

The Impact of Psychosocial Support Services on Students' Development at a South African TVET College

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ABSTRACT

South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) lecturers and student development practitioners are not sufficiently equipped to address psycho-social challenges encountered by students, and that negatively affects learning and teaching. The main aim of the study was to examine the impact of psycho-social support services on students' development at a South African TVET college. The study used a qualitative phenomenological research technique. The participants of the study comprised a total number of 9 participants. The participants included 2 lecturers (one from NCV and the other from Report 191 programmes), 3 students from National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme (L2-L4), 3 students from Report 191 programme (N4-N6), and 1 Student Development Practitioner of a South African TVET college who were selected through a simple random technique. Face-to-face interviews were used for data collection. Thematic analysis was adopted as a tool to analyse the data and findings revealed inadequate provision of counselling and the unavailability of peer tutoring as psycho-social support services that had a negative bearing on their development. The participants' low socio-economic level and the restricted availability of specialised psycho-social assistance for student development from a South African TVET institution were additional factors that negatively impacted their relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Future research is needed to examine the impact of psycho-social support services on students' development at South African TVET colleges by using a larger sample of participants. The paper's findings indicate that the provision of counselling to students, understanding the impact of socio-economic status, and the availability of peer tutoring could develop students psychosocially at the South African TVET college in question. Furthermore, empowering lecturers and SDPs with psychosocial support skills helps them respond to the psychosocial challenges to student development.

KEYWORDS

TVET lecturers; psychosocial support services; psychosocial challenges; students' development; counselling skills; peer tutoring; Student Development Practitioners.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Significant psychosocial challenges that negatively impact students' wellness and, in turn, reduce learning quality are faced by students at this TVET college in South Africa (Modisaotsile, 2012; Spaul, 2013). According to Donald et al (2010), poverty is still a factor in the psychosocial challenges that South African TVET colleges encounter, which in turn has an impact on the wellbeing of the campus community. Due to their in-service training only covering narrow notions of educational psychology and community development as Donald et al (2010) argues, South African TVET college lecturers and SDPs are ill-prepared to serve students in such circumstances (Masitsa, 2011; Motshekga, 2010). (Donald et al., 2010). The sustainability and general well-being of the students at this TVET in South Africa are negatively impacted by this situation. The complex issues that their pupils face naturally worry and astonish inadequately prepared lecturers, making it difficult for them to activate their potential agency (Donaldson, 2020). As per the asset-based paradigm (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993; Pillay, 2012), instructors are amenable to providing psychosocial support to students provided they possess the necessary knowledge and abilities (Hoadley, 2007; Malindi & Machenjedge, 2012; Mampane & Bouwer, 2006; Olawale et al., 2021; Theron, 2009).

In order to help these TVET college students in South Africa deal with psychosocial experiences and enhance their social functioning, including academic achievement, psychosocial support will be essential (Kaljee et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2012; Lee-Rife et al., 2012). In order to help students and their families deal with challenges, psychosocial support creates both internal and external resources (Kaljee et al., 2016). Research indicates that, despite the challenges, students at a TVET institution in South Africa can receive psychosocial assistance if certain aspects are addressed, including peer tutoring, lowering socioeconomic level, and offering counselling (Kirkpatrick et al. 2012; Kaljee et al. 2016). Because it offers an environment where students can learn and develop life skills that are essential for physical, emotional, intellectual, and psychological growth, this TVET college in South Africa is becoming an increasingly important place for students' development (Pufall et al., 2014). Research demonstrates that a large number of students recognise that their psychological wellness depends on their education (Devries et al., 2014; Kunnuji and Esiet, 2015).

The fact that TVET colleges in South Africa are situated in regions where most students spend their time makes them noteworthy as well (Pufall et al., 2014). Furthermore, a wealth of evidence suggests that interventions at the TVET college level in South Africa that provide social, emotional, and psychosocial support benefit students who do not receive psychosocial support in terms of their academic achievement, general development, and general well-being (Ssewamala et al., 2016). Although these interventions are available, there hasn't been much focus on how lecturers and SDPs may help South African TVET college students. Empowering lecturers and SDPs at this TVET college in South Africa psychosocial support skills would help them respond to the psychosocial difficulties that students face (Ebersöhn et al., 2015). Although it has been established how important it is to capacitate lecturers and SDPs in

psychosocial assistance, South Africa's approach for doing so has proven to be insufficient (Kaljee et al., 2016; Matabane et al., 2022; Nkambule & Ngubane, 2023).

In 2008, SADC launched the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme, which equips lecturers with the knowledge and abilities to deal with students' psychological needs. The purpose of this programme is to close the gap. Additional components of CSTL include leadership, fortifying college institutions, and safety and protection. The programme known as CSTL was introduced in South Africa in 2006 and was overseen by the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI). Although some literature suggests that programmes on psychosocial support can address the emotional, academic, and social problems among students who are experiencing psychosocial challenges, there is no qualitative documentation of the methodologies for delivering the programmes and factors that shape integration or the acceptability and adoption of psychosocial support programmes within the educational sector (Ssewamala et al, 2016). The following research questions are put out in light of the study's objectives:

- What is the nature of the counselling and psychosocial support services provided to both TVET college lecturers and students?
- What form of academic support is provided to students from poor socio-economic backgrounds through peer tutoring?

The paper is organised in the following manner: it starts by looking at the impact of psychosocial support services on students' development at a South African TVET college. Next, the researchers review the related literature on the nature of counselling and psychosocial support services provided to both TVET college lecturers and students and the form of academic support provided to students from poor socio-economic backgrounds through peer tutoring. Lastly, the study presents the research methodological procedures followed in collecting data and analysing it to arrive at meaningful conclusions. Additionally, this study contributes empirical evidence to the existing body of literature, providing practical recommendations on the impact of psychosocial support services on students' development at South African TVET colleges and similar settings globally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Counselling and psychosocial support services for both TVET college lecturers and students

Lecturers and SDPs serve as key leaders in the psychosocial support services (PSSS), a college where they assist South African TVET college students with their emotional, social, and academic needs (Onuoha & Munaka, 2010). However, it has been noted that a lot of TVET college programmes in South Africa prioritise students' material requirements over their psychosocial support. The goal of psychosocial support is to guarantee students' social, emotional, and psychosocial welfare by providing a continuum of care and support. Psychosocial support services might be rendered with the intention of curing or preventing. Psychosocial support services have been shown in the literature to enhance students' mental health and

overall well-being. Furthermore, when psychosocial interventions are successful, they bring back control and confidence in the lives of South African TVET college students who are affected by psychosocial issues. Increased social, physical, and psychological well-being are the outcomes of this. Students who get psychosocial support also see improvements in their knowledge, abilities, and social and emotional well-being. In order to develop policies and programmes that will benefit from a contextual understanding of the circumstances of a South African TVET college, it is necessary to monitor and assess the scope and calibre of the psychosocial services being offered to the students in question.

Many students at this South African TVET college encounter trauma, which can lead to psychosocial issues or mental health issues (Kirkpatrick et al., 2012). Numerous issues, such as mental health difficulties, plague these students and have an impact on both their academic performance and general well-being (Chauke, 2023; Kaljee et al., 2016). The effectiveness of student support services at a research-intensive university in South Africa, the factors influencing the dropout rates at Gert Sibande FET college, the role of student support services in promoting student involvement and its impact on student perceptions and academic experiences, the effectiveness of student support officers in providing student support in public TVET colleges, and a proposed psychosocial support framework for sustainable learning for students from child-headed households have all been the focus of research studies. Nevertheless, no research has been done to look at how students' development is impacted by psychosocial support services at a TVET institution in South Africa that is being investigated. The problems surrounding student support services have been researched in a number of nations, both developed and developing. Perceptions of lecturer fairness and respect for students have been linked to resilience and psychosocial wellness, according to a number of meta-studies (Joynes, 2018).

Ensuring academic support for students from poor socio-economic backgrounds through peer tutoring

The core of the educational endeavour is student success. Success in a South African TVET college offers a variety of financial, psychological, and physical advantages in addition to assisting students in achieving their long-term professional and personal objectives (Baum & Ma, 2007). Holding onto students until they graduate is frequently a direct way for colleges and universities to meet their objectives. Preparing students for productive roles in society is the aim of colleges and universities. Before receiving a certificate or diploma, students who drop out of school before graduating forfeit the time and money they spent on their education. The main objective of the educational endeavour is student success. In addition to assisting students in achieving their long-term professional and personal goals, success in a South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college offers a variety of monetary, psychological, and physical benefits (Baum & Ma, 2007). For schools and institutions, keeping students on until they graduate is often a direct path to achieving their goals. The goal of colleges and universities is to prepare students for contributions to society. In an effort to keep

students enrolled through graduation, South African TVET colleges have made significant financial investments in retention services (such as academic success centres, first-year seminars, preparation courses, advising interventions, tutorial programmes, and counselling). These amount to significant expenditures aimed at raising the chances of success for students.

Identifying each student's needs early on and then providing a course of action are essential to fostering their success (Seidman, 2005). Professionals can effectively improve student performance by implementing psychosocial learning aspects as areas of intervention (Grobler, 2021; Krumrei & Newton, 2009). Higher education institutions must conduct assessments of psychosocial learning factors so that treatments can be tailored to the individual needs of each student (Peterson et al., 2006). Research has demonstrated a correlation between TVET college success and several student demographics, including gender, ethnicity, financial condition, and whether or not they are first-generation learners (Pascarella et al., 2004). Mouw and Khanna (1993) summarised 39 studies that looked at a variety of factors to predict college GPA, such as high school GPA, SAT scores, personality traits, and demographics. They came to the disappointing conclusion that, overall, our ability to predict college success based on any of these factors is low. In order to give counsellors a schema for understanding and evaluating student variables so they could advise students on how to improve their academic performance, Russell and Petrie presented a framework in 1992. Therefore, Pascarella et al. (2004) emphasise that students' success at TVET colleges is influenced by both internal psychological traits like motivation, self-confidence, perceived support, and emotional effect, as well as external behaviours like study habits and campus involvement.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted Arthur Chickering's theory, which focuses primarily on student development. The Chickering theory of student development was used as a theoretical framework to examine the impact of psychosocial support services on students' development at a South African TVET college. Chickering's theory describes the development that occurs in student life using seven vectors. This is examined through the use of seven development vectors, which include controlling emotions, developing competence, maturing interpersonal relationships, transitioning from autonomy to interdependence, growing purpose, creating identity, and growing integrity. According to Arthur Chickering's theory, these vectors can be conceptualised as a sequence of steps or assignments that address thinking, feeling, believing, and interacting with others. Individuals may progress through the vectors at different rates. A strict application of Chickering & Reisser's identity development vectors suggests that because their instructors and SDP did not provide them with psychosocial assistance for identity development, study participants were likely to have psychosocial issues. According to McLeod (2018), students were unable to establish their identity, grow in purpose and competence, learn how to manage their emotions, progress from autonomy to interdependence, form mature interpersonal relationships, or grow in integrity because there were insufficient psychosocial

support services available. Therefore, from an educational perspective, lecturers and SDP at a South African TVET college need to support these students for sustainable learning and to develop socially, emotionally, morally, and academically (Madimabe & Omodan,2021).

This theory on student development by Arthur Chickering has assisted the researchers in knowing the nature of counselling and psychosocial support services that are provided to students at the college in question. Chickering's theory describes the development that occurs in student life using seven vectors. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993: 145), "the vectors describe major highways for journeying towards individuation; the discovery and refinement of one's unique way of being; and also towards communion with other individuals and groups, including the larger national and global society." This theory was used to describe the development of students with regard to the nature of counselling, psychosocial support services, and academic support provided to students from poor socio-economic backgrounds through peer tutoring. This is because student development is a part of TVET college life, where students experience different changes and exit their comfort zones. According to Drexler (2006:7), the hypothesis proposed by Chickering "illustrates the importance of cognitive, social, and international learning on collegiate student development and global education overall." This is the reason the Chickering Theory of Student Development was chosen as the study's theoretical framework.

METHOD

Design

Qualitative phenomenology research was utilised to get South African TVET college students to talk about how psychosocial support services affected their growth while they were attending a TVET institution. Based on the philosophical tenet that researchers can learn important insights into the framework of how people interpret their experiences, phenomenological research is an inductive qualitative research approach (Bliss, 2016). Phenomenological approaches make the assumption that people seek meaning from their experiences and that their narratives effectively convey this meaning, as well as attempting to characterise experiences from the perspective of the experiencer (Gill, 2020). This study seeks to examine the impact of psychosocial support services on students' development at a South African TVET college. The participants were given a voice to express their psychosocial experiences using qualitative phenomenology research (Willig, 2013). According to Best (2018), social constructivism is the process by which members of a social group make things for one another and jointly develop a little culture of shared objects and meanings. The participants used language to construct a sense of their own experience of the influence of psychosocial support services on their advancements at a TVET college in South Africa, within the framework of a social constructivist paradigm.

Research locale

This study was conducted at one TVET college in South Africa. There are five campuses, one training facility, and one central office for this public TVET college. The campus is located in a town in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Nonetheless, the majority of the students enrolled at this institution are not native to the area in which it is located. Given that they are from nearby towns and are renting, it is likely that their parents do not provide them with enough social or intellectual assistance. Most students come from low-income families and receive government-funded bursaries through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which they are not required to pay back. There is a single student development practitioner on each campus. These professionals in student development have all recently held this position. It was chosen because one of the researchers was working there as a lecturer and understood the culture of a college.

Selection of the participants

The following factors were taken into consideration when selecting study participants: each participant had to agree to participate; they had to be older than 18; and they had to be available, having attended a TVET college in South Africa. The participants of the study comprised a total number of 9 participants. The participants included 2 lecturers (one from NCV and the other from Report 191 programmes) 3 students from National Certificate Vocational(NCV) programme (L2-L4), 3 students from Report 191 programme (N4-N6), and 1 Student Development Practitioner of a South African TVET college who were selected through a simple random technique. In South Africa, the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges offer two programmes (NCV and Report 191). The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) is a programme designed for learners with a minimum of grade 9 (level 2-4) and Report 191(N4-N6) is a programme for learners who completed their grade 12. Table 1 below provides profile of the participants.

Table 1.

Profile of the participants

Participant	Profile	Gender	Age	Experience/Level
Lecturers	Two lecturers were involved in the study. One lecturer was male and the other one a female. The first lecturer was responsible for teaching NC(V) programmes from level 2, 3 and 4. The second lecturer was responsible for teaching Report 191 students from N4, N5 and N6.	One lecturer was a male and the other was a female	The first lecturer was aged between 45 to 50 years. The second lecturer was aged between 30 to 35 years	The first lecturer had lecturing experience between 15 to 20 years. The second lecturer had lecturing experience between 3 to 5 years.
Students	Six students were involved in the study. The students belonged to the two programmes offered at the TVET college. The two programmes were NC(V) programme and Report 191. The first three students were	Students under the NC(V) programme were doing level 2, 3 and 4. The level 2 student was a male, the level 3 student was a female and the level 4 student was a female. The students under the Report 191	Both the students from the two programmes were aged between 18 to 26	Students under the NC(V) programme were doing level 1, 2 and 3. The students under the Report 191 programme were doing N4, N5 and N6.

	from the NC(V) programme and the other three were from the Report 191 programme.	programme were doing N4, 5 and 6. The N4 student was a female, the N5 student was a male and the N6 student was a female.		
Student Development practitioner	One student development practitioner was involved in the study.	The student development practitioner was a male	The student development practitioner was aged between 50-55.	The student development practitioner had experience between 10 to 25 years.

Data collection method

Face to face interviews were used to gather data. This took form of individual interviews and yielded in-depth personal narratives (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Every participant was invited to create a collage incorporating both their desired and actual experiences, and then to provide feedback on their creations. Thus, face to face interviews were conducted among the participants to better understand their disparate experiences and expectations (King & Horrocks, 2010). According to Burr (2015), people can convey their perceptions of their own life stories when interviews are used as techniques to extract information. Therefore, the use of interviews as data generation method strengthened the validity and reliability of the study. To further validate the process, follow-up visits were made to seek clarity on the interview transcripts from the participants.

Data analysis

The data for this study were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the rigorous process of finding, categorising, and contextualising patterns of meaning (themes) within a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Thematic analysis of qualitative data is regarded as a helpful technique for producing trustworthy results in human-environment interaction research (Stringer et al., 2017). All of the data gathered for this study were transcribed and documented. The information was then examined using the methods suggested by Creswell (2013) in order to find recurring themes and subthemes pertaining to how psychological support services affect students' growth at a TVET college in South Africa. The researchers prepared and organized the data, went through each piece of information, started a thorough analysis using a coding process, used the coding process to describe the themes, explained the themes using a qualitative narrative, and then interpreted and made sense of the data by concentrating on meaning throughout the dataset. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants identity, as such the participants real names were not used in the study. Through the use of thematic analysis, the researchers were able to understand and interpret shared meanings and the effects that psychosocial support services had on the growth of students at a TVET institutions in South Africa. The study considered many TVET campuses to cover the issues of biasness within reliability of the study. Using face to face interviews made it easy that this work accommodates in-depth perspectives as possible in order to ensure reliability. Furthermore, TVET colleges policies were visited and found wanting in terms of student support and counselling within campuses.

Ethical considerations

The University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa's Department of Research Ethics Committee granted ethical permission for this study in order to ensure that all ethical requirements were satisfied before the study was carried out. Prior to their involvement in the study, all research participants were asked to provide written, informed consent. Participants' consent was also sought for the recording of focus groups and interviews. The confidentiality of the information provided by the participants has been maintained as none of their identities have been revealed. The principal of a TVET institution in South Africa was also asked for permission to perform this study prior to the start of data collecting, and he granted it. Leedy & Omrod (2010) stress the value of treating people with respect, particularly when the subject of the inquiry involves private social matters. The participants in this study demonstrated cooperation, reliability, assurances, expectancies, and acceptance of one another. Participants' rights were protected during this study, and they were informed that participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were guaranteed the privacy of their information and the freedom to stop taking part at any time. All participants were given the option of commenting or not on specific topics. Participants in this study received no payment for their participation. There was no bias in the communication with any of the participants. The information was only used by the researcher for that purpose. Additionally, participants were told that the data they provided would only be used in the study's publication. The participants' identities were protected by using pseudonyms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Counselling and psychosocial support for lecturers and students

If social and emotional abilities are considered soft skills, then lecturing should be used as an intervention strategy (Glennie et al., 2017). Furthermore, Glennie et al, (2017) stress that more research needs to be done to examine the effects that lecturers and SDPs can have on students' social and emotional competencies. The outcomes of research investigations are not all the same. More research is needed, according to some experts, to determine how to train lecturers and SDPs to develop the abilities required to meet the social and emotional requirements of students. The importance of this for academic performance has been questioned by some researchers, though (Credé et al., 2016). Additionally, studies have shown that lecturers are the internal college elements that produce higher student attainment (Glennie et al., 2017). Beyond just imparting knowledge, TVET college lecturers can significantly impact their students' social and emotional growth. When college students see a lecturer who is available, enthusiastic, helpful, and caring, they begin to feel like they belong in college. Students' attitudes improve when college instructors help them comprehend the material and provide an explanation for their decisions (Ferguson et al, 2015). Lecturers and professionals in student development can significantly influence students' behaviour, which in turn impacts their academic performance.

When questioned about the psychosocial support he gave students, one of the lecturers raised concerns about his lack of counselling skills:

Mr Z. Mbatha (NCV lecturer):

"It is not easy to support students, especially if we do not have the necessary counselling skills. I will give you a scenario where one of the students in my class could not write a test because she was claiming to be sexually abused by her uncle."

Follow-up question by the researcher:

"What did you do to assist her?"

Mr Z. Mbatha (NCV lecturer):

"Due to a lack of counselling skills, I just told the student to go to a social worker without saying anything to her. After she left, I felt embarrassed because, as a lecturer, I should have at least provided her with counselling before referring her to a social worker or student development practitioner."

Cindy (NCV student):

"The unavailability of specialised lecturers and the unpreparedness of lecturers to support the social and emotional needs of students hinders the academic achievement of these students."

Mr Z. Mbatha (NCV lecturer):

"It is also true that there are few resources that can be used to meet social and emotional needs of students. However, this can be solved by training us on counselling skills."

Ms B. Smith (Report 191 lecturer):

"Psychosocial support is very wide. You look into spiritual, emotional, academic and social support. It is beyond classroom. I think as lecturers, we do try to assist them. The high drop-out rate and high rate of absenteeism are not only the responsibilities of lecturers. Even NSFAS needs to come on board and pay students on time. We need trainings on social and emotional needs of students, really, we need to be trained and also we need to have counselling skills so that we can be able to assist students."

Mr Sanbha:

"As a student development practitioner, I try by all means to assist students. The main challenge in our campus is inadequate resources, especially for physically challenged students. The issue of lecturers being trained is a very sensitive one. I think it should start with Department of Higher Education and Training to organise workshops for lecturers on counselling students for public TVET colleges in South Africa."

When the researchers asked Report 191 lecturer if she was having the same issue, she nodded. The SDP offered to help lecturers before she could respond, and he even asked to be given 30 minutes during our conversations so that he could provide academics with counselling skills. The SDP was granted 30 minutes to teach counselling techniques once other participants concurred.

Counsellors at TVET colleges in South Africa, commonly referred to as student development practitioners, face difficulties brought on by changes in society, education, and policy and curricular expectations. They also face a variety of issues, such as national initiatives pertaining to academic performance that result in the inactivity of South African TVET college counsellors. They begin to doubt the value of college counselling programmes as a result of these issues. The primary issue with offering psychosocial support services to students is the dearth of licenced counsellors and insufficient funding. Support services for psychosocial difficulties faced by South African TVET college students must be provided by qualified counsellors. According to Paisley & McMahon (2001), disagreements on the obligations and responsibilities of college counsellors are the primary difficulties they face. Counsellors at colleges are not providing enough assistance to pupils. Counsellors in South African TVET colleges deal with obstacles related to racial and ethical issues, as well as differences in academic achievement. Counsellors at South African TVET colleges should be qualified to handle racial and ethnic discrimination issues raised by students. Although this TVET college's multiculturalism has greatly improved, mediation in counselling should take students' needs into account. This TVET college's students deal with both academic and non-academic issues. Both of these problems impair students' academic progress. Cooper (2010) asserts that although college students may be academically prepared, unanticipated life circumstances may require the modification of well-laid-out plans. Counselling and one-on-one advice will be provided to students at this TVET college to assist with non-academic issues. Students at public TVET colleges exhibit low self-esteem, discouragement, and demotivation (FET Institute, 2012). According to Masemola (2014), African students are not likely to use social, cultural, and educational resources available on the college's online student portal. College counsellors might better support disadvantaged students by offering chances and information through social networking programs. Participating in these programmes, TVET college counsellors, or SDPs, will understand the value of social networking and be able to help students develop a good attitude towards the college.

Ensuring academic support for students from poor socio-economic backgrounds through peer tutoring

Socio-economic status is one of the aspects of student academic performance that has been studied and discussed the most by educational experts. The most common argument, according to Farooq et al. (2012), is that TVET college students' socioeconomic position has an impact on the calibre of their academic achievement. According to the majority of experts, students of poor socioeconomic status perform worse academically because their basic requirements are not met, which prevents them from improving their performance. These South African TVET college students' low socioeconomic level leads to environmental deficits, which may be the reason for their low self-esteem and subpar academic performance. Apartheid conspiracies, which denied black people access to basic amenities, the right to vote, and the ability to make a significant economic contribution, are the primary source of poverty (Cosatu, 2012).

Moreover, according to Cosatu (2012), this prevented black people from obtaining education and skills and, as a result, from entering the labour force. They are still caught in a never-ending cycle of poverty as a result of it. The environment in which college students grow is explained by their families' socioeconomic status and makeup. A home and a TVET college setting that are welcoming produce positive personality development, which results in balanced students (Donald et al., 2007). However, EWP6a (2006) states that insufficient resources, poor relationships, undernourishment, and stressful circumstances are characteristics of an unwelcoming household. TVET college students' poor socioeconomic level has an impact on their behaviour and emotions (Meyer et al., 2008). Students' cognitive development is also impacted by malnutrition (Vaughn et al., 2007). TVET college students may suffer from low self-esteem, guilt, and poor academic performance as a result of this. The participant remarks regarding the influence of socioeconomic status are included below:

Lucky (NCV student):

"Sir, you know that because of poverty and not having money for transportation last year, I came to write my internal examination during the last hour of the three-hour paper. But because of the hiking, I was late. The examination rules stipulate that if there is only one hour left for the paper to be finished, candidates are not allowed to enter the exam venue. What made things worse was that even the invigilator did not bother to ask the reasons for being late. Instead, she chased me out. And that was just an internal examination. As a student, I ended up not qualifying to write the final examination because if you miss one test, you can end up not meeting the ICASS requirements. I think another solution to eradicate poverty amongst us is to use the cafeteria that is now used as an examination venue. Perhaps as students, we can contribute money and start selling to other students. But that will happen if the campus management, together with SRC, allows us. "

Patience (Report 191 student):

"Greetings to everyone. The main challenge...I think is poverty. As students, we experience financial problems. There are students who failed only one subject but could not come back to the college because of financial problems."

Precious (Report 191 student):

"Err...yes we do receive NSFAS. Noma kunjalo [however] take for instance myself. I do not have parents and they all passed on last year (2018). At home, I have two young sisters (both still going to school) and two brothers who are both older than me. My big brother is the only one who is working. He is expected to support us all financially and that becomes difficult for him. Last year, I never received NSFAS for transport or accommodation. So my brother had to do everything for us. Even this year (2019), I am still struggling to get last year's NSFAS. That is why when I received NSFAS for this year; nayo encane nami ngize ngathenga ngayo ukudla ekhaya [was very little, in such a way that I had to buy food at home with it]. ...you know Sir, as we are speaking now; there are students who did not receive NSFAS for this year. If you go to student affairs to enquire,

they tell you to wait for three months and after three months, it is another three months. That is part of our daily lives here at the college."

Mafu (Report 191 student):

"I think we are really experiencing problems when it comes to socio-economic status. Just to share with you. One of my class mates was very sick and when we reported the matter to the Social Worker and Student Development Practitioner, the social worker told us that the student had a problem at home. Basically, she was very hungry and that is why she was sick. To cut the matters short, can we please be assisted when it comes to socio-economic backgrounds or status?"

Nelly (NCV student):

"It affects a lot Sir (researcher). For instance, if you do not have money to come to the college because of financial problems or poverty, you miss classes. For your information, there are lecturers who do not care about us whether you attend or not [laugh...]. They even tell us that they cannot repeat their lessons because of our financial problems. Those negative comments really kill our self-identity, self-esteem and well-being and we end up dropping out from the college."

Mr Z. Mbatha (NCV lecturer):

"There are so many ways of dealing of low socio-economic status of students. As a lecturer, I will suggest that our campus should do the following; improve the methods of teaching and learning, create environment that is information rich, increase funding, provide adequate resources, build learning community, involve parents, and develop professionalism on a continuous basis. I think if all these things can be effectively done by our campus management, the problem of low socio-economic status can be easily addressed."

Ms B. Smith (Report 191 lecturer):

"Legislation and policies on how to eliminate socio-economic disparities should be advocated to public TVET colleges and ensure that their expectations are understood by officials at public TVET colleges. Officials at public TVET colleges should also plan and monitor the implementation."

Mr Z. Mbatha (NCV lecturer):

"I am very happy that the students are deliberating on these challenges and providing support without any fear. To concur with Report 191 lecturer 1, I think as lecturers, we really need these workshops or even trainings. It is a pity that we cannot have all the students and lecturers partake. I hope that the researcher will continue with these workshops or trainings for effective teaching and learning. Another issue that I think is important is for us to be trained when it comes to dealing with the social and emotional needs of students. Perhaps training will really assist us since we have not been trained on how to deal with the emotional and social needs of students. I also think that

peer counselling and peer tutoring can also have a positive impact on developing students emotionally, socially, and academically. Thank you."

It was clear from conversations with lecturers and students at a TVET college in South Africa that despite the existence of NSFAS, which was meant to cover their housing costs and transport expenses, these students were still facing difficulties like poverty and transit costs. Report 191 students 1 and 2, NC (V) students 1, 2, and 3, as well as Report 191 lecturer 1, all pointed to this. In addition to money, socio-economic status also includes things like financial stability, academic success, social status, and opinions of one's own place in society. It was also clear that the study location had an underutilized cafeteria, which students asked to utilize in an effort to alleviate poverty by taking control of it. Studies have indicated that pupils with lower socio-economic status tend to possess inferior academic abilities compared to those with greater socio-economic status. A family environment marked by a lack of resources, a poor socioeconomic level, and malnutrition can result in unhealthy relationships and stressful situations.

Desperation brought on by a low socio-economic background may influence students' behavioural issues, emotional stability, and developmental issues (Meyer et al., 2008). The majority of these TVET students from South Africa are impacted by their home lives, which include low socioeconomic backgrounds, on a social and emotional level. This has an impact on their academic performance on campus. Furthermore, according to National Centre for Education Statistics, 2015:4, the percentage of dropouts in low-income families was 11.6% in 2014, while it was 2.8% in high-income families.

In a dynamic relationship known as peer tutoring, experienced people offer guidance to those who are less experienced and knowledgeable in a particular subject (Ali & Anwar, 2015). Furthermore, real mentoring, according to Masehela et al. (2014), involves teaching people how to build enduring relationships, deal with adversity, and negotiate in addition to answering questions. Promoting student learning is the goal of peer mentoring support at a TVET institution (Ning & Dowling, 2010). Peer tutoring helps TVET college students respect and value their education while also helping them to grow and develop their academic levels. When asked about the influence of peer pressure, both students and lecturers made the following remarks: Cindy (NCV student):

"Well, I think we should have peer tutoring on our campus. I wonder what actually happened to peer tutoring, because we used to have it. I think if we can bring that back, together with peer counselling, we can be able to do well emotionally, academically, and even socially."

Ms B. Smith (Report 191 lecturer):

"I concur with Cindy regarding peer counselling and peer tutoring. In 2014, we started peer tutoring at our research site, and it helped with academic achievement. There were no drop-outs due to peer tutoring. I will propose that we bring peer tutoring back and also start peer counselling, especially for students."

Peer mentoring is when a more experienced person helps a less experienced one. Students on a campus can boost their self-esteem and develop self-motivation through peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is a two-way practice that benefits both students and tutors in equal measure. In summary, peer tutoring is a very successful method of letting students learn from one another. It assists students not just in the classroom but also in the development of their interpersonal and communication skills.

Implications

TVET college students in South Africa are facing more and more emotional, social, and academic difficulties. According to data from the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five children between the ages of 13 and 18 presently suffers from a significant mental illness (NIMH, 2016). These findings demonstrate how urgently issues related to youth mental health must be addressed. A popular approach to addressing mental health issues in young people is by using the psychosocial support services offered by a TVET college in South Africa. TVET colleges in South Africa are legally required to attend to the social, behavioural, and emotional requirements of their students when such needs have a detrimental effect on the student's capacity to behave, learn, and interact with others (Jordan, 2009). Additionally, a substantial body of research has revealed that college students who exhibit symptoms of poor mental health, such as emotional or behavioural difficulties, are more likely to experience poor educational outcomes as well as other unfavourable psychosocial outcomes, such as academic failure, attendance issues, and/or behavioural problems (Zins et al., 2007). According to research, TVET college students who face these kinds of difficulties are more likely to leave school, which can lead to a lifetime of further difficulties (Zins et al., 2004). Therefore, a particularly relevant population to target for college-based mental health care is TVET college students who have social, emotional, and behavioural issues that put them at greater risk of failing at the college. According to Iachini et al. (2015), early intervention strategies can support at-risk college students' re-engagement in the classroom by addressing their social and emotional needs. This may make them more receptive to learning and more adept at using instructional strategies. This theory is supported by a number of longitudinal empirical research that show how students' academic success can be influenced by their social and emotional well-being (Pizzolato et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of psychosocial support services on students' development at a South African TVET college. The provision of psychosocial support services for students' development at a South African TVET college by lecturers and SDP has a positive impact on taking care of the emotional, academic, and psychosocial needs of these South African TVET college students. All of the stakeholders indicated that the psychosocial support services, such as the provision of counselling, alleviating the socio-economic status of TVET college students, and peer tutoring, have a positive impact on the students as they assist

in coping with both the emotional and psychosocial issues affecting them on a daily basis and contribute towards the positive development of their characters. This study has shown that the provision of psychosocial support services to TVET college students brings about positive change with regard to their emotional and social well-being, academic achievement, knowledge, and social well-being. The study has also highlighted the need to provide psychosocial support services to South African TVET college students, as many of them often face psychosocial challenges that negatively impact their development and academic achievements.

Recommendations

Serious attention must be paid to the psychosocial and socioeconomic aspects of students in South African TVET colleges. TVET college lecturers need to be equipped with the basic skills of student counselling so that they can be able to spot the abnormalities and be able to either give a basic counselling or right away refer students to the trained counsellor. TVET colleges in South Africa must be well equipped with student counselling centres so that lecturers can easily refer students to the available psychologists when necessary. In fact, senior students of psychology can be recruited to assist other students by offering counselling services within student counselling centres. In a good way, such an exercise would help in giving senior students some experience of counselling as a practice in real life. Perhaps even including student counselling ethics within the TVET college policies would be of service if the management would consider it. With all these considerations, further studies can be done on the way in which TVET colleges management would incorporate regulations of student counselling within their policies and procedures. Other scholars might as well be interested in finding out how the students' life in African TVET colleges after the implementation of these suggestions, for instance finding out what does management say about incorporation of students counselling functions, establishment of student counselling centre, putting in place one compulsory course for basic counselling skills for all lecturers in TVET colleges.

Limitations

This study was carried out at a single TVET college in South Africa. Over time, the success and accomplishment of this study will be evaluated. Its success will also depend on how much focus is placed on how psychological support services affect students' development. Participants on this campus are unlikely to encounter the same difficulties as those on other public TVET college campuses. To increase the support of all participants, a similar research study ought to be carried out on all seven campuses.

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