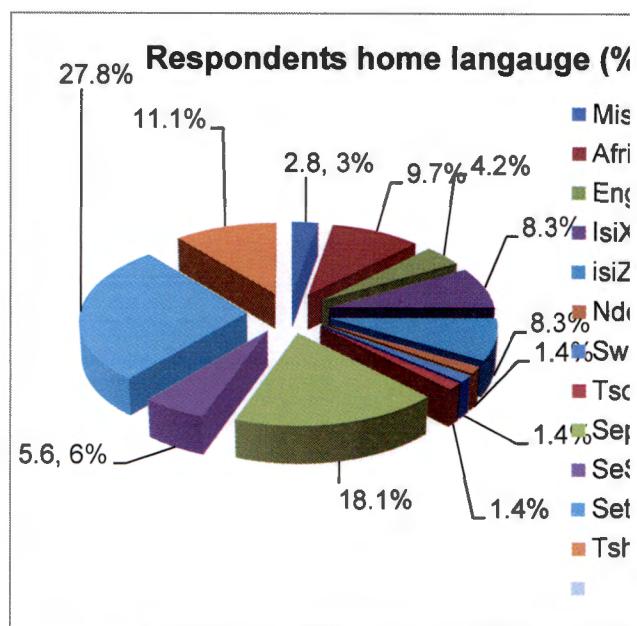


Figure 4.4: Represent respondents home language

4.3 ADMISSION AND PRE-COURSE INFORMATION

As indicated in Table 4.5 below, a low Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.391$) was obtained indicating low reliability ($\alpha < 0.5$) of the item questions tested. The scree analysis indicated the validity of two-factor solutions for the dataset counting for 65.74% of variability out of four.

Table 4.5: The Cronbach's test

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.391	0.418	4

As indicated in Table 4.6 below, the analysis of marketing information to potential students was found to be helpful (Mean = 3.34, St. Deviation = 0.956), and was supported by the majority of respondents 62.5% (n = 45).

Table 4.6: Respondents' views on Agricultural College Marketing

	Relevance of the content: Is the pre-admission test relevant to the content of the programme or course?	Did you receive feedback given after pre-admission test is written?	Is the information given during marketing of the college correct and helpful to applicants?	Do you think open day event will be helpful for giving potential students information about the college before they apply?
Valid	64	67	67	71
Missing	8	5	5	1
Mean	4.03	3.52	3.34	3.89
Std. Deviation	1.403	0.859	0.946	0.464

Source: Primary data

The far reaching method through which prospective students get to know about Agricultural College is through friends 45.8% (n = 33), followed by others 25.0% (n = 18), teacher 12.5% (n = 9), exhibition 9.7% (n = 9.7), and internet 1.4% (n = 1) as indicated in Table 4.7. The respondents also indicated that open day events could be helpful in providing information to potential students (Mean = 3.89, St. Deviation = 0.464), which was concurred by the majority of respondents 93.1% (n = 67) as indicated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.7: Agricultural College Marketing

	Frequency	Percentage
Missing	4	5.6
Exhibitions	7	9.7
Friend	33	45.8
Other	18	25.0
Internet	1	1.4
Teacher	9	12.5
Total	72	100.0

Source: Primary data

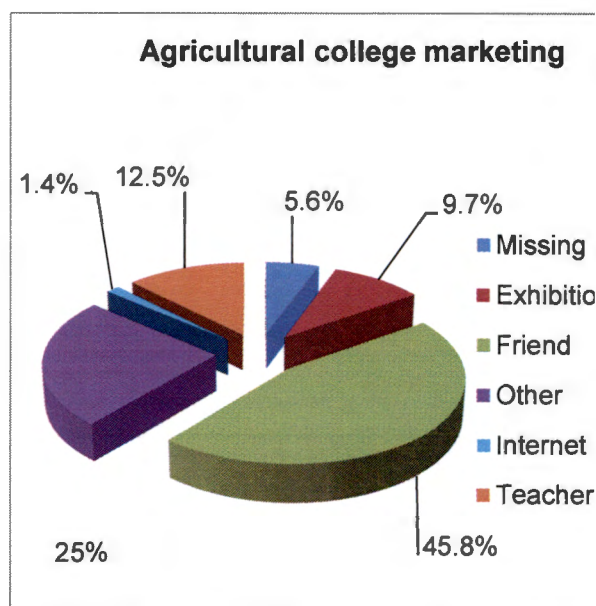


Figure 4.5: Agricultural College Marketing

The analysis of the respondents mean score (Mean = 4.03, St. Deviation = 1.403) indicating that the pre-admission test was irrelevant (see table 4.6). As indicated by the majority of respondents 66.6% (n = 47), whereas only 23.6% (n = 17) indicated it to be good. Similarly, the respondents indicated that feedback after pre-test was poor (Mean = 3.52, St. Deviation = 0.859) as indicated by Table 4.6.

Table 4.8: Admission criteria for respondents with agricultural background on academic performance

With Agriculture background	Matriculation M_Score (Best 6 subjects)	PCA Average Percentage % (Semester 1)
Respondent 1	24	35%
Respondent 2	25	53%
Respondent 3	24	56%
Respondent 4	28	41%
Respondent 5	26	58%
Respondent 6	25	66%
Respondent 7	32	59%
Respondent 8	24	61%
Respondent 9	24	58%
Respondent 10	27	43%
Respondent 11	24	49%

Source: Primary data

As indicated in Table 4.8 above, the analysis of admission criteria for respondents with agricultural background found that the average percentage ranged between 35% and 66%. It implies that the respondents perform on average even when they have agricultural background.

Table 4.9: Admission criteria for respondents without agriculture background on academic performance

With Agriculture background	Matriculation M_Score (Best 6 subjects)	PCA Average Percentage (Semester 1)
Respondent 1	27	71%
Respondent 2	24	68%
Respondent 3	24	58%
Respondent 4	27	69%
Respondent 5	30	82%
Respondent 6	32	67%
Respondent 7	27	61%
Respondent 8	28	67%
Respondent 9	31	72%
Respondent 10	28	34%
Respondent 11	26	51%

Source: Primary data

As indicated in Table 4.9, the analysis of admission criteria for respondents without agricultural background found that the average percentage ranged between 34% and 82%. It implies that the respondents performed outstandingly even though they do not have agricultural background. The analysis concludes that the respondents at PCA can perform well even if admitted without any background in agriculture. The analysis also indicates that the admission points can determine the academic success of the students.

4.4 EFFECT OF TEACHING STRATEGIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The high Cronbach`s Alpha ($\alpha = 0.620, > 0.5$) was obtained indicating high data reliability (Table 4.10). Furthermore, as indicated by the scree plot analysis in Figure 4.6, 67.01% of variables can be explained by only two items out of 5 questions.

Table 4.10: Teaching strategies Cronbach`s analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.620	0.565	5

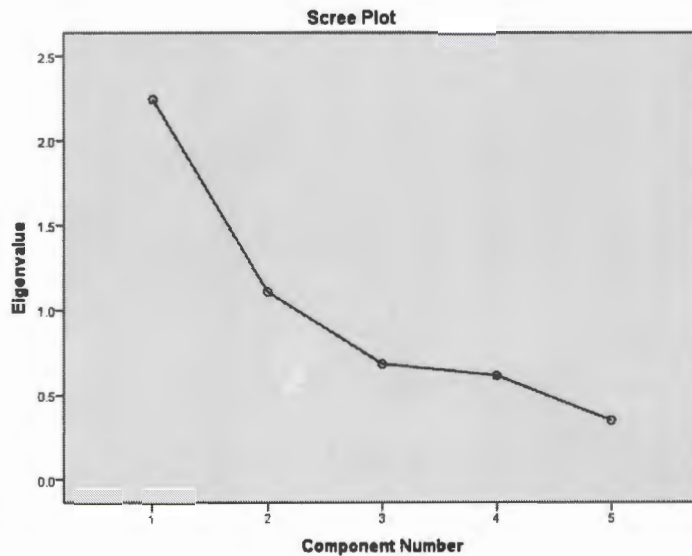


Figure 4.6: Scree plot for all 5 items on the teaching strategies

As indicated in Table 4.11 above, correlation analysis of respondents' academic performances and teaching methods, there is a positive correlation ($r = 0.609$, at statistical significant level $p = 0.001$).

Table 4.11: Respondents' academic performance and agricultural college lecture/teaching methods correlation analysis.

		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mean_Academic	Pearson Correlation	1	.609**	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	71	71	69
Relevance of teaching methods: Is the students able to adapt to new teaching strategies? E.g. interpreting system	Pearson Correlation	.609**	1	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.002
	N	71	71	69
Competence of the lecturer: Are the lectures adequately equipped to offer the lectures?	Pearson Correlation	.770**	.372**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	
	N	69	69	69
Is it difficult to adjust to lecturer's teaching or presentation?	Pearson Correlation	.107	-.245*	-.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.377	.041	.515
	N	70	70	69

The overall mean poor performance (Mean = 4.06, St. Deviation = 1.620) indicates the influence of teaching methods have on academic performance (Table 4.12). Furthermore, there was a positive correlation ($r = 0.770$, at statistical significant level $p = 0.001$) between student performance and competency of the lecturer as per student's response analysis (Table 4.11).

As indicated in Table 4.10, the mean average (Mean = 4.55, St. Deviation = 1.529) also indicates the influence that lecturers ability to lecture has on respondents academic performance.

Table 4.12: Impact of teaching strategies descriptive statistic

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mean academic performance	4.0939	0.95602	71
Relevance of teaching methods: Is the students able to adapt to new teaching strategies? E.g. interpreting system	4.06	1.620	71
Competence of the lecturer: Are the lectures adequately equipped to offer the lectures?	4.55	1.529	69
Is it difficult to adjust to lecturer's teaching or presentation?	2.94	1.006	70

Source: Primary data

Table 4.13: Respondents' academic performance and agricultural college lecturer competency correlations analysis

		Academic	Competence of the lecturer: Are the lectures adequately equipped to offer the lectures?
Academic	Pearson Correlation	1	0.771**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	68	68
Competence of the lecturer: Are the lectures adequately equipped to offer the lectures?	Pearson Correlation	0.771**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	68	69

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The analysis indicated a weak correlation between academic performance and ability to adjust to lecturers teaching or presentation ($r = 0.377$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.377$) (Table 4.11).

The mean score (Mean = 2.94, St. Deviation = 1.006) indicates the moderate ability of respondents to adjust as a result, therefore, performing poorly academically as indicated by Table 4.12.

Table 4.14: Respondents' academic performance and ability to adjust correlations

Mean_Academic	Pearson Correlation	1	.609**	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	71	71	69
Is it difficult to adjust to lecturer's teaching or presentation?	Pearson Correlation	.107	-.245*	-.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.377	.041	.515
	N	70	70	69

Source: Primary data

4.5 EFFECT OF WORKLOAD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

As indicated in Table 4.15 below, a weak correlation between respondents' academic performance and commitment to studies ($r = 0.046$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.703$) was observed.

Table 4.15: Respondents' academic performance and commitment to studies, and student ability to cope due to school workload correlations analysis

		Mean academic performance	Are you committed to your studies?
Mean academic	Pearson Correlation	1	0.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.703
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	63.978	1.581
	Covariance	0.914	0.023
	N	71	70
Are you committed to your studies?	Pearson Correlation	0.046	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.703	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1.581	18.571
	Covariance	0.023	0.269
	N	70	70
Do you cope with school workloads?	Pearson Correlation	0.072	-0.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.549	0.744
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	4.864	-1.429
	Covariance	0.069	-0.021
	N	71	70

Source: Primary data

A lower mean average (Mean = 3.86, St. Deviation = 0.519) can be attributed to lower academic performance as a result of respondents' failure to commit to studies as indicated in Table 4.16 below. Similarly, as indicated in Table 4.15 above, a weak correlation was observed between academic performance and student ability to cope due to school workload ($r = 0.072$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.549$). The mean average (Mean = 3.07, St. Deviation = 1.005) also indicates the influence that being unable to cope with school workload has on respondents academic performance (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16 Impact of workload on academic performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mean academic performance	4.0939	0.95602	71
Are you committed to your studies?	3.86	0.519	70
Do you cope with school workloads?	3.07	1.005	71

Source: Primary data

4.5.1 EFFECT OF FINANCIAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS ON THE academic PERFORMANCE

According to the analysis, as indicated in Table 4.17 below, a much high Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.834, > 0.5$) indicating high reliability of the data. Furthermore 65.08% of variability can be explained by three items out of nine questions as indicated by Scree plot under Figure 4.7.

Table 4.17: Cronbach's analysis

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items ^a	N of Items
0.834	-.805	8

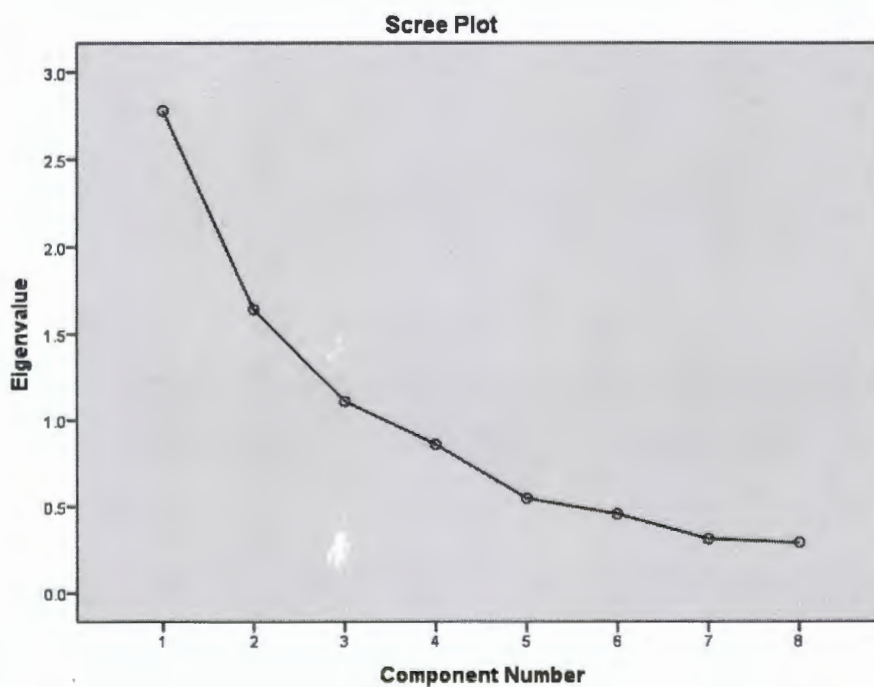


Figure 4.7: Scree plot analysis

According to correlation analysis, there is negative correlation between financial and family problem to academic performance ($r = -0.243$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.044$) as indicated in Table 4.18. Similar trend was also observed where financial and family problem did not influence academic performance ($r = -0.258$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.080$).

Table 4.18: Family's ability to buy food; and respondents' extra work to make money for study fees on academic performance correlation analysis

		Mean academic performance	Do you experience financial and family problems?	If yes, did the financial and family problems affect your studies?	Do you manage to pay your tuition fees?
Mean academic performance	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.243 [*]	-0.258	0.292 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.044	0.080	0.013
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	63.978	-15.861	-11.121	17.435
	Covariance	.914	-0.233	-0.242	0.249
	N	71	69	47	71
Do you experience financial and family problems?	Pearson Correlation	-0.243 [*]	1	0.539 ^{**}	-0.621 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.044		0.001	0.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-15.861	68.870	22.783	-37.565
	Covariance	-0.233	1.013	0.506	-0.552
	N	69	69	46	69
If yes, did the financial and family problems affect your studies?	Pearson Correlation	-0.258	0.539 ^{**}	1	-0.577 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.080	0.001		0.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-11.121	22.783	46.809	-26.298
	Covariance	-.242	.506	1.018	-.572
	N	47	46	47	47
Do you manage to pay your tuition fees?	Pearson Correlation	0.292 [*]	-0.621 ^{**}	-0.577 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.013	0.001	0.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	17.435	-37.565	-26.298	55.662
	Covariance	0.249	-0.552	-0.572	0.795
	N	71	69	47	71
Do you manage to buy food for yourself?	Pearson Correlation	0.253 [*]	-0.563 ^{**}	-0.538 ^{**}	0.616 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.034	0.001	0.001	0.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	16.320	-37.647	-25.191	37.600
	Covariance	0.237	-.562	-.548	0.545
	N	70	68	47	70
Do you work on after hours/ on weekends to	Pearson Correlation	-0.071	0.012	-.084	-0.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.559	0.921	0.572	0.992

raise money for school?	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-3.444	0.588	-2.979	-0.057
	Covariance	-0.050	0.009	-0.065	-0.001
	N	70	68	47	70

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The mean average (Mean = 2.96, St. Deviation = 1.006) confirms that the financial problems did not have effect on respondents' academic performance as indicated in Table 4.19. Weak correlation was recorded on ability to pay tuition fee and ability to buy food having influence on academic performance ($r = 0.292$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.013$; and $r = 0.253$ at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.034$ respectively) as indicated in Table 4.15. The mean average (Mean = 3.46, St. Deviation = 0.892) also shows the ability of respondents on payment of tuition fees and (Mean = 3.20, St. Deviation = 0.987) indicates that respondents are unable to buy food, Table 4.19.

Furthermore, as indicated in Table 4.18 above, a negative correlation was recorded on extra efforts to raise money for school by respondents towards academic performance ($r = -0.071$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.559$). The mean average (Mean = 2.31, St. Deviation = 0.733) shows that making efforts to raise money does not have influence on respondents' academic performance (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19: Impact of financial problems on academic performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Mean academic performance	4.0939	0.95602	71
Do you experience financial and family problems?	2.96	1.006	69
If yes, did the financial and family problems affect your studies?	2.94	1.009	47
Do you manage to pay your tuition fees?	3.46	0.892	71
Do you manage to buy food for yourself?	3.20	0.987	70
Do you work on after hours/ on weekends to raise money for school?	2.31	0.733	70

Source: Primary data



4.6 EFFECT OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The data reliability indicated a negative Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = -0.039$, < 0.5) as indicated in Table 4.20 and 52.02 of variability and explained by one item according to scree plot analysis.

Table 4.20: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items ^a	N of Items
-0.039	-0.084	2

As indicated in Table 4.21 below, a positive correlation between the support provided by student affairs office and academic performance ($r = 0.326$) at statistical significant level $p = 0.01$) was observed.

Table 4.21: Respondents academic performance and academic and family support correlation analysis

		How is the support do student get from student affairs office?	Did your parents choose this career for you?
How is the support do student get from student affairs office?	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.742
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	338.203	-3.478
	Covariance	4.974	-0.051
	N	69	69
Did your parents choose this career for you?	Pearson Correlation	-0.040	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.742	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-3.478	21.972
	Covariance	-0.051	0.314
	N	69	71
Mean academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.326**	0.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.917
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	47.409	0.473
	Covariance	0.697	0.007
	N	69	71

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The mean score (Mean = 4.29, St. Deviation = 2.230) indicates that the respondents get an average academic support as shown in Table 4.22 below. However, a much weaker correlation was observed for the respondents who indicated career choice having been made by their parents against the academic performance ($r = 0.013$, at non-statistical significant level $p = 0.197$) (Table 4.21).

The Mean score (Mean = 2.17, St. Deviation = 0.560) identifies not involvement of parents in respondents' career choice decision making, Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: The level of support received by respondents

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How is the support do student get from student affairs office?	4.29	2.230	69
Did your parents choose this career for you?	2.17	.560	71
Mean Academic performance	4.0939	.95602	71

Source: Primary data

4.7 COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND THROUGHPUT

Below is the explanation indicated by Table 4.23 and Table 4.24

The number of students enrolled for 2013 was 77 and the throughput in 2015 was 50. This implies that 65% graduated successfully and 35% did not perform well academically. The enrollment of 81students in 2014 was observed and the number of students who completed the program successfully in 2016 was 49. This shows 61% of students who passed and 39% of those who did not perform well in 2016. The demographic of students who dominated during 2016 graduation was blacks with 82%, 12% of whites and 6% of Indians respectively. The students' intake for 2015 was 99 and the throughput rate is expected to be 65 in 2017. It implies that 67% of pass rate is observed and 33% of failure rate is also observed. The students that performed well in 2017 are 96% blacks and 4% white students. It shows that more blacks are completing their studies at PCA than other races. As exhibited by the tables, the failure rate declined from 39% to 33%; giving the impression that there is an improvement observed by the researcher in terms of the failure rate. There were no coloured students enrolled from 2013 to 2017 indicated below.

Table 4.23: Enrollment of students during 2013 to 2017

YEAR	GENDER & RACE	TOTAL
2013	Male black	13
	Female Black	4
	White Male	31
	White Female	27
	Indian Male	2
	TOTAL	77
2014	Male black	29
	Female Black	31
	White Male	19
	White Female	2
	Indian Male	0
	TOTAL	81
2015	Male black	43
	Female Black	41
	White Male	11
	White Female	0
	Indian Male	4
	TOTAL	99
2016	Male black	45
	Female Black	40
	White Male	10
	White Female	0
	Indian Male	3
	TOTAL	98
2017	Male black	35
	Female Black	34
	White Male	11
	White Female	3
	Indian Male	4
	TOTAL	87

Source: Statistics obtained from PCA Student Administration Office

Table 4.24: Throughput rate of students during 2013 to 2017

YEAR	GENDER & RACE	TOTAL
2013	Male black	14
	Female Black	15
	White Male	9
	White Female	0
	Indian Male	
	TOTAL	38
2014	Male black	23
	Female Black	13
	White Male	3
	White Female	1
	Coloured Male	1
	TOTAL	41
2015	Male black	23
	Female Black	23
	White Male	2
	White Female	1
	Coloured Male	1
	TOTAL	50
2016	Male black	26
	Female Black	14
	White Male	5
	White Female	1
	Indian Male	3
	TOTAL	49
2017	Male black	30
	Female Black	34
	White Male	2
	White Female	0
	Indian Male	0
	TOTAL	64

Source: Statistics obtained from PCA Student Administration Office

B) QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To understand the factors that contributed to Potchefstroom College of Agriculture first year students' academic performance, the interviews were conducted with students who discontinued their studies at the college to share their experiences during their stay at the institution.

4.8 RESULTS

The following are categories on which analysis of raw data was based, and themes that subsequently emerged from the analysis.

i) Category 1: Student's Academic Challenges

Time management, communication, and language problems are themes that emerged at this category. Below are the themes emerged in this category and brief comments are as follows:-

- **Time management**

The participants expressed their feelings about the class scheduled on the time table take too long; meaning there is a class after another class starting from 07:45 to 16:00 daily. Participants said: *"The time that is spent in the lecture halls from 07:45 – 15:35 is too much and it does not give us (students) time to read because by the time we leave the lecture halls we are already tired. Please reduce the time."* *"The lecture hours are too long from 8 to 4. We get too tired we don't have time to study by ourselves. We are having too much pressure."* Participants said these long class periods; many subjects registered resulting to too much workloads; the congested semester tests timetable and second opportunity examinations whereby tests are wrote daily and 3 subjects of the same level are written same day during aegrotat and these is a challenge and stimulates the students' thinking. Participants said: *"College must try to increase the days (space) between days of writing examination and semester tests because we don't have enough time to study. Lecturers should not give us many class tests to write at the same day because we are unable to prepare many modules at the same time."* *"The exam timetable should be fair e.g. writing 3 subjects per day at the same time during second opportunity examinations (exam 2) is not alright. If the student is absent because of health condition and must write all subjects, he/she will fail"* According to participants, lack of time management skills lead to workloads and subsequently poor academic performance.

- **Communication Problem**

Participants further raised a challenge in lack of proper communication regarding timetable schedule change or shifting of lessons which is done by lecturers by making arrangements among themselves without formally informing students. This causes an inconvenience to students' pre-class preparations and to those who reside outside college campus. According to participants lack of proper planning leading to communication problem ended up resulting to poor academic performance.

- **Language Problem**

Another serious academic challenge is language competence. Participants indicated that some lecturers without Afrikaans language skills contribute to academic performance. Participants said, *"Some of the lecturers prepare their slide presentations in English only and not in Afrikaans also. Some of the lecturers are struggling to explain the work to us students and make it difficult for us to understand the subject. Sometimes it is not clear what the lecturer what from us- the questions are unclear."* *"Some of our study materials are not translated correctly into Afrikaans, that makes it harder to understand the subject and caused me to fail Botany this year! And that the lecturer couldn't understand what I wrote on my tests, just because I write in Afrikaans."*

ii) Category 2: Lecturer attributes

The only theme emerged in this category is unapproachable lecturers.

- **Unapproachable lecturers**

It is indicated by the participants that students find it difficult to consult some lectures when having problems with the subject content. Some lecturers are sometimes unavailable and when students need them and difficult to approach.

iii) Category 3: Assessment

Provision of feedback is the theme emerged in this category.

- **Provision of feedback**

Participants commented about feedback regarding tests that: *"Feedback after tests are too slow and come back too late"* *"Marks publications are not on time"*

Participants indicated that the delay in feedback of tests and semester marks inconvenience students when they have to know whether they qualify to write examinations or not so that they can start to prepare on time.

4.9 DISCUSSION

The participants' comments on Student's Academic Challenges (category 1) have shown that most students find it difficult to use their time effectively and efficiently. According to Sikhwari et al. (2015), poor management of time said to be caused by lack of time management skills. Participants indicated that inability of lecturers to acquire Afrikaans language skills contribute to the students' academic performance. Comments made by participants have shown that student academic challenges range from language problems whereby the Afrikaans speaking students were sometimes denied opportunity to learn in their language even though it is one of the medium of instruction at the college. Study manuals and question papers were sometimes not properly translated in Afrikaans and students find difficulties in understanding some concepts and struggle to understand the manner in which questions are asked during tests and examinations.

The participants' comments on Lecturer attributes (category 2) have shown that it is difficult to interact with some of the lecturers in times of seeking help in certain subjects. According to the participants' comments students' academic performance is affected by unapproachable lecturers and their unavailability. According to Yaworski et al. (2000), students who develop positive relationships with their lecturers feel more comfortable in approaching them when they need assistance. Therefore; it is important for the lecturers to avail themselves when students need to consult about academic issues. This will help the students to improve their academic performance.

The participants' comments on assessment on (category 3) focused on the way feedback was being provided. According to the comments of the students, it appears to be dissatisfied in the way in which the lecturers handle the feedback. Lockett and Sutherland (2000) revealed in one study carried out that if the feedback provided properly, can motivate the students and improve their learning.

Timeous feedback also allows the students' time to know the mistakes they committed in the previous paper and have opportunity to correct it but not to repeat the same mistake again on responses. Academic challenges that students' faces like time management and language problems needs to be investigated further. It would, therefore be appropriate to implement the Afrikaans language skills program for some of the lecturers to enhance their understanding in the language.

4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented findings of the study emanated from both the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in illuminating the research questions presented to the respondents. It started by explaining the biographic profile of the respondents. Presentation of findings was organised according to the research questions and used the statistics software pack to analyse the qualitative data whereby tables and Quantitative data was analysed by firstly identifying the themes emanated from the participants in the study. The perspectives were written to support the statements in the themes. Results were discussed and interpreted. The next chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of the study and addresses the findings according to the research questions and conclusions for each research question. The quantitative analysis based results were discussed in chapter 4; this chapter is dedicated to discuss the qualitative results. Conclusions of the study are drawn followed by limitations and recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 gave a background to the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the importance of the study, data collection explanation, research design and methodology, the limitations, ethical considerations and how the study was organised.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of factors affecting college students' academic performance, and the literature reviewed for this study. Finally, the chapter dwelt on some theories discussed that appear to be supportive when it comes to the factors affecting college first year academic performance.

Chapter 3 dealt with research design and methodology which covers population, sample and sampling, and interviews. This chapter also included procedures for administering the data collection tools, validation of data, methods of data presentation and analysis.

Chapter 4 dealt with data analysis as collected by the researcher, followed by data interpretation.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This conclusion is based on the literature reviewed and the findings of the study. This study revealed that the male respondents constitute majority of students who took part in the contribution of this study. In terms of admission and pre-course information given by PCA, the study confirmed that was helpful and useful. The literature reviewed showed that if the admission points are high, the academic performance is likely to be high; however, it has been confirmed by the study that the admission points determines the academic potential of a student's progress academically.

The effect of teaching strategies was the poor academic performance in this study. It goes in line with the literature reviewed in chapter 2 that teaching strategies have an impact on the inability of students' performance. The study revealed that the students are not able to handle the pressure and school workload; however it was revealed in other studies that this makes the students not to engage socially. It also affects the academic performance. Although the family and financial problems are a challenge to other students, this study did not find them to be influencing the academic performance. It has emerged in this study that the fair and average support that they receive both from the college and parents is important in influencing the academic performance of the students.

The study found out that the failure rate declined from 39% to 33%, indicating improvement observed by the researcher in terms of the failure rate. Although the results display positively, still intervention remedies are needed to lower the rate further. It is possible to introduce active intervention that might lessen the risk factors that cause poor academic performance.

Even though colleges can have minor influence on certain socio-economic factors (e.g. family conflicts, lack of finance due to unemployment, etc.), this research suggests that simple, low cost interventions such as opening college library at night for self-guided studies could have a significant impact on the retention or student academic performance and qualification rates. It can be concluded that students' lack of time management skills might influence their ability to handle workloads and pressure, ultimately their academic performance.

This conclusion is substantiated by the participants' views concerning time management lead by the attributes emanated thereafter which is long class periods, many subjects registered and congested time table (tests and examinations). It is very important that the lecturers should value the Afrikaans language skills and have basic as it is one of the medium of instruction in the college. It is an added advantage for the lecturers who have basics of Afrikaans language. They can be able to mark Afrikaans written scripts easily without being restricted by memorandum. Students are unable to consult some of the lecturers, and it may have a negative impact on the academic performance of the students. Hopefully, issues concerning provision of feedback raised by the participants will be considered and necessary steps be taken to remedy the situation. It is learned from other researchers who indicated the importance of providing feedback timeously improve the academic performance.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research study as well as the literature, the following recommendations are made:

ADMISSION AND PRECOURSE INFORMATION

- 1) Potential students without agricultural background can be admitted at the college; most students can cope with their studies for as long as they are passionate on what they are doing.
- 2) Psychometric test is recommended for all students who are admitted for studies in the college.
- 3) Marketing programme must be done in all provinces.

EFFECT OF TEACHING STRATEGIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- 1) Afrikaans is also an official medium of instruction in the college. HoD must make sure that the teaching manuals are interpreted in Afrikaans for students using the Afrikaans language.
- 2) Not all lecturers understand Afrikaans; training for basic Afrikaans language must be arranged to empower them.

Or alternatively, arrangements with the service provider for interpreting system can be made to help the lecturers with Afrikaans language; therefore it will be relevant for the staff skills development program be in place.

- 3) English to Afrikaans translator software can be used and it can be downloaded for free.
- 4) Question papers must be proof read by the HoD and the lecturer before being sent for moderation to avoid discrepancies that contribute to poor academic performance of students.
- 5) Offering of extra classes will be an added advantage to students who cannot learn fast and revision classes are recommended for all subjects before examinations starts.
- 6) Lectures should explain further when teaching by giving meaningful examples related to the topic they are discussing so that students can understand better.
- 7) Lecturers need to be available when students need to consult and improve their academic performance.
- 8) Procurement of more books, installation of self-study 24hour library and media centre at the library whereby computer lab will be installed and this will enhance the learning and teaching of students.
- 9) It is recommended that systematic monitoring of students' academic performance be in place to identify students at risk in time and introduce intervention measures such as mentoring programs.
- 10) It is recommended that students be awarded opportunities to work around the college facilities as part of their practical as this career needs more practical exposure.

EFFECT OF WORKLOAD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- 1) The other factor that hinders success is curriculum; there are 18 subjects per year and most of them need a background in agriculture, mathematics and physical science. Other students struggle to cope because students without those subjects are also admitted in the college and struggle with calculations and end up not performing well.

For example, Soil Science has a lot of physical science and chemistry therefore, most students fail these core subjects and they are pre-requisites for other subjects of the programme.

- 2) The subjects have more than 360 credits as required by the CHE accreditation board for this diploma programme. Adding more subjects as an intervention mechanism is not a solution; instead it creates a workload for students.

The solution is to have extra lessons just for basics without formal assessments. The lessons will be simply for sharpening their knowledge and laying a good foundation.

- 3) It is recommended that the section 1.16 of academic and examinations policy of students shall have a maximum of two years to complete each academic year subjects be reviewed. All aspects behind the whole idea be reviewed not forgetting the point of the whole idea of imparting knowledge and skills to the students and thoroughly looking at the factors impacting to poor academic performance.
- 4) The time table for the lectures is too congested. Lectures start at 8am to 16hrs and students do not have time to rest. These have a negative influence on performance because students attend but hardly hear anything. It is recommended for the schedules to be revisited and allocate time allocated reasonably.
- 5) Semester tests and examinations time table are also too congested; because students write everyday and preparation is very difficult without breaks in between. It leads to failing of subjects and others are tempted to bring unauthorized materials into the examination for scribing. They are caught, disciplined and suspended or get expelled from the college. These contribute to poor academic performance.
- 6) Library 24 hour service must be provided.
- 7) Computers must be installed at the library and must have more updated text books.
- 8) WiFi must be fully functional to allow students to access internet connection.
- 9) Inability of students to handle workloads lead them to fail hence the policy of two year to complete one academic year subjects be revisited to ease the dropout rate.

EFFECT OF FINANCIAL AND FAMILY PROBLEMS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- 1.) NSFAS must be fully introduced and other bursary funding offered by the department of Agriculture at provincial; national; and other stakeholders (i.e. AgriSETA) if any, to assist the students who have poor financial and family background.
- 2.) It is recommended that meals fee be included in the tuition account and the college provide meals for the students. It will help students who cannot afford to provide meals for themselves.
Other students end up looking for money in a wrong way. They get involved in relationship with elder people and married men to have money to buy food.
- 3.) A psychologist must be appointed to help assist the students who are under distress by offering counselling. Students abuse alcohol and drugs to suppress the stress levels caused by family problems. Intervention is seriously needed in this regard.

EFFECT OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- 1) The student mentorship programmes must be strengthened.
- 2) The message must be conveyed to parents during induction and open days about the importance of parents' involvement in students' education.

SOCIAL ISSUES

- 1) Hostel renovations and maintenance must be considered.
- 2) Cleanliness of hostels must be done. Dirty place is a health hazard to the students and it is against the occupational health and safety standards. Staffs that are not doing their work must be disciplined.
- 3) Geysers must be installed properly. Lack of hot water is not good, it is worst during the winter season. The problem needs urgent attention.
- 4) A kiosk is needed on campus for the students to buy small items like bread and airtime.
- 5) More sports and recreation activities must be introduced to accommodate other students. Currently, the sports activities available are soccer, netball and golf. Recreation activities will help students to integrate socially and it can also be easy for them to help each other academically afterwards.

6. LIST OF REFERENCES

Allen, J., Robbins, S., Casillas, A. and Oh, I. 2008. *Third-year college retention and transfer: Effects of academic performance, motivation, and social connectedness. Research in Higher Education*, 49, 647–664.

Archer, J. Jr. and Copper, S. 1998. *Counselling and mental health services on campus: A handbook of contemporary practices and challenges. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.*

Africa News Agency. 2015. *SA student dropout rate high.* Retrieved on 09/08/2017 from <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/student-dropout-rate-high>

Badat, S. 2011. *University access and Admissions, in Higher Education of South Africa, Insight Issue No 3, September 2011. Pretoria: Higher Education of South Africa. 23.*

Badenhorst, Z. and Axmann, M. 2002. *The educational use of videoconferencing in arts faculty: shedding a new light on puppetry. British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(3) 291-299.

Balkrishen, 2015. *The leadership role of campus managers to improve student achievement in further education and training colleges in Mpumalanga.*

Black, C.D. and Watties-Daniels, A.D. 2006. *Cutting edge technology to enhance nursing classroom instruction at Coppin State University. The ABNF Journal*, 103–106, Summer.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., and Tight, M. 2010. *How to research. 4th ed. Berkshire: Open University Press.*

Bless, K.W. & Kathuria S.M. 1993. *Social Research. Belmont: Wordsworth.*

Bokana, K.G., 2011. *Performance of students in the college of Law and Management studies, UKZN: An econometric analysis.*

Basson, R. (2004). Interpreting an integrated curriculum in a non-racial, private, alternative secondary school in South Africa, *South African Journal of Education*, 24(1):31-41.

Bayat, A. Louw, W. and Rena, R. 2014. The impact of socio-economic factors on the performance of selected high school learners in the Western Cape, South Africa. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 45(3): 183-196.

Briggs, A. R. J., Clark, J., and Hall, I. 2012. Building bridges: understanding student transition to university. *Quality in Higher Education*, DOI:10.1080/13538322.2011.614468.

Calderen, C. 2012. *The Effects of Social Integration on Stress and Risk of Depression in College*.

Cao, Y. and Hong, P. 2011. Antecedents and consequences of social media utilization in college teaching: a proposed model with mixed-methods investigation. *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*, ISSN 1074-8121, 19(4).

Chemers, M.M., Hu, L.-t. and Garcia B. F. 2001. Academic self-efficacy and first year college student performance and adjustment. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1).

Chidzonga, M.M, 2014. Transition from High School to University: Perspectives of first year students at the University Of Zimbabwe College Of Health Sciences.

Collier-Reed, 2013. Proceedings of the Second Biennial Conference of the South African Society for Engineering Education. Cape Town

Connell, R.W. 1993. *Schools and Social Justice*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Creswell, J.W. 2009. *Research Design qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cuseo, J. (n.d.). *Academic support strategies for promoting student retention & achievement during the first-year of college and beyond*. 4,6,28.

Dalbert, C. 2004. *The implication and functions of just and unjust experience in school*. Inc.

Davis, B.G. 1999. *Motivating students*. University of California, Berkeley: Jossey-Bass.

Department of Agriculture, 2014. Potchefstroom College of Agriculture Strategic Plan for 2014 [Policy document], p. 2.

Department of Higher Education and Training. 2013. *Statistics on Post-School education and Training in South African: 2010*. Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.

De Villiers, J. and Rwigema, H. 1998. The effect of a bridging year on the graduation success of educationally disadvantaged commerce students. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 12(1), 103-108.

DiPerna, J., Volpe, R., & Stephen, E. 2002. A model of academic enablers and elementary reading/language arts achievement. *School Psychology Review*, 31(3), 298-312.

Dictionary [online]. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/questionnaire?s=t>
Retrieved: 14th July 2017.

Dictionary [online]. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/performance?s=t>
Retrieved: 30th April 2017.

Duncan, S. and Savage, M. 1989. Space, scale and locality. *Antipode*, 21:179-206

Dyer, J.E. and Breja, L.M. 1999. Predictors of student retention in colleges of agriculture. Proceedings of the 53rd Annual Central Region Research Conference in Agricultural Education, p. 93-100. St. Louis.

Eisner, E.W. and Peshkin, A. 1990. *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate*. Columbia: Columbia University.

Eshiwani, G. 1985. *The Kenya teacher in the 1990's some reflections on training and professionalism*. Kenyatta University College: Bureau of Educational Research.

Fagan, P.F. and Rector, R. 2000. The effects of divorce on America. *Heritage Foundation*, 6, 34-50

Finnie, R., and Qiu, T. 2009. Moving through, Moving On: Persistence in Postsecondary Education in Atlantic Canada, Evidence from the PSIS. Statistics Canada. *Culture Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics – Research Papers*, Catalogue no. 81-595-M – No. 072.

Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, N.E. 2010. *How to design and evaluate research in education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Fraser, W. and Killen, R. 2005. The perceptions of students and lecturers of some factors influencing academic performance at two South African universities. *Perceptions in Education*, 23(1), 25–39 [in English].

Fürst, L.N. 2011. The effect of teaching methods used as experienced and perceived by student nurses at a nursing college in the Western Cape Province.

Goos, K. 2013. The Examination of participation in a community college peer mentoring program on social integration and academic success of first-time students.

Grayson, J.P. and Grayson, K. 2003. *Research on Retention and Attrition*. Montreal: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Garton, B.L., Dyer, J.E., and King, B.O. 2000. The use of learning styles and admission criteria in predicting academic performance and retention of college freshmen. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 41 (2), 46.

Geiser, S. and Santelices, V.M. 2007. Validity of high school grades in predicting student success beyond the freshman year. Retrieved on August 8, 2017 from http://cshe.berkeley.edu/publications/docs/ROPS.GEISER_SAT_6.12.07.pdf

Halawah, I. 2011. Factors influencing college students' motivation to learn from students' perspective. *Journal of Education*, 132 (2), 379-380.

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. and Smit, B. 2004. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. 1st ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Jansen, J.C. 2014. Factors that could facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-school education: the case of high school X in Phillipi, p. 8-9.

Jawitz, J. 1995. Performance in first- and second-year engineering at UCT. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 9(1), 101-108.

Kennedy, G.J. and Tuckman, B.W. 2013. An exploration into the influence of academic and social values, procrastination, and perceived school belongingness on academic performance. *Journal of Social, Psychology Education*.

Killen, R., Marais, A. de K. Loedolff, and Van Z, P. 2003. Success and failure in distance education: perceptions of South African students and lecturers in Business Management. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 17(2), 147–158. Retrieved from:

http://reference.sabinet.co.za/webx/access/electronic_journals/high/high_v17_n2_a17.pdf. [in English] (Retrieved: 22August 2017).

Kyoshaba, M. 2009. Factors affecting academic performance of undergraduate students at Uganda Christian University. Available at: <http://mak.ac.ug/documents/Makfiles/theses/Kyoshaba%2520Martha.pdf> (Retrieved: 24 August 2017).

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. 2010. *Practical Research Planning and design*. 9th ed. Pearson education Inc.

Lee H.J. and Rha I. 2009. Influence of structure and interaction on student achievement and satisfaction in webbased distance learning. *Educational Technology and Society*, 12(4): 372–382.

Leibowitz, B. 2001. Students' prior learning and their acquisition of academic literacy at a multilingual South African university. Unpublished D Phil dissertation, University of Sheffield.

Letseka, M. and Breier, M. 2008. Student poverty in higher education: the impact of higher education dropout on poverty. In S. Maile (Ed), *Education and poverty reduction strategies: issues of policy coherence: Colloquium proceedings* (pp. 83 101). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Little, J. 2015. The Collision: College Students, Family Problems and University Life. *The Vermont Connection*, 25 (7).

Luckett K, Sutherland L 2000. Assessment practices that improve teaching and learning. In: S Makoni (Ed.): *Improving Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: A Hand Book for Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand Press and HERDSA, pp. 98-130.

Machika, P. and Johnson, B 2014. Poor students face massive financial stress. <https://mg.co.za/article/2014-04-08-poor-students-face-massive-financial-stress> accessed on 09/08/2017

MacMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S. 2010. *Research in Education Evidence-Based Inquiry*. 7th ed. Pearson education Inc.

Mahlo, F. D. and. Taole, M. J. 2012. Intervention Strategies to Improve Student Performance. [Online]. Available:

<http://www.sacpo.co.za/downloads/conference%20papers/Intervention%20Strategies%20To%20improve%20Student%20Performance.pdf> accessed 12 August 2017.

Malefo, V. 2000. Psycho-social factors and academic performance among African women students at a predominantly white university in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 30 (4).

Malik, T. 2011. College Success: First Year Seminar's Effectiveness on Freshmen Academic and Social Integration, Impact on Academic Achievement and Retention at a Southern Institution.

Martin, A.J. and Dowson, M. 2009. Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practices. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 1, 327–365.

Maree, K. 2012. *First steps in research*. 10th ed. Pretoria, Van Schaick.

Mbithi, D.M. 1974. *Foundation of School Administration*. Nairobi, Oxford University Press.

McDonald, A.S., Newton, P.E., Whetton, C. and Benefield, P. 2001. Aptitude testing for university entrance: A literature review. *National foundation for educational research*.

McGhie, V.F. 2012. Factors impacting on first-Year Students' academic progress at a South African University.

Mertes, S.J. 2015. Social Integration in a Community College Environment. *Journal of Research and Practice*: Vol 39.

Ministry of Education. 2001. *National plan for higher education in South Africa*. Pretoria: Ministry of Education.

Modipane, M.C. 2011. Initial experiences of first entering students at the University of Limpopo: Implications for coping with academic work/studies. 1594-1595, 1603.

Morris-Compton, D.J. 2013. Social and Academic Integration as Predictors of Community College Students' Semester Persistence in Developmental Courses.

Murray M. 2014. Factors affecting graduation and student dropout rates at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *South African Journal of Science*.

Mushtaq, I., and Nawaz Khan, S. 2012. Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*.

Naidoo, D. and Parker, D. 2005. The implications of mathematics teachers' identities and official mathematics discourses for democratic access to mathematics, *Perspectives in Education*, 23(1):53-67.

Neuman, W.L. 1997. *Basics of social research methods*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Ngcobo, and Pillay, 2010. Sources of stress and support among rural-based first-year university students: an exploratory study. *South African Journal of Psychology*: 40 (3).

Ntakana, K.N. 2011. The effectiveness of student support programmes at tertiary institution. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 40 (3).

Poh, N. and Smythe, I. 2014. To What Extent Can We Predict Students' Performance? A Case Study in Colleges in South Africa.

Potgieter, M., Ackermann, M. and Fletcher, L. 2010. Inaccuracy of self-evaluation as additional variable for predicting of students at risk of failing first-year chemistry. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, 11, 1724 [in English]

Potter, C. and Van der Merwe, E. 1994. Academic performance in Engineering. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 8(1), 193-215.

Pym, J., Goodman, S., and Patsika, N. 2011. Does belonging matter? Exploring the role of social connectedness as a critical factor in students' transition to higher education. *PINS*. Vol 42, p 32.

Reason, R.D., Terenzini, P.T., and Domingo, R.J. 2006. First things first: Developing academic competence in the first year of college. *Research in Higher Education*, 47, 149–175.

Rhoden, C., and Dowling, N. 2006. Why tutors matter: realities of their role in transition, in Proceedings of the 9th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference, Griffith University, Australia.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2009, *Research methods for business students*. 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Shah SSA 2009. Impact of Teacher's Behaviour on the Academic Achievement of University Students. PhD Thesis. Rawalpindi (Pakistan): Pirmchr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University.

Sikhwari, T. D., Maphosa, C., Masehela, L. and Ndebele, C. 2015. Exploring Students' Views on Factors Affecting Academic Performance in a South African University. *International Journal of Educational Science*, 10(3).

Spady, W. G. 1970. Lament for the letterman: The effects of peer status and activities on goals and attainments. *American Journal of Sociology*, 680–702.

Stake, R.E. 1995. *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Stake, R.E. 2006. *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Steenkamp, L.P., Baard, R.S. and Frick, B. L. 2009. Factors influencing success in first-year accounting at a South African university: A comparison between lecturers' assumptions and students' perceptions. *South African Journal of Accounting Research*, 23:1, 113-140.

Staffolani, S. and Bratti, M. 2002. Student time allocation and education production functions. [http:// ideas.repec.org/p/wpa/wuwphe/0207001.html](http://ideas.repec.org/p/wpa/wuwphe/0207001.html) - 16k

Swanepoel, C.H. and Booyse, J.J. 2003. Belewing van gedwonge onderwysverandering deur 'n heterogene groep onderwysers, *South African Journal of Education*, 23(2):94-100.

Tinto, V. 1993. *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. 1975. Dropout From Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research. *Review of Educational Research*, 45, 89-125.

Walberg, H. J. 1981. A psychological theory of educational productivity. in N. G. F.H. Harley (Eds.), *Psychology and Education* (pp. 81-108).

Walberg, H. J., Fraser, B. J., & Welch, W. W. (1986). A test of a model of educational productivity among senior high school students. *Journal of Educational Research*, 79, 133-139.

Walzer, M. 1983. *Spheres of justice: A defense of pluralism and equality*. New York: Basic Books.

Walzer, M. 1995. Education, democratic citizenship and multiculturalism. *Journal of Philosophy and Education*, 29, 181–189.

Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell, 2005. *Research Methodology*. 3rd ed. Cape Town, Oxford university press.

Yam, S. 2010. Tutoring strategies to engage first year students in the transition to university learning: The students' perspective. Occasional Papers on Learning and Teaching at UNISA – Paper 15.

Yator, M.T., 2003. Factors that contribute to students' poor performance in Kenya Certificate of secondary education (K.C.S.E) Examination in Kabartonjo division, Baringo District.

Yaworski J, Weber R, Ibrahim N 2000. What makes students succeed or fail? The voices of developmental college students. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 30(2): 194-217.

Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case study research. Designs and methods*. 4th ed. California: Sage Publications.

Zhou, G. and Zhang, Z. 2014. A Study of the First Year International Students at a Canadian University: Challenges and Experiences with Social Integration. *Canadian and International Education*, 43 (2).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

QUESTIONNAIRE

FACTORS AFFECTING FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN POTCHEFSTROOM COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

Dear Respondent

At present the researcher is engaged in a research project towards my MBA (Masters in Business Administration) at North West University Mafikeng campus under the supervision of Prof Ravinder Rena. The research is concerned with the "Factors affecting college first year students' academic performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture"

As students in the community of Potchefstroom College of Agriculture, the researcher has therefore taken the liberty in asking you to please share your experiences or challenges that hinder your academic performance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information will be regarded as CONFIDENTIAL and no personal details of any respondent/student will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular respondent.

We deeply appreciate your co-operation in this research project.

Yours sincerely



.....
Ms Mngomezulu

17/10/2017

Date

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESPONDENT

1. Please read through each statement carefully before giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure that you do not omit a question or skip a page.
3. Please be totally frank when giving your opinion.
4. Please do not discuss the statements with anyone.
5. Please return the questionnaire after completion.

Kindly answer all the questions by supplying the requested information in writing, or by making a cross (X) in the appropriate block

SECTION 1: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Mark with an (X)

1.1 My gender is?

Code

Male		1
Female		2

1.2 My age in completed years as at 2017-12-31:

Code

Age group		
17 – 20 years		1
21 – 25 years		2
26 – 30 years		3
31 – 35 years		4
Older than 35 years		5

1.3 Marital status

Code

Marital status		
Single		1
Married		2
Divorced		3
Widowed		4

1.4 Year level

Code

Year level		
1 st year		1
1 st year repeater		2
2nd year		3
Other please specify		4

.....

1.5 Home language

Code

IsiXhosa		1
IsiZulu		2
Sepedi		3
Sesotho		4
Setswana		5
English		6
Afrikaans		7
Tshivenda		8
Other, please specify		9

.....

1.6 How did you learn about Potchefstroom College of Agriculture?

Code

Exhibitions		1
Newspaper		2
Friend		3
Teacher		4
Other, please specify		5

.....

SECTION 2: ADMISSION, ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL

2.1 Relevance of the content: Is the pre-admission test relevant to the content of the programme or course?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.2 Did you receive feedback given after pre-admission test is written?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.3 Is the information given during marketing of the college correct and helpful to applicants?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.4 Do you think open day event will be helpful for giving potential students information about the college before they apply?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.5 Relevance of teaching methods: Is the student able to adapt to new teaching strategies? E.g. interpreting system

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.6 How is the teachers' attitude towards students?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.7 How do you grade teaching and practical facilities?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.8 How is the support do student got from student affairs office?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.9 Competence of the lecturer: Are the lecturers adequately equipped to offer the lectures?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.10 How are the library facilities?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.11 How do you grade practical facilities? e.g. Workshops, laboratories, dairy, etc.

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.12 Do you find Wi-Fi helpful to your studies?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.13 Is it difficult to adjust to lecturer's teaching or presentation?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.14 Do you stay in a hostel?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.15 If Not, are you arriving on time for lectures?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.16 Is the hostel accommodation in good condition?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.17 Are your kitchen facilities good for use?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.18 How do you grade the time allocated for opening of kitchen in hostel?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.19 Is the environment safe for students?

	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Code	1	2	3	4

2.20 Do you experience financial and family problems?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.21 If yes, did the financial and family problems affect your studies?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.22 Do you manage to pay your tuition fees?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.23 Do you manage to buy food for yourself?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.24 Do you work on after hours/ on weekends to raise money for school?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.25 Did your parents choose this career for you?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.26 Are you committed to your studies?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

2.27 Do you cope with school workloads?

	Code		Code
Yes	1	No	2

APPENDIX B: Informed consent

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

NWU School of Business and Governance

Factors affecting first year college student's academic performance

Research conducted by:

Ms. P.N. Mngomezulu (16483480)

Cell: 071 869 9283

30 April 2017

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Ms Patricia Mngomezulu...
...Masters student from the School/Department: School of Business and Governance at the North-West University- Mafikeng Campus.

The purpose of the study is to determine and evaluate the factors that cause the first year college students' academic performance.

Please note the following:

- This is a quantitative study survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 20 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study research Supervisor, Prof R. Rena, 0183892496/Ravinder.Rena@nwu.ac.za if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. (Please tick)

YES

Date of consent:

APPENDIX C: Ethical clearance



ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the Human Resource Research Ethics Committee (HREEC) on 18/07/2017, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approve your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: Factors affecting first year college students' academic performance in Potchefstroom College of Agriculture	
Project Leader/Supervisor: Prof R Ravinder	
Student: PN Mngomezulu (16483480)	
Ethics number:	N W U - 0 0 6 1 8 - 1 7 - A 9
Application Type: Single study	
Commencement date: 2017-07-18	Expiry date: 2020-07-18
Risk:	M/A

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the HREEC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the HREEC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via HREEC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the HREEC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via HREEC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and HREEC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - 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 project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HREEC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HREEC can be contacted for further information via Ethics@nwu.ac.za or 018 280 2873.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or HREEC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda Du Plessis

Digitally signed by Linda Du Plessis
DN: cn=Linda Du Plessis, o=Chair
Institutional Ethics Regulatory
Committee, ou=NWU, ou=ZA,
email=Linda.DuPlessis@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2017.07.18 09:03:02 +0200

Prof Linda de Plessis

Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

APPENDIX D: Letter for permission to conduct research

The Head of campus

Potchefstroom College of Agriculture

Private Bag x1292

Potchefstroom

2520

03 April 2017

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH STUDENTS
AS SUBJECTS**

I am currently registered with the North West University (Mafikeng campus) undertaking a Master's in Business Administration. One of the requirements for the qualification is a complete dissertation where I am expected to conduct research. My research topic is "Factors affecting college first year students' academic performance at Potchefstroom College of Agriculture"; therefore I request permission to conduct research using students as subjects. Students who are willing and available will be requested to complete the questionnaire.

Thanking you in advance in anticipation of your consideration of this matter.

Yours truly,

P.N. Mngomezulu (Ms.)

16483480