

**Assessing academic success among off-campus students: A case study of
Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College, Centre for
People's Development Campus, South Africa**

by

SIZANGANI PINKIE IMAAN SOKHELA

2016344935

**Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree
MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**In the
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences**

**at the
University of Free State
Bloemfontein Campus**

Supervisor

Dr. Faith Wadzanai Mkwanzani

November 2022

DECLARATION

I, *Sizangani Pinkie Imaan Sokhela*, student number: 2016344935, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation titled: Assessing academic success among off-campus students: A case study of Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College, Centre for People's Development Campus, South Africa, in partial fulfilment for the Master of Development Studies degree at the University of the Free State, has not in any form previously been submitted for a qualification at any other institution and is a record of my independent work.

Sizangani P.I Sokhela

30 November 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I would like to thank the Almighty. It is only through His grace that I have been able to reach this far.
- I am deeply grateful and I feel a profound sense of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Faith Wadzanai Mkwanzani for her continuous guidance, invaluable patience and encouragement every step of the way. Thank you for always sharing knowledge with me and constantly steering me towards the right direction.
- Thank you to my mother, sisters, spouse and my children, for your faithful support, motivation and unconditional understanding.
- At last but not least, gratitude goes towards my friends and colleagues who directly and indirectly helped me to complete this study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who went through difficult times in sacrificing and giving the little she had to make sure that we had an opportunity to education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
DEDICATION	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction and research problem background	1
1.2 Background to the study	2
1.3 Problem statement	3
1.4 Research aims and objectives	3
1.5 Research questions	4
1.6 Motivation and significance of the study	4
1.7 Literature review.....	6
1.7.1 <i>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education 2030 agenda</i>	8
1.7.2 <i>Student’s accommodation infrastructure and safety</i>	9
1.7.3 <i>TVET accommodation challenges and their effects on students</i>	12
1.8 Theoretical framework.....	12
1.9 Research methodology	13
1.9.1 <i>Research approach</i>	14
1.9.2 <i>Research design</i>	14
1.9.3 <i>Data Collection Strategy</i>	15
1.9.4 <i>Population, sampling, and recruitment</i>	15
1.9.5 <i>Data handling and analysis</i>	16
1.9.6 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	16
1.9.6.3 <i>Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy</i>	17
1.9.7 <i>Ethical approval</i>	17
1.9.8 <i>Limitations</i>	18
1.9.9 Chapter outline	18
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 TVET colleges in South Africa	20

2.3 Academic success.....	23
2.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education 2030 agenda	24
2.5 Student accommodation infrastructure and safety	25
2.6 TVET accommodation challenges and their effects on students.....	28
2.7 Conclusion.....	29
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Human capital theory	31
3.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory	31
3.4 Capability approach	32
3.4.1 Why CA for this study?.....	33
3.4.2 Capabilities and Functionings	34
3.4.3 Conversion factors	35
3.4.4 Agency.....	36
3.5 Conclusion.....	37
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	38
4.1 Introduction	38
4.2 Research paradigm	38
4.3 Research approach.....	38
4.4 Research design	39
4.5 Population, sampling, and recruitment.....	40
4.6 Data collection strategy	41
4.6 Data analysis strategies.....	42
4.7 Ethical considerations	44
4.7.1 Voluntary participation and Informed consent	45
4.7.2 Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy	45
4.8 Ensuring rigour (trustworthiness)	46
4.8.1 Credibility.....	46
4.9 Limitations of the study	46
4.11 Conclusion.....	46
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS	49
5.1 Introduction	49
5.2 Demographic profile of participants	49
5.3 Research findings from the participants	51

Category 1: Capabilities	52
Theme 1: Socio-economic background	53
<i>Sub-theme 1: Available financial support</i>	53
<i>Sub-theme 2: Limited financial support</i>	54
<i>Sub-theme 3: Lack of financial support</i>	56
Theme 2: Access to NSFAS funding that allowed the student to enrol	59
Theme 3: Opportunity to earn income	60
Theme 4: Sense of Independency and privacy	62
Theme 5: Networking/ Exposure	63
Category 2: Conversion Factors	65
Category 3: Agency	71
5.4 Conclusion.....	74
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	76
6.1 Introduction	76
6.2 Summary of research findings.....	76
<i>Research question 1: What opportunities do students living off-campus have? ..</i>	76
<i>Research question 2: What are the conversion factors that affect students living off-campus? ..</i>	78
Research question 3: How does off-campus student accommodation influence the academic success of the Majuba TVET College students? ..	80
6.3 Theoretical contribution of the study	82
6.4 Empirical contribution of the study.....	83
6.5 Recommendations	83
6.6 Conclusion.....	85
REFERENCES	86
APPENDICES.....	94
Appendix A: Ethical approval letter	94
Appendix B: Gatekeeper Letter (permission letter to conduct research at Amajuba College).....	95
Appendix C: Informed consent form	98
Appendix D: Interview schedule	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Six steps of thematic data analysis

Table 5.1: Sociodemographic information of participants

Table 5.2: Thematic table of findings

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA- Capability Approach

CPD- Centre for People's Development

DHET- Department of Higher Education and Training

GHREC- General/ Human Research Ethics Committee

HE- Higher Education

HEI- Higher Education Institutions

NATED- National Accredited Technical Education Diploma

NCV- National Certificate: Vocational

NSFAS- National Student Financial Aid Scheme

PSET- Post School Education and Training

SDGs- Sustainable Development Goals

SRC- Student Representation Council

SSIs- Semi-Structured Interviews

SSS- Student Support Services

TVET- Technical, Vocational Education and Training

UFS- University of the Free State

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

The Department of Higher Education in South Africa merged all technical colleges, colleges of education, and training centres into 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges to turn the smaller, weaker colleges into stronger institutions. This merger allowed the new bigger colleges the capacity to offer more educational programmes and the capacity to take more students, thus improving the issue of access to education and training (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa, 2013). Human development views the TVET sector as one of the means to develop capabilities, which are the opportunities that can lead to what the capability approach terms as “functioning” that the individual and communities at large can value (Tikly, 2013). The merger of the colleges meant that the youth had to temporarily move from their home and stay in the towns where the colleges are to be able to attend classes frequently. Few colleges were able to build college-owned accommodation facilities and students have to rent privately owned accommodation from the households within the area where campuses are based. The study seeks to understand and assess the academic success of students staying in the off-campus private accommodation, with the focus being the students of Majuba TVET college, Centre for People’s Development (CPD) Campus. The capability approach is employed in analyzing the experiences of the students.

The researcher adopted the qualitative research approach in form of a case study design. The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews with a total of 20 students that are enrolled for N5 and N6 from report 191 programmes, and L3 and L4 from the National Certificate Vocational (NCV). A thematic data analysis method was applied using the CA tenets.

Findings from the study show that the South African government provided students in the TVET sector with National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) so that students from poor economic backgrounds can access education and training opportunities. The unavailability of college-owned accommodation forces the students

to seek private off-campus accommodation, which exposes them to several negative conversion factors that negatively affect their overall academic experience.

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and research problem background

Access to a place to live is one of the fundamental needs for all people. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that everyone has the right to access adequate housing, which makes housing a constitutional right for South African citizens to be provided by the state (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The realisation of this right should be satisfied with the available state resources. The right to access adequate housing does not mean that the state must build houses for all citizens; however, the state needs to enforce laws and policies to protect its citizens in whichever form of housing they choose. According to Russell, Privalko, McGrinity and Enright (2021), housing provides safety and shelter and underpins people's ability to hold employment, participate in education, and engage in civil society activities. The housing issue is among the challenges faced by the South African community, and the student population is not excluded from experiencing this challenge. The student population in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector is the youth from other towns who decide to relocate to where their educational institutions of choice are situated. These students utilise on-campus accommodation (also known as residences) provided by the institution; some resort to residing in off-campus accommodation if they do not secure on-campus accommodation for the duration of their studies.

According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Whitt (2007), various factors influence students' academic success, namely methods of learning, motivation, university or academic interactions, teaching quality, and social environment. This study focused on assessing the off-campus living conditions and their effect on student academic success. Hattie & Anderman (2013) argues that there is a difference between academic performance and academic success. Richardson, Abraham and Bond (2010) define academic performance as the extent to which a student, lecturer or institution has achieved their (or its) short or long-term educational goals. They further add that the goals are measured through constant structured assessments (Hattie & Anderman, 2013). However, academic success (also known as academic achievement) is achieved through educational engagement in purposeful activities in

a learning institution, that lead to the acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and competence for educational outcomes (York, Gibson & Rankin, 2015).

1.2 Background to the study

The community surrounding the Centre for People Development (CPD) campus is located in Amajuba District in the town Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). According to the Profile and Analysis document by Amajuba District Municipality (2020), in the Newcastle area there were about 92 200 formally employed people in 2019. The total population at 337 284. The unemployment rate is high in the area, and a number of community members live in poor conditions. Most of those employed work in retail and clothing factories, earning low wages (below R3500 which is the South Africa's minimum wage). Families survive on social security grants, and rent out a portion of their homes to students to supplement their income (Mtshali, 2020). Some of the landlords around the CPD campus have moved out of their homes to either rent accommodation, live with relatives or to live in other low cost areas, in order to accommodate more students as tenants. Student choose the accommodation based on their economic status or affordability. The accommodation charged the least is usually in poor condition, and there are often four or more students sharing a one-room space. This setup might be challenging for students sharing a room because it will affect their study schedules. As roommates, their studying times might differ. When other roommates need to study, others might want to entertain friends or beloveds.

For students to succeed academically, Zotorvie (2017) argues that student accommodation is one of the essential components of institutions of higher learning and critical for students' experiences in those tertiary institutions. Consequently, students tend to look for accommodation within their economic affordability, and those from poor households lean towards cheapest accommodation (Mtshali, 2020). On the other hand, students from middle-income families opt for comfortable and secure accommodation regardless of price (Maina & Aji, 2017). According to Visagie (2013), a household with earnings averaging from 5 600 to 40 000 South African Rands per month is categorized as a middle-class household. The cheapest student accommodation will have four or more students sharing a small room, each paying R350 to R500 per month. Usually, the most affordable accommodation has little to no

ventilation, dangerous illegal connection of electricity, lack of basic safety measures, and they are not conducive for studying. Comfortable accommodation will be where a student is not sharing a room or have one roommate; however, this accommodation is above what students can afford to pay monthly. The space in the room is enough for them to move around, there is ventilation, and the accommodation can be locked to ensure student safety during their stay in the accommodation. According to News24 (2017), students who stay in poor conditions struggle to perform well in their studies.

With the above information, the study seeks to assess the academic success of students at Majuba TVET CPD campus that are living off-campus.

1.3 Problem statement

The TVET sector needs to be seen as a place of choice for higher learning. The increasing number of enrolments in the TVET colleges does not match the growing number of student accommodations. According to Xulu-Gama (2019), student housing can be used to build sustainable living and learning environments to promote student access and success. TVET colleges across the country enroll a considerable number of students. To produce well-qualified graduates, they must address student housing challenges (Mtshali, 2020).

The college under study does not have on-campus and off-campus student residences, and students must look for private accommodation. In most instances, these private student accommodations are not linked to the college, thus unaccredited. In other words, private student accommodation is not bound by the college monitoring and regulation system as stipulated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) policy for student housing for public institutions, such as colleges. The absence of accreditation by private student accommodation is problematic because the physical environment or infrastructure where the students reside is essential towards students' success. The conditions of students' place of residence including their homes impacts their health, satisfaction, social behaviour, welfare, and stress levels (Amsterdam, 2010).

1.4 Research aims and objectives

This research aimed to establish the impact of off-campus student accommodation available to Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) students' academic success.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To identify the impact of infrastructure and safety on students' academic success.
- To establish if the number of students residing in one room private student accommodation affects the time spent studying and academic performance.
- To determine if students' academic success is affected by the type of conversion factors they experience.

1.5 Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

- i) What opportunities do students living off-campus have?
- ii) What are the conversion factors that affect students that are living off-campus?
- iii) How does off-campus student accommodation influence the academic success of the Majuba TVET College students?

1.6 Motivation and significance of the study

Students' academic success in the TVET sector is attributed to numerous factors (Du Toit-Brits & Roodt, 2017). Factors contributing to student academic success include student motivation, the level and quality of teaching and learning, and the type of academic support the college provides. Other factors include the knowledge and teaching skills of lecturers on the content that they teach to students, environmental factors that the students live in, and the quality of their personal and social relationships (Biggs, 2011). The TVET sector has increased the intake or enrolment numbers due to the pressures set by the economic problems, which required an increase in the development of skills and training per the country's economic needs (Du Toit-Brits & Roodt, 2017). However, there seem to be inadequate resources directed towards providing well-managed and college-owned student accommodation by the DHET in the TVET sector.

Therefore, this research on off-campus student accommodation is essential, as it looks at the living conditions that the students live under in their rented accommodations.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) makes provision and covers accommodation fees for registered students; however, the issue is on the living conditions of the off-campus accommodation available to students. However, monitoring of accommodation where these students reside needs to be improved (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2015).

The researcher hopes that, through this study, the Majuba TVET College management will be aware of student's experiences at their off-campus places of residence. The study findings will inform the decision for colleges to provide on-campus accommodation that will cater for the diverse student population.

In the policy on the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities, the DHET has clearly outlined that the quality of private student housing has to be assessed according to four main factors. These factors are physical infrastructure, social spaces, health and safety, and services within the private student accommodation (DHET, 2015). This policy only seems to cater for the university sector, and the TVET sector needs to catch up in terms of the involvement of the sector concerning residential places of students (Mtshali,2020). The DHET has focused most of its financial resources on universities; hence there are few TVET colleges with on-campus residences. The former is supported by DHET funding and expenditure trend in the PSET report which states that "in the year 2020/21 most of funding was for public universities (R93.4 billion), which served just below 1,1 million students, followed by the TVET colleges (R15.3 billion) and serves 452 277 student (DHET, 2022). The relationship between the colleges and the off-campus private student accommodation landlords is non-existent. There needs to be a plan that allows respective colleges or the DHET to assess off-campus private student accommodation where their students are residing to their suitability per the above factors. The places that offer off-campus student accommodation will need to be accredited.

The study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on TVET college students' experiences in their off-campus private student accommodation, specifically in the Northern KZN. The study findings will likely be instrumental in informing the DHET policymakers, municipality authorities, and college officials about the TVET student's experiences of the off-campus residences. Furthermore, the study findings will be made available to the management of Majuba TVET College so that the college

can be aware of the student's experiences with the possibility of building on-campus student accommodation. The issue of student accommodation requires the partnership of different stakeholders to assist students in securing safe accommodation that will be conducive to their academic needs. The off-campus private student accommodation landlords will also need to form part of the stakeholders involved in the deliberations.

The study findings will further be instrumental for the college and the DHET broadly to develop minimum standards and policies to guide the private off-campus accommodation for students. There are minimum norms and standards for student housing; however, they were tailored for universities. The TVET sector needs to strengthen its policies on matters regarding student accommodation in the TVET institutions to ensure that TVET college students can be afforded accommodation that will be favourable to their academic success.

The findings of the study will assist in unravelling the conditions of the settlements available to students to live, and possibly make the Majuba TVET College sensitive to issues that students encounter in their off-campus private student accommodation settings.

1.7 Literature review

Travis (2015) defines academic success as the process of acquiring academic achievement, engaging in educationally purposeful activities that will lead towards satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and competencies, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance. Academic success does not only focus on mere teaching and learning but also features all of the above, as defined by Travis (2015). Florence, Asbridge and King (2008) argue that generally, as levels of education increase, there is also an associated increase in income and social status. This associated increase in socioeconomic status affects student's quality of life by influencing access to health care, housing quality, work environment, and lifestyle factors. Academic success is seemingly critical and has a vital role in changing the future circumstances of human beings (Cappy, 2016), their family, and the overall community. The quality of education received by the student and academic success are most likely to assist in reducing socioeconomic challenges that students in TVET colleges encounter (Biggs, 2011). Battle and Lewis (2004) concur that education is

essential in developing human capital that enhances the country's economic growth. Papier and McBride (2018) identified factors contributing to college students' poor academic success, poor living conditions, poor nutrition, a lack of self-management skills, and self-discipline. According to the DHET (2015), the location of student housing can profoundly impact access, equity, and redress for students requiring housing and their academic success.

In this regard, Hernandez (2015) argues that globally, 70% of students who struggle to graduate on time come from poor backgrounds and are likely to drop out of college compared to students from high-income families. In South Africa, institutions of higher learning offer on-campus residences; however, on-campus residences are predominant in the university sphere. A report by the DHET in 2012 showed that, in SA, residences are available on a few TVET college campuses and only available to first and final-year students (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2012). It is reported by Mtshali (2020) that students from TVET colleges that do not have student residences will have to make arrangements with off-campus private accommodation and rent rooms within the community surrounding their campus.

The merger of the 152 previously smaller to form 50 bigger colleges necessitated them to be renamed TVET colleges. The DHET aimed to develop and capacitate the TVET colleges to be high-quality centres for post-matric education DHET (2012). Despite plans for capacitation and development of the TVET sector by DHET, academic success in TVET colleges is still a challenge. In this case, the students of Majuba TVET College stay within the surrounding community in poorly maintained off-campus private student accommodation. These students interact with the social environment of the community they reside in, and experience issues faced by the community. For example, students may be directly affected by the crime rate in the communities. The student support services office in the CPD campus has observed that these difficulties maybe have an impact in terms of their academic life as they form part of the overall higher education experience.

The Majuba TVET College enrolment system shows that about 85% of currently enrolled students are from elsewhere other than the surrounding areas of Newcastle. According to the NSFAS Annual Performance Plan (APP) of 2018, most students, especially those from poor backgrounds, are funded by the NSFAS (National Student

Financial Aid Scheme [NSFAS], 2018). This APP affirms that NSFAS funds students who come from poor households that cannot afford fees and study costs (NSFAS, 2018). Eighty-five percent of students who are not from nearby areas do not reside on campus because Majuba TVET College does not offer on-campus accommodation. As a result, students depend on available off-campus private student accommodation surrounding their campus. Unfortunately, available rented houses need to be formally vetted by the college as suitable for students to occupy. Ultimately, the choice lies solely in the students' accommodation choices and affordability.

This next section discusses the literature relevant to the research problem and will look at the key issues pertinent to the research objectives.

1.7.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education 2030 agenda

In 2000, 189 states adopted and declared to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Hulme, 2007). The SDGs agenda aims to improve people's lives globally by ending poverty and protecting the planet (Nanda, 2015). One of the ways identified to contribute to the agenda is to transform lives through education. All 17 SDGs focus on specific action points, with SDG 4 specific to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Botha, Snowbal, De Klerk and Radloff (2013) state that the quality of student residences and their environment is important to consider to build on the need for inclusive and quality education. The authors believe that accommodation facilitates student learning and promotes their well-being. Although providing education and access to education is important, so is the environment where those students reside. Xulu-Gama (2019, p.1) states that "student housing plays a key role as a conditioning context for student success". Students living in well-planned and structured residences will have other important resources included in their residences. For example, safe running water, electricity, safe residences, study areas, and many other resources would make the residence suitable for student life.

According to Statistics South Africa (2019), 70% of those without education live in poverty. These statistics decreased to 60% for those with some primary and 50% for those who had completed primary school (Spaull, 2014). The level dropped to 44% for those with some secondary schooling and 23.6% for those with Grade 12 (Maurice Webb Race Relations Unit, 2016). It is important to note that the attainment of

education and the level of education in SA do not entirely protect individuals from economic hardship. However, it places them in a better position to access employment opportunities. The DHET has called for an expansion and building of an effective TVET sector to cater for millions of young people and adults who are not in education, employment, and training (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013). The expansion attracts students to see the TVET sector as a crucial driver of social equity, inclusion, and sustainable development. TVET colleges have been primarily utilised by those who cannot qualify for entry to universities and are not employable due to lack of qualifications.

1.7.2 Student's accommodation infrastructure and safety

The TVET sector headcount enrolment has expanded from 350 000 in 2010 to 650 000 by 2013, and to one million by 2015, where headcount enrolment refers to the number of students who register in a year (DHET, 2013). Nimako and Bondinubaa (2013) assert that student accommodation facilities provided by the learning institutions, specifically the TVET sector were inadequate as few TVET colleges offer on-campus student accommodation. All other TVET college students have to make their arrangements which often involve renting out space in a room from houses of the community members around the respective campus. Mbara (2013) states that when higher learning institutions worldwide emerged, most students were provided with on-campus accommodation because the number of students who enrolled was low. However, with the increase in the number of colleges, the number of students seeking to enter the post-school sector, and the decrease in university funding, there was an increase in the number of students residing off-campus (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2016). The inability of some of the TVET colleges to provide on-campus accommodation for students has opened an opportunity for the surrounding community members to convert their households into private accommodations for students. An article on Mail & Guardian (2012) highlights that some landlords resort to building sub-standard structurally unsafe rooms with electricity connected illegally. This measure is exercised to take in more student tenants. This somewhat competitive resolution has led to an increased concern for students' safety and welfare, which is supported by findings from Nimako and Bondinuba (2013) study on the quality of student accommodation in higher education. The study states that the unlimited and uninspected number of private entities involved in the provision of infrastructure has increased competition in

the students' accommodation industry, leading to an increased concern for the welfare and safety of students serving as their clients.

Radebe (2013) stated that the limited capability of TVET colleges to provide student housing has resulted in private property developers finding a profitable niche and opportunity in the student housing market. The owners of these houses seem to only care about the increased profits rather than the actual welfare and provision of a safe place for the students (Radebe, 2013). In the case of the community surrounding Majuba TVET College, the homeowner has found an opportunity to make extra income by allowing the students to rent their homes. The conditions of this rented accommodation are often poor, and the number of students sharing a room needs to be regulated. The decision of the number of students allowed to occupy a room lies with the landlord. The DHET (2012) noted that the lack of accommodation challenges had led students to rent sub-standard accommodation, which is often of poor quality. The reason for TVET college students resorting to sub-standard accommodation is due to several reasons, including that most colleges do not have policies that regulate and standardize the quality of off-campus private student accommodation.

Travis (2015) states that the physical environment experienced by the students ought to impact the educational outcomes and the student's skills attainment. A stable, safe, and secure student accommodation of good quality is associated with academic achievement and retention of students and is therefore playing a significant role in the throughput of the student (Xulu-Gama, 2019). This accommodation setup is necessary to make student life more comfortable and conducive to study (DHET, 2013). Academic success may potentially be influenced by the poor living conditions that they live in.

The landlords who own off-campus private student accommodation increase the number of students staying in one house or room to maximise their profits (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2016). According to Blomstrand (2020), the overcrowding of students is against promoting overall student well-being, as room ventilation could be challenging. The transmission of contagious viruses like the coronavirus diseases of 2019 (COVID-19) will be faster due to a lack of social distancing. Students will also be deprived of study time due to noise made by other students in the same yard. For example, five or more students share a room, and each with different studying styles and times.

Those not studying may want their friends to visit while others are studying. This setup may become a source of conflict especially if the students need to establish rigid rules of engagement.

Students staying in rented accommodations do not have security services and are exposed to crime (Kahari, 2010). The student population has become targets and potential victims of criminal activities, including muggings and house robberies. Makhaye (2017) concurs that most of the victims of on-campus or off-campus crimes suffer from trauma, leading to mild or severe mental illness, which could later contribute to the student's poor academic results, or eventually drop out of college. There are two categories of students that are staying off-campus: students that are staying in the same residential yard with their landlords and those that are not staying with their landlords. Both categories of students are at risk of experiencing crime. Both categories of students are at risk of being mugged on their way to and from campus. However, students that do not stay with their landlords are at a greater risk of break-ins and house robberies as they are targeted by local criminals for NSFAS money and electronic gadgets like cell phones and laptops.

Furthermore, female students are at risk of being sexually assaulted (raped) during these robbery incidents. Mbara (2013) adds that this has led to more limited social-contact opportunities with other students which will disadvantage off-campus students. I argue that the issue of students feeling unsafe during their travel to and from campus may also affect students making meaningful relationships with other students who might be in a position to give peer academic support. This factor will also make it difficult for students to attend extra classes and other forms of academic support available on campus, mostly offered outside the regular teaching and learning times. The non-attendance of the offered academic support might affect the student's potential to receive academic information and affect the student's chances of performing well academically (Gopal & van Niekerk, 2018).

1.7.3 TVET accommodation challenges and their effects on students

Higher institutions of learning located in impoverished and remote areas tend to have either unsuitable or unavailable student housing (DHET, 2011). As a result, academic learning and success are being severely constrained and hampered by overcrowding caused by a shortage of student housing (DHET, 2015). A study by Inyang, Ejue and Agwadu (2018) shows that off-campus residences appear to clog the achievements of the students learning outcomes, as the students that reside off-campus are subjected to different sorts of disturbances. These disturbances negatively affect their academic performance and, therefore, their academic success within the learning institution (DHET, 2011). Sleeping patterns also differ from student to student because they attend different lectures at different times. According to Schlarb, Friedrich and Merle (2017), varying sleeping patterns, sleep problems, and sleep disorders impair the academic success of all students involved. Students also differ in their preferred studying patterns; one prefers studying a night, and some study at dawn (Oxford Learning, 2017). These behaviours affect academic performance as others may disturb those trying to study (Aabid, Muhammad, Kanwal, Bodenarain and Bukhari, 2013). The matter of overcrowded student accommodation needs to be strategically looked into by the college considering building on-campus residential area for students. There is a need for quality and suitable standard off-campus student accommodation that will take care of the needs of students but will also restore their dignity as human beings.

Conditions associated with student housing that record negative satisfaction ratings include overcrowding and issues of territoriality (Amole, 2011). This condition makes the issue of overcrowded off-campus private student accommodation one of the factors that are likely to negatively affect the lives of students in their academic success.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The capability approach (CA) was founded by Amartya Sen, an Economist-philosopher (Calitz, 2016). According to Kimhur (2019), political philosophy, economics, humanities, social sciences, and education scholars have further developed and expanded the theory. The key concepts of the approach are

capabilities, functionings, conversion factors and agency. Access to student housing can be categorized as capability because access to suitable student accommodation where a student can live, study and feel safe is a resource that a student can utilise to perform well (academic success) in their studies. Academic success is a functioning that a student can achieve by converting the resources available through the capabilities to achieve functionings for equal participation in the community (Calitz, 2016). Academic success being a functioning can play a role of being a resource that will allow the individual to be able to participate and contribute economically to society. Calitz (2016) further describes an equally participating student as one with full access to all support needed and offered by the institution of higher learning and has access to institutional arrangements available to students to succeed.

Other factors that will undoubtedly influence the student's academic life, will happen at the economic, social and environmental levels. Understanding the level of influence the economic, social and environmental conversion factors impact on students' ability to succeed at the institution of higher learning can provide a theoretical and practical framework for formulating interventions to enhance opportunities and freedoms (Strydom, 2011). Those freedoms are needed to convert opportunities into achievements or functions.

The academic success of students in higher education is a concern following rising global unemployment rates and funding problems because of its link to social and economic progress in many countries (Maina & Aji, 2017). According to Mtshali (2020), there is an undeniable link between skills development, productivity and economic growth, making the TVET sector a crucial tool in achieving SA's economic objectives. Therefore, students who succeed academically increase their chances to be economically active through access to employment and other economic activities, bringing about economic growth in the country. Hence, the study plans to investigate the academic success of off-campus student accommodation offered to college students and explore the influence it has on the student's academic success.

1.9 Research methodology

This section details the appropriate methodology used in this study. These included the research approach, research design, data collection strategy, population and

sampling, data analysis strategy, and ethical considerations. Chapter 3 details the methodology.

1.9.1 Research approach

Bryman (2008) describes the qualitative research approach as more concerned with words rather than numbers. The approach seeks to find meaning and interpretation of the information as experienced by the individuals. According to Melendez (2011), qualitative research promotes a more diverse reaction from those previously asked or researched as the participants' experiences of the phenomenon being studied will not be the same across participants. Herein, there is no point in the research where participant responses and reactions will be the same. The participants' point of view in this current study will be accepted and appreciated as part of the study.

The researcher chose a qualitative research approach due to the nature of the study and its objectives. The qualitative research approach helped the researcher in gathering a deeper understanding of the student's academic success and the lived experiences and feelings relating to staying in off-campus private student accommodation. As indicated in the objectives, the life experienced by the students in their rented accommodation will need to be captured, also concerning the effects of the rental living conditions on their academic performance. This research approach is personal and not centred on a pre-designed set of categories.

1.9.2 Research design

A case study design was employed in this study. Merriam and Tiddell (2016) define a case study as an intensive descriptive analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. The case study research design allowed the investigation of rental living conditions experienced by the students in a real-life context. Herein, students shared their rental living conditions with the researcher, and how these experiences affected them and their academics. The study sought to explore a relationship between the

students' off-campus living conditions and arrangements, and the influence these had on their academic journey.

1.9.3 Data Collection Strategy

Gill (2008) asserts that the commonly used data collection strategies in qualitative research are individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). There are three major types of research interviews, namely: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2002). For this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews (SSIs). The SSIs assisted the researcher in keeping the interviewing session on track allowing participants to add information that was not asked but were valuable to the study. Open-ended questions were asked in the SSIs. These questions increased reliability by asking for clarification of the participant. The researcher probed more on some discussion points which allowed her to get a deeper understanding of the responses provided by the research participant regarding their opinions and experiences. Moreover, SSIs allowed participants to be in a setting where they were not affected by the response of other respondents. Once the researcher reached data saturation, the analysis stopped as, at that point, no new information emerged, and every detail shared was beginning to be repetitive. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation occurs when no new information is reported by participants to create more themes from the data analysis. At this stage, the researcher stopped collecting data

1.9.4 Population, sampling, and recruitment

Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood (2015) state that purposeful (purposive) sampling is widely used in qualitative research identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. The population study was currently enrolled students of Majuba TVET College staying in off-campus rented student accommodation. The study will not include students that reside in their homes and will also not include students who reside in their relatives' homes. The study participants were National Certificate Vocational (NCV) levels 3 and 4, and Report 191 from N5 and N6 courses. The NCV (levels 3 and 4) and Report 191 (NATED (National Accredited Technical Education Diploma) (N) levels 5 and 6) groups were chosen because they were returning students with experience of at least six months to a year

studying at Majuba TVET College. The researcher envisaged to interview 10 male and 10 female students. However, given the nature of qualitative research, the total number of participants was guided by data saturation. Students were invited to participate in the study through the campus notice boards. Also, the Student Representative Council (SRC) were asked to assist by broadcasting the invitation on the campus Facebook social media page. Additionally, class representatives of the chosen courses were asked to inform students about the study.

1.9.5 Data handling and analysis

After SSIs were conducted, the researcher transcribed all interviews verbatim. The coding according to themes of the participant responses commenced when participants gave information. Data from the participants was analysed immediately after the interviews. The researcher coded the data and looked for themes that emerged in all SSIs.

An audio recording device was used to record SSIs. Permission to use a tape recorder was requested from the participants. The use of an audio recording device assisted the researcher in capturing all information that no valuable information was left out. The researcher did not place audio recorder on the table where the participants saw it, as this may have influenced the amount and type of information they gave. However, they were informed about being recorded, and they provided full consent before the recording continued.

All the researcher's notes, transcripts, and audio recordings were stored in a lockable cabinet, and only accessible to the researcher and supervisor. All files will be saved in a password-protected folder to avoid unauthorised access. All this information will be used for analysis to formulate the research report.

1.9.6 Ethical considerations

According to Simons (2009), ethical consideration is practised by researchers to ensure that the study is in the best interests of the individuals or the community as a whole. Skefu (2018) states that, as much as the researcher has some interests to be

met by conducting the research, the participant's interest should always be catered for. The researcher ensured that all ethical processes were followed comply with laws and ethical standards of research.

1.9.6.1 Voluntary participation

All the students who participated in the study participated voluntarily after the researcher explained the study purpose and objectives to them. Those participating in the study will be informed that they are free to withdraw or stop participation in the study at any time.

1.9.6.2 Informed consent

The study targeted students that were over the age of 18 years and in a position to sign informed consent. The consent forms were available in English and isiZulu languages so that the content of the consent forms was understandable. All consent forms will be stipulating the nature of the study. The informed consent forms emphasised voluntary participation as mentioned earlier and also explained risks and benefits for participating in the study.

1.9.6.3 Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy

Identifying particulars of the participants were protected by using pseudonyms to ensure privacy and anonymity.

The students participating in the study were assured that the researcher would keep all information they shared confidential. All the study records were stored in a safe place where accessibility would only be limited to the researcher and supervisor as previously mentioned. None of the data was fabricated or falsified.

1.9.7 Ethical approval

Permission to conduct the study was sought from the TVET College, and the University of the Free State (UFS) General/ Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC). The ethical clearance number is UFS-HSD2022/0370/22. The gatekeeper's permission was obtained from the Head of the Majuba TVET College and the campus

manager. In the request for permission from the study participants, the researcher ensured that all information about the study was disclosed to participants.

1.9.8 Limitations

The limitation with this study was that it was conducted at Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) and the findings cannot be generalizable to other Majuba TVET college campus or other colleges. This was a limitation because the campuses of Majuba TVET College are situated in different towns that have varying social and economic setups. However, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge that will be available to policymakers of the TVET sector.

1.9.9 Chapter outline

The structure of the study will be as follows:

Chapter 1: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one introduced the study. It presented the background of the study together with the problem statement and the research objectives. An introduction of the literature review and theoretical framework was made on this chapter.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the review of available literature on the research problem. The discussion is on TVET colleges in South Africa, and sustainable development goals in terms of how they link to academic success. The student challenges that are faced by the TVET sector.

Chapter 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical influences and concepts that underpin the study. The human capital theory and the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory are briefly discussed however the capability approach is discussed further as it is the theoretical framework chosen as more relevant to the study.

Chapter 4: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 4 presents the general approach and methodology that the researcher followed in conducting the study. A qualitative approach with the case study design was adopted. This chapter discusses the sampling technique used to select study participants, and data collection and analysis strategies are discussed. The ethical considerations were taken into account and ends with discussing of the study limitations

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The finding of the study is presented in this chapter and the information is presented according to theme which were formulated according to the CA tenets.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the final chapter and it present the overall conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature relating to the study, assessing the academic success among off-campus students at Majuba TVET College. Rowley and Slack (2004) note that a literature review helps to identify and organise the concepts in the relevant literature. Du Plooy Cillier, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014, p.105) state that the literature review process involves "searching for, reading, evaluating, summarizing as much as possible of the available literature that relates both directly and indirectly to the researcher's research topic". The researcher is exposed to work done by other researchers, allowing the her to penetrate deeper into the research topic. A literature review will allow the researcher an opportunity to have access to what has been done previously, enabling them to interpret and evaluate the information that other researchers have written about. This research will attempt to identify and bridge the research gap(s) by exploring the experiences of students residing in off-campus private accommodations and their impact on academic success.

This review focuses on the concept of academic success within the similar context of Majuba TVET college in the TVET sector, followed by the policy framework for TVET Colleges in South Africa (SA) and its provision for student residences. Lastly, it will also look at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education 2030 agenda. The SDGs relate to the study because the work done by the TVET colleges is the development of capabilities such as numeracy and literacy through skills development, thus putting the students in an advantageous position to contribute to the economy positively. The student accommodation infrastructure and safety will also be discussed with the TVET College accommodation challenges as factors affecting the student's academic accomplishment.

2.2 TVET colleges in South Africa

According to the Department of Education (DoE) (2001), colleges and full-service schools are institutions that are equipped and supported by the government to provide a complete range of learning needs for all learners. According to McGrath (2011), the growing number of unemployed youth propelled governments to explore possible

solutions to address the issue and the problem of where young people will go after basic education. This task led to a renewed focus on the TVET sector, particularly in 2010, when UNESCO announced that the 10th Edition of the Global Monitoring Report would be on skills development (UNESCO, 2020). In 2002, all smaller colleges were combined to form 50 TVET colleges to strengthen their capacity to respond to the skills needed in SA. TVET colleges are mandated to provide skills training to address poverty, unemployment, and socio-economic instability (DHET, 2011). This mandate increased in the number that colleges needed to enrol, and fewer colleges available across the country made people leave their homes to study in areas that were not their hometowns. The White Paper on PSET System (pathway, qualifications and organisations) indicates that TVET colleges must admit learners of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds seeking education and training and provide quality vocational education and training (DHET, 2019). The need for student accommodation increased with the increasing number of youth coming from other towns to study in the town where the TVET colleges are situated (Smith & Hubbard, 2013).

Majuba TVET college

Majuba TVET college forms part of nine TVET colleges in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) province. This college has five campuses. The Centre for People Development (CPD) campus is located in Amajuba District in Newcastle, and the campus is located in Madadeni Township Section Two. According to the Profile and Analysis document by Amajuba District Municipality (2020), there were approximately 92 200 formally employed people in 2019. Madedeni and Osizweni Townships and Newcastle are the economic hubs of Majuba District and are classified as the larger economic centres in the province (Amajuba District Municipality, 2021). There are four economic drivers in the district, namely: manufacturing, tourism, government, and services sector (Amajuba District Municipality, 2020). Currently, chemical manufacturing and the wholesale and retail are the emerging sectors. The unemployment rate is high in the district, and community members live in poor conditions. Most of those employed work in the retail and clothing factory sectors, earning low wages. According to Amajuba District Municipality (2020), Majuba TVET college is the critical driver of skills development in Newcastle as it offers learning and skills development programmes

that focus on contributing to the shared socio-economic objectives of the local, provincial and national government.

From the researcher's knowledge, the families of people who are unemployed survive on social security grants, and those families close to the CPD campus rent out a portion of their homes to students to supplement their income. The majority of Majuba TVET College students are funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), and it stipulates the funding eligibility criteria. The NSFAS aims to promote fair and equitable access to Higher Education (HE) for South African students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the University sector, students that qualify for financial assistance receive funding to pay the total costs of tuition and for meals, books, travel, and residence. The South African government supports this funding. According to NSFAS (2022), TVET college students qualify for three types of allowance which are accommodation, transport and personal care allowance. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2021) outlines that the accommodation allowance is intended to be spent on TVET-managed accommodation; however, the funding is instead spent on private student accommodation due to the lack of TVET-managed accommodation.

Access and success in the TVET sector

The Sustainable Development Goals link access to higher education as a way to fight poverty and ensure prosperity (Raby, et al., 2022). However, according to Coughlan (2007) the above-mentioned notion is true for those students who have gained access to the TVET institution and were able to attain academic success through attaining the certified knowledge. The certified knowledge has value as it represents a form of qualification that will provide real economic solutions towards attaining economic participation through formal employment or in business. In a study by Coughlan (2007) it is stated that while a number of students can access the formal education system in the TVET sector, there are a number of factors that have an effect on success. Some of these factors are the living environment conditions that are described by Mtshali (2020) as having an impact to the quality of life that is led by students. It is stated by Coughlan (2007) that there has been a lot of effort by the South African government through the NSFAS to ensure that access to higher education is improved however

once access is granted, the conditions to success should also be in place. Meaning students who have been admitted to study should be provided with conducive places to live in while they study and the right support should be at their disposal in order to be able to academically succeed. In the case of Majuba TVET college, it is clear that access and success is interlinked because the students have limited choices in the type of accommodation they wish to occupy in the duration of their studies. The campus in which this study was conducted is based in the township and there are no student residences that are provided by the college. The qualifying students are provided with the accommodation allowances by NSFAS however the accommodation that is available is within the residential area surrounding the campus. The conditions of the off-campus accommodation are not checked in any way to see if they are conducive for students to reside in and the overall social environment are not known by any one from the college. The gap identified is that there are visible efforts by the government to assist people with accessing higher education, but it is visible that the access does not come with support to the students of the TVET sector to succeed.

2.3 Academic success

Academic success is acquiring academic achievement, engaging in educationally purposeful activities that will lead to satisfaction, acquiring desired knowledge, skills, and competencies, attaining educational outcomes, and post-college performance (Travis, 2015). The academic success issue not only focuses on teaching and learning but also features all of the above (Travis, 2015). Florence *et al.* (2008) argue that generally, as levels of education increase, there is also an associated increase in income and social status. The associated increase in socioeconomic status affects the quality of life of people by influencing access to health care, housing quality, work environment, and lifestyle factors. Academic success is seemingly critical in changing individuals' future circumstances, their family, and the overall community (Cappy, 2016). Battle and Lewis (2004) concur that education is important in developing human capital that enhances the country's economic growth. Papier McBride (2018) identified factors contributing to the poor academic success of college students, including poor living conditions, poor nutrition, a lack of self-management skills, and self-discipline. However, this research focuses on off-campus living conditions of students and the influence those living conditions have on the student's academic success. According to DHET (2015), the site or location of student housing can profoundly impact access,

equity, and redress for students requiring housing and upon their academic success. In this case, Majuba TVET College students stay within the surrounding community in rented, off-campus poorly maintained accommodation. These students interact with the social fibre of this community, and experience the issues faced by the community. For example, they are directly affected by the high crime rate. These difficulties may potentially impact students' academic life as they form part of the overall higher education experience.

This section discusses the literature relevant to the research problem and will look at the key issues of the research objectives.

2.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education 2030 agenda

In 2000, 189 countries adopted and declared to work toward the Sustainable Development Goals (Hulme, 2007). The SDG agenda aims to improve people's lives globally by ending poverty and protecting the planet (Nanda, 2015). One of the ways identified to contribute to the agenda is to transform lives through education. All the 17 SDGs focus on specific action points, with SDG 4 specific to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Statistics South Africa, 2014). Botha *et al.* (2013) state that the quality of student residences and their environment is important to consider to build on the need for inclusive and quality education. The authors believe that accommodation plays an important role in facilitating student learning and promoting student well-being. Therefore, as much as providing education and access to education is important, so is the environment where those students reside. Xulu-Gama (2019, p1) states that "student housing plays a key role as a conditioning context for student success". Rasool and Mahembe (2014) argue that human capacity and sustainable development should underpin TVET policy on residences. The report by the DHET clearly outlines that the emergence of off-campus student accommodation facilities relates to the lack of sustainable development of housing infrastructure for students (DHET, 2011). Sustainable housing is defined by Smets and van Lindert (2016) as a home that affects the environment in a minimum way in terms of environmental toxins and the use of material resources and that home has a positive physical and psychological impact on those living in it. Students will plan accordingly, and structured residences will have

other important resources included. For example, clean water, electricity, safe residences, study areas, and many other resources that would make the residences suitable for student life.

2.5 Student accommodation infrastructure and safety

The TVET sector headcount enrolment has expanded from 350 000 in 2010 to 650 000 by 2013. By 2015, it had increased to one million, where headcount enrolment refers to the number of students who register in a year (DHET, 2013). Nimako and Bondinubaa (2013) reported that the student accommodation facilities provided by the learning institutions, specifically the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, were not enough as few TVET colleges are offering on-campus accommodation to the student. Other TVET Colleges and Higher Education institutions (HEI) that offer on-campus residences are failing to keep up with the demand. Most of the students rent unsuitable off-campus residences (Mtshali, 2020). In South Africa, only a few colleges can provide some of their students with on-campus student accommodation. All other TVET sector students will have to make their arrangements which often involve renting out space in a room from houses of the community members around the respective campus. Mbara (2013) states that when higher learning institutions across the world emerged, they provided most students with on-campus accommodation because the number of students who enrolled was low. However, with the increase in the number of colleges, the number of students seeking to enter the post-school sector, and the decrease in university funding, there was an increase in the number of students residing off-campus. The inability of TVET colleges to provide on-campus accommodation has allowed the surrounding community members to convert their households into private accommodations for students. Some landlords resort to building sub-standard structurally unsafe rooms with electricity illegally connected. Landlords provide sub-standard accommodation to have more tenants. This rather competitive resolution has led to an increased concern for students' safety and welfare, which is supported by findings from Nimako and Bondinuba's (2013) study on the quality of student accommodation in higher education. The study states that the unlimited and uninspected number of private entities involved in infrastructure provision has increased competition in the students' accommodation industry. This increase has led to an increased concern for the welfare and safety of students serving as their clients.

Radebe stated that the restricted capability of colleges to provide student housing has resulted in private property developers finding a profitable niche and opportunity in the student housing market. The owners of these houses seem to only care about the increased profits rather than the actual welfare and provision of a safe place for the students (Radebe, 2013). In the case of the community surrounding Majuba TVET College, the homeowner has found an opportunity to make extra income by allowing the students to rent their homes. The conditions of this rented accommodation are often poor, and the number of students sharing a room is not regulated. The decision on the number of students allowed to occupy a room lies with the landlord. DHET (2012) noted that the lack of accommodation challenges led students to rent sub-standard accommodation, which is often of poor quality. This renting of sub-standard accommodation is due to several reasons, including that most colleges have no policy in place that regulates and standardises the quality of off-campus residences provided to students

The study by Travis (2015) states that the physical environment experienced by the students ought to have an impact on their educational outcomes and the student's attainment of skills. Obeng-Odoom (2012) notes that over time, the tertiary residential sector focused little on the relationship between learning and accommodation. This issue of residences was regarded as simply an issue of providing housing. A stable accommodation of good quality is associated with academic achievement and retention of students. Herein, good accommodation, therefore, plays a significant role in the throughput of the student, and "this is necessary to make student life more comfortable and to provide conditions more conducive to study" (DHET 2013, p6). The students of Majuba TVET College find themselves in a situation where they have to look and find their student accommodation around the campus. The physical conditions of those accommodations vary. The conditions of most student residential places are poor and may affect how the student performs academically.

The landlords who own off-campus residences tend to increase the number of students staying in one house or room to maximize their profits (Ghani & Sulaiman, 2016). The overcrowding of students is against promoting the overall student well-being as room ventilation could be challenging. According to Mtshali (2020), it is stipulated in the Government Gazette (1997) that a maximum of two students should be residing in a single room. The transmission of contagious viruses like COVID-19 will be faster

due to a lack of social distancing. Students are also likely to be deprived of study time due to noise. This deprivation may be a source of conflict, especially if the students could not be a source of conflict, especially if the students could not establish rigid rules of engagement. According to Powell and Hall (2014), noise, power cuts, and community social activities are some of the disturbances that students living off-campus are exposed to, which poses a challenge in their learning process.

Students staying in rented accommodations do not have security services and are exposed to crime (Kahari, 2010). The student population has become targets and potential victims of muggings and house robberies. Makhaye (2017) concurs that most of the victims of on-campus or off-campus crimes end up going through trauma, leading to mild or severe mental illness, which could later contribute to the student's poor academic results or dropping out of school. Staten (2016) states that students who live in private off-campus residences cannot stay after lectures to participate in on-campus learning, including group work activities, attending additional lectures and using the library. Student resort to this action because they have to walk in the dark to their off-campus accommodation and are at risk of being robbed of their belongings, attacked, and raped.

There are two categories of students that are staying off-campus that exist in Majuba TVET college. It is students staying in the same residential yard with their landlords and those not staying with their landlords. Both categories of students are at risk of experiencing crime. Both categories of students are at risk of being mugged on their way to campus and home. However, the students that are not staying with their landlords are at a greater risk of break-ins and house robberies as they are targeted by local criminals for NSFAS money and electronic gadgets like cell phones and laptops. Female students are at risk of being raped during these robbery incidences. Mbara (2013) adds that this has led to more limited social-contact opportunities with other students, which disadvantages off-campus students. The issue of students feeling unsafe during their travel to and from campus may also affect students making meaningful relationships with other students who might be in a position to give peer academic support. This factor will also make it difficult for students to be able to attend extra classes and other forms of academic support available on campus, which are mostly offered outside the normal teaching and learning times. The non-attendance of the offered academic support might affect the student's potential to receive academic

information and affect the student's chances of performing well academically (Gopal & van Niekerk, 2018).

2.6 TVET accommodation challenges and their effects on students

The DHET Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Residence Public Universities Policy states that the place where the student housing or accommodation is situated significantly impact access, equity, and redress for students requiring housing as well as upon their academic success (DHET, 2015). Provision and access to suitable student residences are not only about providing students with beds. However, they should provide students with an environment that promotes effective teaching and learning (Gopal, 2018). There are often inadequate or unavailable student housing options at higher educational institutions in impoverished and remote areas (DHET, 2011). Due to a lack of student housing, academic learning and success are severely impeded (DHET, 2015).

A study by Inyang *et al.* (2018) shows that off-campus residences appear to put a clog on the achievements of the students learning outcomes, as the students that reside off-campus are subjected to different sorts of disturbances. Some of the disturbances are social problems of the society where students are residing, noise, easy access to drugs and alcohol, and vulnerability to crime. These disturbances negatively affect their academic performance, and therefore, their academic success within the learning institution (DHET, 2011). "Most students who attend public TVET colleges are from disadvantaged families, and cannot afford to pay registration fees and accommodation costs, and therefore finding suitable student accommodation is a challenge" (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2010). NSFAS provides financial support; however, TVET college students still struggle with monthly needs, including food and rent as the financial aid scheme has a tendency to process student payments after every four months. As a result, this adds an extra burden as students worry about meeting their basic needs and paying their monthly rental fees. According to Morgan and McDowell (2010), students' families also experience financial burdens as they often have to send money for rent and food while students wait for their NSFAS monthly allowance. Obeng-Odoom (2012) suggests that colleges should offer students more than the currently available financial support. Herein, students can be linked with the

Department of Social Development (DSD) in the Newcastle area, which will offer them support as per the needs of students.

Morgan and McDowell (2010) note that residing in a mixed-age off-campus private student accommodation negatively influences the students' academic success. The daily activities of the tenants sharing the accommodation may differ as others are students, others employed and others not employed. The sleeping patterns also differ from one student to another because they attend different lectures at different times. According to Schlarb *et al.* (2017), varying sleeping patterns, sleep problems, and sleep disorders severely impair the students' academic success as their bodies do not get the much needed rest in order to continue participating actively in learning. Students also differ in their preferred studying patterns: one may prefer to study a night while others may study at dawn (Oxford Learning, 2017). These patterns may affect their academic performance as others may disturb those trying to study (Aabid *et al.*, 2013). The Majuba TVET College management should investigate the matter of overcrowded student accommodation because of the unmet need for quality and suitable standard of student accommodation that prioritises students' needs while restoring their dignity.

Access to campus facilities and relating with the campus community is a challenge that students who reside in off-campus private student accommodation encounter. According to Mtshali (2020), students who reside off-campus find it challenging to join the on-campus study groups and participate in the on-campus communities, contributing to their inability to construct their identity as Higher Education (HE) students socially.

Overcrowding and territorial issues are associated with negative student housing satisfaction ratings (Amole, 2011). These conditions make the issue of overcrowded rented off-campus in their academic success.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature review showed that the students who reside off-campus experience several challenges. These challenges negatively affect students and thus affect their inability to cope and adjust to learning. The study seeks to fill in a gap in the

experiences of students residing in private off-campus residences in a peri-urban area and the impact of the challenges to their academic success.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 of the study presented the literature review section, which discussed the context of Higher Education (HE) in South Africa (SA), where the Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) sector exists. The TVET sector accommodation challenges were also discussed, especially the challenges students face in communities where off-campus students reside. This chapter discusses theoretical frameworks that informed the study, with a particular focus on the Capability Approach (CA) which guided the study.

3.2 Human capital theory

According to Walker (2005), the human capital theory views the attainment of education as an investment toward improving human productivity and the level of individual earnings. This investment can be made by the public through government funds or privately through the individual funding their education. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funds a large number of Majuba TVET College students. The state ensures that the constitutional right of access to post-school education of students from poor and working-class families is upheld (National Student Financial Aid Scheme [NSFAS], 2022). This assurance is an example of the state or public investment in human capital as the financially assisted citizens who complete their programme have higher chance of employment and will later keep the country's economy afloat. On an individual level, people accessing the available assistance and others paying for their education fees is an example of individuals doing something towards advancing their knowledge with the hope of improving human productivity and increasing their earnings. This theory makes a linear assumption that educational attainment leads to an increase in earnings and, therefore, a better quality of life. However, it ignores the social dimension brought by the reality in which people experience and perceive their lives and the things they value.

3.3 Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory comprises a five-tier model of human needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization (McLeod, 2018). The physiological and safety needs fall under the

category of basic needs, followed by belonging and love needs, esteem as psychological needs, and self-actualisation at the top of the hierarchy as self-fulfilment (Kaur, 2013). According to McLeod (2018), physiological needs (basic needs) are at the lower level of the hierarchy. Those needs must be met first before an individual can attend to psychological needs, followed by self-actualisation. According to Freitas and Leonard (2011), self-actualisation depends on meeting underlying needs, first physiological needs, psychological needs. The individual can then look outward from oneself to humankind.

For this study, students need to reach a stage of being able to achieve academic success in their studies. In this instance, the physiological needs of having food, shelter, and clothing must be satisfied to enable them to psychologically be in a state to concentrate in class, participate in academic activities, and benefit from the academic activities on their campus. Subsequently, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, they will reach the self-utilisation stage, which includes the feeling of achievement, reaching their full potential, and being capable of achieving their best.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs theory will not be the main framework for this study because, according to Kaur (2013), this theory suggests that individuals who grow up with their basic needs and psychological need unmet will be unlikely to function in a healthy and well-adjusted manner. The theory further suggests that having their lower needs unmet will result in people not having the motivation and the agency to identify the resource to create capabilities (opportunities) that are available to achieve things they value.

3.4 Capability approach

The capability approach (CA) is concerned with the aspects of people's lives, such as their health, the education they can enjoy, and the support available for them to enjoy in their social network (Robeyns, 2017). The approach is also concerned with what people can do, including one's ability to work, raise a family, travel, and be politically active within their communities. The approach cares about whether or not people have the real freedom to do whatever they want to do and the options open to them when exercising their freedom. According to Robeyns (2017, p2), "the basic claim of the capability approach is that, when asking normative questions, we should ask what people can do and what lives they can lead".

The CA is the chosen theory used in the study to view the dynamic issues presented by the study topic, mainly the issues of poverty, inequality, and social arrangements. Robeyns (2005) states that the CA is used in fields, particularly in welfare economics, development, social policy, and philosophy. The approach accounts for the complex social, political, and environmental aspects that people encounter while trying to exercise their freedoms and pursue what they value. From a CA perspective, the means and the ends are of great importance; however, only the ends have intrinsic importance, whereas the means are instrumental to achieving the goals that will increase well-being and development. Relevant to the study is the CA's suitability for integrating capabilities available to the population of students under study, types of conversion factors, and individual agency within the analysis of experiences of students who reside in off-campus private accommodation.

3.4.1 Why CA for this study?

The CA incorporates the multi-dimensional issues relating to the student's academic success and living conditions. This approach sparks conversations among people interested in the students' experiences and possibly find alternative ways in which people can solve social community issues that affect students who reside in them.

According to Walker (2005, p.20), "development is driven by human capability", and the focus needs to be less on economic progress but human capability. Focusing on the latter is a stronger foundation of progress for development that leads to living that is worthwhile to the people in pursuit of things that they value (Walker, 2005). Sen (1991) argues that in human development issues, if only people focus on expanding human freedom instead of focusing on economic progress at the end of educational efforts, economic growth will become the foundational understanding of development. This expansion will lead to more worthwhile and free lives. The capability approach is applicable in the study as it provides a multidimensional tool to analyse the opportunities available to students concerning the socio-structural challenges that directly impact the life they aspire to value. As per the CA, people's ability to function should be conceptualised as a means by which they can achieve their goals of well-being, justice, and development, i.e., their ability to participate in the actions and activities they want to do, and to become the person they want to be (Calitz, 2016, p.51). The CA is a well-fitting theoretical framework that identified the capabilities the students valued and considered the vulnerabilities (conversion factors) at interplay

towards the individual aspiring to achieve specific functionings. The approach considered the individual level agency in the analysis of students' experiences.

The CA also focuses on the individual hence each person's capabilities, the types of resources, the types of conversion factors and the level of the agency are all taken into account when making conclusions. Students come from different backgrounds and geographical locations and are diverse and have varying interpersonal backgrounds. The above, combined with the capabilities, the various types of resources available to individuals, and the level of agency, will collaboratively determine the functionings achieved. The CA can get input from people and groups in all social and economic backgrounds to gather data in the context that will reflect individual's capabilities, perceived freedoms and the functionings they value. In the sections that follow, key tenets of the capability approach are discussed, focusing on their applicability to the topic of this study.

3.4.2 Capabilities and Functionings

Capabilities and functionings are vital constituents of the capability approach. In the CA context, Wilson-Strydom (2011) defines capabilities as the freedom a person has to enjoy valuable functionings. Robeyns (2017, p.38) adds that "capabilities are what people can be and to do". They are real opportunities, and they differ from person to person. For example, access to a TVET college means that a person can have the capability (an opportunity) to get educated. The functionings are an outcome or an achievement, and the capabilities are the ability granted to achieve. In this current study, a capability was an opportunity for a student to access an institution of higher learning to further their studies. That opportunity came with other prospects, such as the ability to enjoy life and freedom of being away from home (independence) and access to extra-mural activities or participating in community activities (social activism). The functionings that came with the opportunities were being educated and having a post-Grade 12 qualification, acquiring practical reasoning, attaining good marks that allowed the student to progress to the next level of study, a qualification that the student will attain, and forming new friendships. Another opportunity was the possibility of forming critical professional networks and the likelihood of job opportunities that have the potential to improve the student's quality of life and their family. The capabilities and functionings phenomenon is closely related; however, the functionings are the results of the capabilities.

3.4.3 Conversion factors

The capability of a person to achieve depends on the conversion factors. Calitz (2016) describes the conversion factor as the degree to which resources are transformed into a function. The resources available will need to go through a conversion process where they are converted to play a valuable function. According to Nambiar (2013), conversion depends on personal, social, and environmental factors, which influence the functionings to achieve certain things. It is the personal characteristics (age, physical conditions, gender, and more), social characteristics (policies, norms, cultural values, gender roles, and power social dynamics), and environmental characteristics (climate conditions and geographical conditions). Two individuals may be interested in utilising the same resource; however, the utilisation may achieve a different functioning length. For example, it is likely, however, that a student who is responsible for helping at home with NSFAS money will send some of the money to their family to cover their needs, leaving them with a smaller amount to spend on themselves than a student who does not need to share their money with his or her family. Therefore, the latter student has more money (resources) to convert into and spend on what they value.

The students' challenges in their off-campus private accommodations may be seen as conversion factors. Wilson-Strydom (2011) adds that the challenges people face in achieving functionings also contribute to how much they are willing to achieve. In the case of the TVET college students, academic success was one of the functioning that resulted from students' capabilities (Calitz, 2016). Personal characteristics can influence academic success. For example, a student who is partially blind and is not given enough support with a disability within the institutions will have a challenge with studying and, therefore, might not be able to achieve the academic success that he or she would have potentially achieved with support. The environmental factors, such as the social fibre and the social dynamics of the community in which the students stay, will influence academic success. For example, students who stay in quiet areas that allow for study time have that as a resource that will assist them towards being academically successful. In contrast, students who stay in an area with lots of social destruction, such as high crime rate, a high number of taverns (alcohol establishments) and high rates of substance abuse, may be distracted, which may affect their ability to succeed academically. The latter students have these social ills

as the negative factors that they will need to put extra effort into and find other alternatives to navigate their way and be able to be academically successful.

The CA recognises human diversity when it comes to conversion factors. According to Robeyns (2003), the various conversion factors interact varyingly for each individual and social group.

3.4.4 Agency

Code (2020) describes agency as the level of individuals' capability to make choices or act on those choices in a way that makes a difference in their lives. According to Sen (1999), the role of an agent is to actively bring about change by participating actively in the society where they are placed. A sense of agency can imply that it is individuals' freedom that individuals have and the opportunity to convert the resources available to them to achieve outcomes that matter. The freedom to become an active agent also depends on social, political, and economic opportunities available to us (Sen, 1999). In the case of students, an individual may decide to leave their home for access to education far away from home. This access to education opportunities is the only way they perceive it will change their living conditions. According to Duckworth (2012), a student's sense of agency can influence the likelihood that he or she will access and participate in education and, therefore, realise his or her potential. This decision lies with a person as an agent towards achieving things they value. They may value having a qualification or being independent when deciding to leave home to stay on their own. However, viewing admission and access to education and NSFAS funding and allowances as positive conversion factors and opportunities that will assist towards reaching the desired level of functioning. A level of agency is required as the student needs to deliberate, choose and constantly act on what they perceive as a good life.

Agency is characterised by a person's ability to make choices that aid them towards pursuing goals that align with his values and are essential to the life s/he wishes to lead (Walker, 2006). Agency is an important characteristic needed to exert control towards one's life. According to Walker (2005, p.34), an agency is an "important dimension of human development". The conversion of these resources depends on the conversion factors and how they encourage or inhibit the conversion of capabilities into functionings. The CA acknowledges that each individual in society is

not the same, and their experiences of conversion factors (Robeynes, 2005). differ Therefore, the level of agency also differs from one individual to another as other people have high level of agency and others display lower level of agency.

3.4.5. Capabilities and social justice

“The promotion of social justice has been supported by the South African Higher education policy context since the early 1990s” (Wilson-Strydom, 2011, p409). Its focus was mainly on access to Higher Education (HE). From that time, a range of policy changes translated to legislative reforms such as the National Plan for Higher Education and the Education White paper 3. These legislative reforms brought about sector changes in HE, such as an increase in the number of students able to access TVET colleges and other institutions of higher learning. On the other perspective, the increase in access to higher education institutions provided an opportunity for those who view access to higher education as a capability. However, it opened doors to issues of the need for student residences not being met as the number of students accessing the institutions of higher learning is more than the number of residences available to accommodate those students. The capability approach guided the researcher on how she viewed the research problem mainly focusing on the tenets of the approach, which are the functionings and capabilities, agency, and conversion factors. The issues of social justice issues will later allow us to come up with recommendations based on the findings of the study.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the capability approach and discussed its applicability to the study. It briefly discussed the human capital theory and Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in terms of the challenges that students who reside off-campus private accommodation faced in relation to their academic success. The next chapter details the methodology applied in the study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. It focuses on the research paradigm; research design; research approach; population, sampling, and recruitment; data collection; and data handling and analysis strategies. The chapter further presents the research site, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study.

4.2 Research paradigm

Maree (2016, p.52) defines a research paradigm as a "set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular worldview". Bryman (2012) adds that paradigms are lens through which we see, perceive, and experience reality. The research paradigm employed in this study was the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is more focused on with understanding the world subjectively from the experiences of individuals that are being studied (Bryman, 2012). According to Mtshali (2020), to understand a person's actions and behaviour, people have to try and see the world through the eyes of the actors, and that can be reached by the participants sharing their subjective experiences. For example, the type of private off-campus student residences available, and students' socioeconomic background contribute to the accommodation students of Majuba TVET College choose. Students from poor socio-economic backgrounds are prone to choosing cheaper off-campus student accommodation. However, the affordable accommodation will be in an area where the surrounding social factors such as overcrowded accommodation may negatively affect the student's quality of life. In the case of applying the interpretative paradigm, the students will be sharing their experiences as they live and perceive them every day, and the research will be using that data to create meaning as applicable to the study topic.

4.3 Research approach

Creswell (2014) states that it is important to illustrate the research approach, as it is an effective strategy to increase the validity of social research. According to Atieno

(2019), there are two research approaches: qualitative and quantitative. A study may choose a qualitative approach, a quantitative approach, or mixed methods, which applies qualitative and quantitative approaches. A qualitative research approach was chosen approach for this study due to the nature of the study and the objectives of the study as outlined. Bryman (2008) describes the qualitative research design as one more concerned with words rather than numbers. The approach sought to find meaning and interpretation of the information as experienced by the individuals. According to Melendez (2011), qualitative research promotes a more diverse reaction from previously asked or researched due to the subjective nature of participant responses informed by their experiences and perceptions of the topic under exploration.

The qualitative research approach was appropriate for the study topic as it helped the researcher to establish the relationship between the student's experiences of living in off-campus private accommodations and their academic success at Majuba TVET College, specifically on the Centre for People Development (CPD) Campus.

Furthermore, this research approach allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perceptions of staying in off-campus private accommodations.

4.4 Research design

According to Van de Voordt (2002), descriptive research is about how reality is, and therefore the descriptive research questions affords the researcher to get raw data from the participants. Bryman (2012) states that there are three types of descriptive research methods in qualitative research, namely are; observational method, case study method, and survey research. This study employed a case study research design, which is descriptive research. Merriam and Tiddell (2016) define a case study as an intensive descriptive, and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. Yin (2017) states that the case study research design enables the researcher to study the particular case in its environment. In particular, this research focused on the community of Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) students who reside in private rented accommodations. The case study research design allowed the exploration of off-campus rental living conditions as experienced by the students in a real-life context

and environments as experienced by the participants. Herein, students shared their experiences and perceptions of living in off-campus private accommodations, particularly and how their experiences affected them and their academic life.

4.5 Population, sampling, and recruitment

A study population is defined as “the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected” (Bryman, 2012, p.712). This study's population was Majuba TVET College students on the CPD campus who reside in off-campus private accommodations near their campus.

Frankel and Wallen (2018) define a sample as a group of units which may be people, units, organizations, documents, among others, from the populations of elements on which information is required. The type of sample needed is directly related to the research questions asked by the researcher. Bryman (2012) further states that a sample is a group of participants representing the larger group or population. In this instance, it refers to objects, subjects, phenomenon or activities on which the researchers wish to research to find new information (Bryman, 2012). According to Skefu (2018), the validity of the study is enhanced by the type of sample, and the findings can be generalized to other populations in similar situations as the study's phenomenon.

The sampling method that the study applied was purposive sampling, a technique that selects a sample based on the study's specific characteristics and objectives. Palinkas *et al.* (2015) state that purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. The study sample was 20 participants, and the researcher got an opportunity to deeply understand the study topic. The number of participants selected was enough to get the researcher rich information which allowing for a deep understanding of their experiences in the private off-campus student residences.

The study involved students enrolled at Majuba TVET College and the participants were all staying in private off-campus rented accommodations. All the study participants are studying the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) levels 3 and 4, then

also Report 191 (NATED (N) levels 5 and 6). The NCV (levels 3 and 4) and Report 191 (N5 and N6) groups were chosen as were returning students and have experienced at least six months to a year studying at Majuba TVET College (CPD campus). Therefore, this group of participants had experience and studied through the off-campus living conditions, and shared their experiences with the researcher. There was a balanced representation of 10 male and 10 female students who participated in the study. Nineteen participants were between 20–31 years, with one participant being 42 years. The study sample included students that did not live in the same off-campus private accommodation.

The study participants who is 42 years old took part in the study voluntarily and she is also staying in off-campus rented accommodation however her case brought different dynamics to the data. She is a female student and she has a child who is also a student at one of the universities in South Africa. Due to the NSFAS funding students more types of allowances in the universities when compared to the TVET sector, the participant's child is the one who financially takes care of the 42-year mother for months when she is waiting for her NSFAS payments.

For this study, students were invited to participate in the study through campus notice boards. In addition, the Student Representative Council (SRC) posted the invitation on the Majuba TVET College Facebook social media page. The campus class representatives were also asked to inform students about the study. The researcher focused on students enrolled in both the NCV program (levels 3 and 4) and Report 191 (N5 and N6) students. This was done to minimise participants reporting the same experiences.

4.6 Data collection strategy

According to Gill (2008), the commonly used data collection strategies in qualitative research are individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews (SSIs). These interviews are defined as “interviews are an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Interviews are useful when the topic of inquiry relates to issues that require complex questioning and considerable probing” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001). Regarding this

study, SSIs allowed the researcher to get the participants' attitudes, feelings, and beliefs and allowed the researcher to explore their attitudes and feelings about their off-campus living conditions and impact on academic success. The researcher utilised an SSI schedule to collect data. According to (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001), SSI schedule is concerned with the interviewer using a set of predetermined questions and the respondents answer in their own words. The SSI schedule had pre-set interview questions grouped into themes. During the SSIs, the researcher asked participants open-ended questions to increase reliability by asking for clarification and allowed them to elaborate on their responses. Herein, the researcher probed more on certain discussion points allowing her to deeply understand participants' responses regarding their perceptions and experiences of living in off-campus private accommodation. Mouton (2007) adds that the researcher can take notes while in the field as study participants respond to questions from individual interviews and focus groups.

4.6 Data analysis strategies

Du Plooy Cillier *et al.* (2014) define data analysis as bringing order, structure, and meaning to the vast amount of information collected through data collection strategies. During data analysis, the researcher gets an understanding of and interprets the events about the topic as narrated by the participants. This study employed thematic data analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic data analysis is a powerful and fitting method to utilise when the researcher seeks to understand a set of experiences, thoughts and behaviour across the data set. This analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2019) comprises six steps which are not linear but recursive. For this current study, the researcher applied these steps of thematic analysis in the following manner (table 4.1):

Table 4.1: Six steps of thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019)

Step 1	The researcher had to familiarise herself with the data through conducting the interviews, recording them, transcribing the data, re-reading the data, noting down the information (writing field notes, comments and memos) and reflecting on it.
Step 2	The researcher generated initial codes in a systematic manner. The data was organised by allocating it to their related codes.
Step 3	The researcher identified themes in the data and organised the coded data according to the themes.
Step 4	The researcher reviewed and finalized themes. Under this step, one can continue to identify additional data to be analysed under each theme.
Step 5	The researcher defined and named themes. One can look for more themes in the data, and in this step, there were clear definitions of themes, and a name was given to each identified theme.
Step 6	The researcher conducted document analysis and interpreted the results by refining the themes and interpreted the data of themes. In this step, the researcher related the analysis back to the research question, research objectives and the reviewed literature. She further wrote the research analysis chapter.

The researcher collected data coded according to the research questions guided by the capability approach. The questions on the SSI schedule were divided according to the CA's central themes: capabilities, functionings, conversion factors, and agency. The responses were organised into the themes above mentioned themes, making the analysis easier. All the responses from the participants were captured verbatim. This data capturing was done to avoid looking at the authentic meaning of the information participants shared. On the SSIs, the researcher used transcripts to create themes as they emerged during data analysis. Data from the participants was analysed immediately after every SSI. The researcher coded the data and searched for themes that emerged from all interviews. According to Marshall and Rossmann (2011), it is paramount for the researcher to re-read the collected data several times as this will allow the researcher to immerse themselves in the data and therefore be intimately familiar with it. Once the researcher reached data saturation, the data analysis was stopped because no new information emerged from the participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) define data saturation as a stage that occurs during data collection, and it is

when the researcher is not getting new and unique findings. At this stage, the researcher discontinued collecting and finalised analysing the available data.

The researcher used an audio recording device to record SSIs. Permission to use an audio recorder was obtained from all participants. Using an audio recording device allowed the researcher to go over the information material and ensure that she captured all data. In this instance, none of the valuable information was excluded, and all the needed data was noted and coded correctly. The audio recording device was not placed on the table where the participants could see as this may have potentially influenced the amount and type of information they gave. The researcher took field notes and ensured that all the audio recorder information is recorded is recorder to be analysed.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Sekaran (2013) describes ethics as moral principles that individuals should follow. It is further added by Sekaran (2013) that ethics are the moral and professional code of conduct that regulates standards and human behaviour. A researcher must always conduct his or her research study in an ethically acceptable manner, as that will assist in making the finding universally accepted within the academic and research field. Permission to conduct the study was sought from Majuba TVET College, and the University of the Free State (UFS) General/ Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC). The ethical clearance number is UFS-HSD2022/0370/22. A gatekeeper permission letter was obtained from the Head of the Majuba TVET College and the campus manager.

Simons (2009) states that researchers practice ethical consideration to ensure that the study is in the best interests of the individuals or the community. The researcher ensured that the participants were comfortable at all levels throughout the study. Additionally, Skefu (2018) asserts that the study should meet not only the interests of the researcher but also those of the participants. The researcher ensured that she followed all processes to comply with laws and ethical research standards.

4.7.1 Voluntary participation and Informed consent

According to Sara & Amelia (2018), voluntary participation refers to all research participants being free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion. All the students who participated in the study understood that participation was voluntary they were free to withdraw or stop participation in the study at any time. The study participants needed to be registered Majuba TVET College students to participate.

Informed consent refers to a process by which a subject voluntarily confirms their willingness to participate in a particular study, after having been given all the information of the aspects of the study (Sara & Amelia, 2018). Obtaining informed consent from participants is essential because it allows a participant the opportunity to decide whether to take part in the study or not. This study targeted students that are over the age of 18 years. These participants signed their informed consent forms. The consent forms were available in both English and isiZulu languages. The researcher used these languages in their simplest form to ensure that participants understood the content detailed in the informed consent forms. Before conducting SSIs, the researcher introduced herself and provided participants with the study information. All participants agreed to continue participate in the study by providing verbal consent to be voice recorded. All consent forms stipulated the nature of the study, including possible risks and benefits associated with their participating. The researcher sought permission from participants to use the audio recording device. To ensure that all students who take part in the study are registered in the current year, all study participants were requested to produce student cards or proof of registration.

4.7.2 Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy

The researcher acknowledges that some of the information shared was confidential and that the participant's information was to be kept confidential. Pseudonyms were allocated to each participant to ensure their anonymity. The students participating in the study were assured that the researcher would keep all information they shared strictly confidential and that the records would be kept in a safe place where accessibility was limited to the researcher and her supervisor. All files were saved in a password-protected folder on the researcher's laptop to avoid any unauthorised access.

The data collected and used by the researcher to reach the study conclusions would be shared with other researchers and institutions of higher learning. However, that will happen after the findings are published.

4.8 Ensuring rigour (trustworthiness)

4.8.1 Credibility

Maree (2016) mentions that several strategies are utilised to ensure the credibility of a study including well presented research methods, a research design that goes well with the research question, and a theoretical framework through which study data is analysed. Mtshali (2020) proclaims that establishing early familiarity with the participants, and continuous involvement with participants is another strategy to build credibility. The researcher gained participants' trust by emphasizing the ethics guideline, also put their fears at ease so that they could easily share their experiences of living in an off-campus private accommodation and the impact of the living conditions on their studies. According to Bryman (2012), another way of ensuring credibility is the frequent supervision sessions between the researcher and the supervisor, which is where the researcher shared his or her work, and received guidance from the supervisor. The researcher also utilized flexibility in the interview schedule, that way the study participants came to the study interviews relaxed.

4.9 Limitations of the study

Study limitations are defined by (Ross & Zaidi, 2019) as weaknesses identified with the study that may have an effect on the study outcome and conclusion. The limitation identified by the researcher with this study was that the study was conducted at Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) and the findings are not generalizable to other TVET College campuses. This was a limitation because the campuses of Majuba TVET College are situated in different towns that have varying social and economic setups when compared to other colleges. However, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge that will be available to policymakers of the TVET sector.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter explained the research methodology the researcher utilised to conduct the study. The chapter presented the research paradigm, research approach and

design. The study employed an interpretive research paradigm to understand the view in which the students who reside off-campus are experiencing reality. Furthermore, the chapter presented data collection; data analysis; population, sampling, and recruitment strategies; ethical considerations and approvals pertinent to the study; and the limitations that might be associated with the study. The following chapter presents the study findings.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The researcher will present findings as follows: socioeconomic characteristics, opportunities enjoyed by students residing in private off-campus accommodation, resources available to students, factors affecting students, and perceived actions students are taking to create a positive learning environment, and the tenets of the capability approach to present and discuss the themes that emerged from the data collected.

5.2 Demographic profile of participants

Below are the summarised profiles of the participants (Table 5.1). The summary also includes information on the courses the participants are enrolled in the college and the type of accommodation they stay in while studying.

Table 5.1: Demographic information of participants

no	Pseudonym	Gender	Programme	Age	Type of off-campus accommodation	NSFAS funded/ not funded
1	Siboniso	Male	Office Administration L3 (NCV)	22	Outbuilding- not sharing	Funded
2	Philani	Male	Tourism L4 (NCV)	27	Single room in a house	Funded
3	Kagiso	Male	Public Management (N5)	22	Sharing room - 6 occupants in a house	Funded
4	Melusi	Male	Financial Management (N6)	23	Sharing room - 4 occupants in a house	Funded
5	Nthuthuko	Male	Office Administration L4 (NCV)	25	Single room in a house	Funded

6	Phumlani	Male	Human Resource Management (N5)	22	Outbuilding	Funded
7	Sicelo	Male	Financial Management (N5)	21	Outbuilding	Funded
8	Mxolisi	Male	Public Management (N6)	31	Outbuilding	Funded
9	Banele	Male	Tourism L3 (NCV)	29	Single a room in a house	Funded
10	Lindelani	Male	Office Administration L4 (NCV)	23	Sharing a room- 3 occupants in a house	Funded
11	Buhle	Female	Financial Management (N6)	22	Sharing a room in a house	Funded
12	Nana	Female	Hospitality L3 (NCV)	22	Outbuilding- 2 occupants sharing a room	Funded
13	Glory	Female	Hospitality L4 (NCV)	20	Sharing a room in a house	Funded
14	Andile	Female	Tourism L4 (NCV)	26	Sharing room - 6 occupants in a house	Not funded
15	Bonisile	Female	Office Administration L3 (NCV)	20	Outbuilding- not sharing	Not funded
16	Samukelisiwe	Female	Human Resource Management (N5)	26	Single room in a house	Funded
17	Nokwanda	Female	Public Management (N6)	20	Sharing room - 3 occupants in a house	Funded
18	Zama	Female	Hospitality L4 (NCV)	21	Outbuilding- 3 occupants sharing a room	Funded

19	Siphumelele	Female	Public Management (N5)	42	Outbuilding- not sharing	Funded
20	Nobuhle	Female	Public Management (N5)	20	Sharing room - 7 occupants in a house	Funded

5.3 Research findings from the participants

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews (SSIs) for this study with the students of Majuba TVET College (Centre for People Development [CPD] campus). The themes that emerged from the data are socio-economic background, opportunities enjoyed by students residing in private off-campus accommodation, resources available to students, factors affecting students, and perceived actions students are taking to create a positive learning environment.

Table 5.2: Thematic table of findings

CA Categories	THEME	SUB-THEME
Capabilities	Socio-economic background	Available financial support
		Limited financial support
		Lack of financial support
	Access to NSFAS funding that allowed the student to enrol	
	Opportunity to earn income	
	Sense of independency and privacy	
	Networking/exposure	
Conversion factors	Economic conversion factors Social conversion factors Environmental conversion factors	

Agency	Collective agency/	
	Individual agency	

Category 1: Capabilities

In this section, data is interpreted from a capability approach perspective. As noted in chapter 3, the capability approach is useful in this study as it provides a practical framework and allows the research to capture students' experiences concerning their rental living conditions. The sections discuss the capabilities /opportunities available to the students, followed by conversion factors, and finally, agency.

As presented above, participants had varying experiences. In their responses, there were advantages that these participants associated with being students of Majuba TVET College who resided in off-campus rented private accommodation. Accessing education is the primary capability that has moved the students from their homes to Majuba TVET College. Students' access to food, accommodation, financial support and supportive peers, are viewed the positive conversion factors that they need to have an environment that allows them to achieve the life they have reason to value. Some students have shown a higher sense of agency by acknowledging the challenges and finding creative ways to deal with their challenges. The main reason the study participants left their families to live in towns with people they do not know was to pursue a qualification and get an education. According to Kennett, Reed and Lam (2011), most first-year students attended the institution of higher learning to prove that they could get a qualification. Students from their second year of study reported reasons for self-improvement, societal contributions, and the need to improve their family conditions. From a capability perspective, access to an institution of higher learning will not only provide the students with possible economic opportunities, but will also provide an opportunity for the students to have liberty to live the life they value. Achieving the functionings depends on the conversion factors and the role that these factors play during their process of working towards the life they value. Personal, financial, social, and environmental circumstances have a role in conversion factors. Students with a high level of agency in dealing with these circumstances have increased chances of achieving a greater functioning.

Eighteen out of 20 study participants reported that they came to Majuba TVET College to get an opportunity to acquire an education they can use to find employment and earn an income. They reported that the income would assist in changing the socioeconomic situations in their homes. Majuba TVET College is seen as a symbol of hope to bring about change and improve the quality of life in their families. One of the participants said:

“After my grandmother passed away, no one was left to care for all four of us. As the eldest of the children, I had to choose to leave my other siblings at home so that I could look for study opportunities. I heard that NSFAS funding in Majuba TVET college pays really well, and indeed I was funded by NSFAS when I got an opportunity to study. I started at the NCV level and am now studying for a diploma. I am currently using the knowledge and skill I got from NCV to make a living, which is already improving my family’s situation. (Mxolisi)

According to Adetiba (2019), a common belief in the community is that attaining a higher education certificate will automatically qualify them to gain access to employment opportunities. The study's participants outlined that they were in the institution of higher education to obtain a qualification that would lead them towards accessing employment opportunities and increasing their chances to participate in the country's economy. From a capability perspective, participants viewed education as instrumental towards success. Adetiba (2019) argues that attaining qualifications is not directly linked to guaranteed employment. However, the expansion of higher education is driven by the market forces and the government's response to the economic need for skills and knowledge. The above literature makes the participants believe that formal education will connect them to employment opportunities, not a perceived opportunity but a real one.

Theme 1: Socio-economic background

Sub-theme 1: Available financial support

The responses provided by the participants show that the participants came from family homes with varying socio-economic backgrounds. Participants from homes with both parents who earn an income, and those students were well supported financially,

and receive funding for their studies from National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Kagiso and Nana had the following to say:

“I live with both my parents, sharing a seven rooms house with my other siblings. My mother runs a chicken business at home, and my father owns taxis. We get along very well at home. My parents send me money for rent, food, and everything I need every month. I am funded by NSFAS.” (Kagiso)

“My mother and father are still alive. My mother is a creche teacher, and my father owns a tuckshop in the area where we stay. When he was employed, he was able to build us a house with five rooms and backrooms. Both my parents give me a monthly allowance between R2 000-R2 500 for all my needs, including rent. My older brother stays in the backroom with his wife and their son. My brother is employed, and gives me money whenever I ask. NSFAS funds me; by however, I have not received the traveling and rent funds for Semester 2.” (Nana)

“Both my parents passed away, and I am staying with my sister, her husband, and their three children. The living conditions are good as they treat me like their own child. My sister provides me food money and pays for my rent.” (Bonisile)

A study by Moneva et al. (2020) revealed that students are more motivated with their academic tasks when their parents financially support them. In addition, these students are less stressed about providing for their needs.

Sub-theme 2: Limited financial support

Some participants lived with single parents who earned an income and could provide financial support. However, some participants came from homes where (a) parent(s) were unemployed and therefore found it difficult to provide consistent financial support. The responses from Siboniso, Philani, Melusi, Buhle, and Nobuhle revealed the above in the following manner:

“I reside with my mother and do not know my father or paternal grandparents. My maternal grandparents passed away. There are five children from my mother, and we

are all supported by her. She works as a site supervisor in the sugar cane fields. She also sells fat cakes from our home and my older sister helps make and sell fat cakes. My mother pays my rent and food; however, I also do people's hair to earn money to buy the items I want while waiting for NSFAS to pay me.” (Siboniso)

“I stay at home with my father, and my mother passed away. My father retired three years ago, and financially supports me by giving me an allowance every month. My father does have a girlfriend, and she now stays with us as my stepmother. We reside in a four-room house with only two bedrooms.” (Philani)

At home, I stay with my mother and two other siblings. She works as a domestic worker. She sends me R300 for rent every month, and I struggle to find the money for food. There is a lecturer that helps with buying food for me, and she also gives me clothes. It is hard.” (Melusi)

“I left my daughter at home with my mother, brother, and two younger sisters. My mother receives a child support grant for my child and my two sisters. My brother works as a petrol attendant, and supports me with the rent and food money. The situation is not good at home. My mother receives the social grant and uses it to buy food for the family. I also send my mother some money when I receive NSFAS.” (Buhle)

“At home we are a family of seven staying in a five rooms house. My mother is the breadwinner. She owns a fresh produce business, and she supports the family with that money. I have never met my father. I get all the financial support from my mother. NSFAS funds me; however, the allowances are not received monthly. (Nobuhle)

According to Michubu (2013), poverty impacts student's academic work as parents have limited resources to provide and fund their children's education and good housing suitable to study.. Students experience challenges, but they lack the resources that will assist them in overcoming those challenges. The above students have at least a single parent or guardian supporting them; however, they are provided with money for only accommodation and groceries. The NSFAS allowance does not include medical care, clothes, recreational resources, and additional learning stationery.

Sub-theme 3: Lack of financial support

Seven study participants came from homes where the socio-economic status was poor, and the participants supported their families with the money they received from NSFAS and part-time jobs. Other participants made cash by offering a service like hairdressing to other students. Herein, the parents were still alive and living with them at the family home; however, they do not earn income at all, and some received social security grants. These grants were not enough to sustain the family or even send money to the student. Ntuthuko, Phumlani, Sicelo, Banele, Glory, Samukelisiwe, Nokwanda and Zama expressed the following:

“At home, I left my three siblings and my mother. I do not know the whereabouts of my father. We reside in a two-room house, and economically the situation is not good. My two sisters and one brother are unemployed, and my family relies on me to send them money when I receive the NSFAS allowance. When the NSFAS funds are not received, I have to find part-time work at) [name of the workplace withheld]. I work nightshift and get R900 every two weeks. This job affects my studies because sometimes I am too tired to attend class the following day, and I often miss the study groups arranged as they are normally after school hours.” (Ntuthuko)

“I live with my parents, my five siblings, and two uncles in a two bedroom house. There are two shacks outside. At home, no one works and the family survives using the grant money. I do receive NSFAS, which I use to pay my rent. The money for food is a challenge. Some times I get a job at the campus to be a marshal during the enrolment period, and the money helps to buy food and pay rent ” (Phumlani)

“My parents passed away and I reside at my mother's home with my grandmother and uncle. They do not support me in any ways, and it is even difficult for me to go home during the school holidays as I am scared of my uncle. He used to rape me from the age of 8, and I have tried to get him arrested; however, he gets out. I feel better staying in my rented place; however, most of the time, I need rent money and food. I make people's hair, but that money is not enough, and I am currently not funded by NSFAS because I failed three subjects.” (Sicelo)

“My mother stays with us at home, and there are two of my other siblings. I collect and sell materials like plastic bottles and tins. She does not make enough money to support us, and she does not financially support me. I struggle with food and rent money. Sometimes during the enrolment season, I do get employed by the campus as an enrolment marshal. I am able to pay 1 month rent and buy food for that month”
(Banele)

“At home, there are too many of us. My mother stays in her home, and she never got married. There are also children of her sibling staying there, and we fight a lot. I was happy to get an opportunity to get out of my home. My grandparents' old age grant buys food at home.” (Glory)

“I reside with my sister and her boyfriend, who is unemployed. My sister is the breadwinner in the house as she sells food at the taxi rank. She supports all of us in the house, including their three children. We stay in a 4-room house, and our parents passed away in a car accident. She manages to pay rent and give me food money which is R1 200 a month. It is not enough to cover all my needs; however, I get extra money by washing people's cars and doing garden work here and there with a friend I met here at the college.” (Samukelisiwe)

“I stay with my mother's sister [aunt] at home. My mother got married and moved to another town. She sends about R300 for me to pay rent; however, I need more money for food. My boyfriend does help with money for food.” (Nokwanda)

“It is not nice at home because my uncles and mom drink alcohol often. They sell traditional beer, even though it is illegal, but it brings income. My mother does send money to rent and some for food; however, I do not enjoy going home because my home is always crowded with people who buy traditional beer. Police also come in from time to time to search our house, and most of the time there are fights when people are drunk.” (Zama)

Two of the participants came from homes that were headed by themselves. Both parents passed away, and the students were the ones bearing the role of providing for

and looking after the family without any help from adults who are family. One participant was 42 years of age, and was financially supported by her child, who studied in another institution of higher learning. Her child supports her through the NSFAS fund that she receives monthly. The responses of participants Mxolisi, Lindelani, and Siphumelele are as follows:

“I left my siblings alone at home while I stay here. The Principal of the high school I was studying in applied for me at Majuba TVET College, and I got the space. I saw that as an opportunity to try and change my home situation. At home, we stay in two mud houses and one shack. Our parents passed away, and relatives are not assisting us. I work as a peer tutor; however, that income is not constant. It is difficult to support them at home, but they rely on me.” (Mxolisi).

“My mother passed away six years ago, leaving us with our father. He has always been the one that takes care of us, but he was shot in December 2021. He was involved in land conflicts in the area. There are four of us, and I am the eldest. I have a baby, but I had to take my baby to my father's house because I could not afford to take care of him. When my father passed away, I was already a student at Majuba TVET College, and I needed to continue with my studies, so I can get a job to help my family. I get rent money from a lecturer, and the student support office on campus linked me with the Department of Social Development for monthly food parcels. Currently, I do not receive NSFAS, and it is hard.” (Lindelani)

“I decided to come and study at Majuba TVET College in 2021. I was already above the age of 40 years. My child is also studying at a tertiary institution, and she sends me monthly money to pay rent and buy little food. She receives her NSFAS monthly, unlike us, who receive NSFAS after a few months. However, we share the money when I receive my NSFAS allowance. We have family support. Her father passed away about ten years ago. I stay in a single room because I need her to visit me during the university holidays.” (Siphumelele)

Most of the students studying at Majuba TVET College were funded by NSFAS. According to the NSFAS (2022, p.27), a “TVET College student may either qualify for the travel allowance or the accommodation allowance”. Students do not receive

allowances that they can utilise to buy necessities like food and clothes. Those students that do not have financial support from home and have to find other ways to get money for food. According to Taylor (2017), students with limited financial resources have fewer resources available to them to study, do their homework, and be involved in other activities that enhance their academic life experience. Furthermore, these students are overburdened with the stress of trying to meet their basic needs and, at times, carry the burden of worrying about the survival of the family members that they have left at home.

Theme 2: Access to NSFAS funding that allowed the student to enrol

NSFAS funded 18 of the participants. Due to participants coming from families with a low socioeconomic status, funding was an instrument that provided students with an opportunity to attain education. The NSFAS eligibility criteria document stipulates that "TVET College students may either qualify for the travel allowance or the accommodation allowance" (NSFAS, 2022, p. 28). The participants funded by NSFAS are receiving the accommodation allowance. NSFAS allowance is meant only to pay for the accommodation according to the quotation that the student submits. All of the 18 participants NSFAS funds reported that they found off-campus private accommodations that costs less than the amount submitted to NSFAS so that they can keep the rest of the money left after paying rent. These participants further reported that they used the money to buy food and clothes and send money home to assist with the needs of the family. The NSFAS accommodation allowance was a positive conversion factor, especially for participants who used it to ensure that their other basic needs were met. The participant's expressed the following:

"NSFAS is paying for my study fees and rental fees. The rental allowance amount is paid late into our accounts, but I am happy that NSFAS settled my fees earlier so that I do not have to worry about my college fees." (Siboniso)

"NSFAS pays my college fees but I still owe the college money as I failed some subjects last year, and NSFAS refused to fund me. That time was challenging, but I am grateful that the college allowed me to enrol while I am owing them." (Philani)

Some participants responded that they utilised a portion of their NSFAS allowance for rent and to buy groceries as they come from families where they are financially not assisted by anyone. Their responses were as follows;

“NSFAS pays for my fees, and I use the rental allowance to buy my groceries. I share groceries with my roommates.” (Melusi)

“I use NSFAS for my fees, and fortunately, the rent allowance is paid directly to us as students. I can have a bit of money for food and also buy clothes for myself.” (Ntuthuko)

“I had to apply for NSFAS because there is no one at home who pays my college fees. My mother does not earn much money. I use the NSFAS allowance to pay rent and buy some food. I struggle a lot with food as NSFAS does not pay the allowances monthly, but I am happy to get an opportunity to study.” (Banele)

According to NSFAS (2022), all students registered at an institution are financially eligible and qualify for NSFAS funding if their household income is R350 000 or less. In the TVET sector, there are three types of allowances. These are personal care, accommodation, and travel allowance. The personal care allowance of an amount of R2 900 per year is applicable to all students who NSFAS funds; however, students who qualify for the accommodation allowance cannot receive the travelling allowance (NSFAS, 2022). The university sector has two types of allowances that are added over and above the three types of allowance available for the students in the TVET sector. These allowances are the living allowance and the learning material allowance.

Theme 3: Opportunity to earn income

Most students at Majuba TVET College come from deep rural areas within KwaZulu Natal (KZN) to study in an educational institution. Even though these students are moving to semi-urban regions in search of educational opportunities, they believe that it will bring about economic changes in their family circumstances. The phenomenon was illustrated in the following responses from some of the participants:

“The money my mother sends me is not enough to cover my basic living costs while studying. I try not to bother much, but I am grateful that I have lecturers helping me with food and clothes. I sometimes look for job opportunities that allow me to work on weekends to earn an income to buy food and add to the rent.” (Melusi)

“NSFAS takes months to pay allowances to us, and at home, I am not supported by anyone as I am the one heading the family. I had to find part-time jobs while studying. I have worked for some lecturers helping them with housework to get rent money and basic food. Things better when I found a job as a bartender and was getting paid R700 every two weeks. I could send some money home, pay my rent, buy my food and get myself a few clothes.” (Mxolisi)

“While studying at Majuba TVET College I got to be chosen as a peer tutor. A peer tutor assists other students who are struggling academically. You get paid for that. The money I received through peer tutoring paid my rent and food for myself and my siblings, who are left at home. I also receive the NSFAS allowance, and I would use the NSFAS allowance together with the peer tutoring stipend to build a house for my family. It has been hard, but I feel proud.” (Glory)

“The only income I receive is from NSFAS. The money NSFAS pays us is quite a bit; when I receive it, I use it to pay my rent and buy a lot of food to last me for the coming months. I also send some money home because the situation is not good. Yes, at times, I use the NSFAS money to help at home. It feels good to have my own money and be able to provide for my needs at home.” (Samukelisiwe)

Neyt, Omeý, Verhaest and Baert (2018) states that one of the essential reasons why students need to combine studying and work is that work provides them with an income to help satisfy their consumption aspirations. Neyt *et al.* (2018) concludes that combining studies with work can have a negative outcome on the student's educational outcomes. This may be due to them not investing the needed time towards their studies and the psychological stress behind the student's reasons for finding work. The need for students to find part-time jobs is also linked to their low socioeconomic status and home background. Ngwato (2020) states that students are

negatively impacted by their socioeconomic classes, forming part of the financial challenges they encounter.

Theme 4: Sense of Independency and privacy

A total of 16 participants expressed that staying away from home gave them a feeling of independence, and they also had privacy. The participants highlighted that they enjoyed making every day independent decisions about their lives compared to their parents or guardians making the decisions for them. The decisions they referred to were the study times, type of friends, recreational places, spending their money, and social life. The participants responded with the following:

“I enjoy the freedom that I experience while here at the college. I get to decide how I spend my time and money, when to see my friend, and which places to visit.” (Philani)

“My mother is very strict at home, and when I am this side during college time, I enjoy myself. I clean my space whenever I like, and no one asks where I am going. I prefer receiving the NSFAS allowance when the college is open because I can decide what amount to send home. When I am home, I finish my faster due to the never-ending needs at home.” (Nobuhle)

“I feel independent as I make decisions without my sister around. Sometimes we plan to go out at night with a friend to enjoy ourselves, which I would not have been able to do at home. This lifestyle can be detrimental to me as a student and I just need to manage my time well to enjoy good academic marks and social life.” (Bonisile)

Some participants rented in a yard where they resided with their landlords, and the landlords rules that students needed to adhere to. Participants expressed this in the following ways:

“In my rented accommodation, I stay with my landlord in the same yard. There are three of us girls sharing a single room. There are strict rules there. No friends are allowed to visit, and the gates are locked daily at 6:00pm. This curfew deprives us of

the freedom to go out at night but makes us feel a little bit safe. We also get time to study without the friend of our roommate disturbing us.” (Nokwanda)

Theme 5: Networking/ Exposure

The participants also expressed that being in an institution of higher learning has allowed them to meet new people and form new friendships with people from other places. All the students who participated in the study were not from Newcastle, and have left their friends at home to pursue their studies. Buote, Pancer, Pratt, Adams, Birnie-Lefcovitch, Polivy and Wintre (2007) state that high school friendships face an increased risk of dissipating, particularly for students who leave home to attend an institution of higher learning in another town, especially if they have to reside in the town of study. According to Buote *et al.* (2007), friends are particularly important because they provide a sense of belonging, sympathetic listening, acceptance, reassurance, encouragement, advice, guidance, and feedback. The friendships formed at the institution of higher learning give a supportive environment that allows students to adapt to the new academic and social environment. The participants said that:

“One of the things I enjoy being a student at Majuba TVET College is that I got to meet new friends, and we get along very well. We share everything.” (Andile)

“The friend I found here at College has helped me deal with many family issues and help me with food when I am in need. I have lost some of my friends from home but have come to have peace with that fact that they are not my friend anymore. (Zama)

“At first, it was difficult for me to make friends, but I have found a few who play an important role in my life. They offer support and sometimes can help me with my studies. We also go to church together on Sundays.” (Nana)

The DHET (2011) highlighted the inability of institutions of higher learning to cater to the influx of students in terms of accommodation, forcing students to look for private accommodation. The students facing the challenge of needing accommodation exercise their agency by finding a place to stay that is within the amount they can

afford. Mahlatsi (2022) states that a phenomenon called "studentification" emerges where social, cultural, economical, and physical changes occur in the neighbourhoods surrounding higher education institutions. As a result of this phenomenon, landlords would look to maximise their profits by leasing as many rooms to students as possible, sometimes even moving out of their homes to make room for more students. In the case of Majuba TVET College, there is no working relationship between the institution and the landlords, putting the students at risk of renting overpopulated rooms and being subjected to living conditions that are not dignified. Participants shared the following:

"Where I reside, there is the main house and backrooms. People are renting the main house and also some rent the backroom. In total, I think there are about 15 people residing in the yards. Some are not students but are employed." (Zama)

"The landlord stays with us in the yard. Three of us share a room. There is noise every Friday to Sunday. The landlords have keys to our room, and they access it to help themselves with our food." (Nokwanda)

"The noise level is high where I am renting. We share the house with other people who are not students, and they do not seem to understand that we need time and a quiet environment to study. They play loud music. To study, I must wake up at midnight while everyone is sleeping." (Lindelani)

"I rent a shack, which gets cold when the temperature drops and hot when the temperature rises. My biggest problem with the shack I am renting is that it has holes in the roof. The rainy season is hard as I have to collect water using a container to avoid my bed getting wet. I pay R300 a month, and it is all I can afford." (Bonisile)

Two students shared that they are renting rooms but not sharing them with anyone else. They reported positive experiences about this as they were at liberty to structure their study times as they saw fit. They also did not report disturbances from the landlords.

The participants mentioned that the issue of finding a place to stay started when they arrived in the township area where Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) is situated. This was during the registration process, and most of the study participants reported

that when they came to enrol, they did not know anyone who could connect them with available accommodations to rent while busy with the registrations. The landlord decided on the cost of the accommodation and living arrangements. Some participants mentioned that, at times, they had to take accommodation that required them to pay for transport to and from school, which was an added cost.

Category 2: Conversion Factors

Theme 1: Economic conversion factors

Eighteen of the 20 participants reported that NSFAS funded their studies. They also received an accommodation allowance. They further noted that NSFAS eased the burden on themselves and their families to pay for tuition. The NSFAS funding is considered a positive economic conversion factor which allowed funded participants an opportunity to enrol in the college. NSFAS did not support the other two participants due to their failure to meet the minimum requirements to qualify for the continuation of funding.

A study by Mkwanzani (2013) states that lack of finances is among the challenges that affect youth accessing higher education. One of the NSFAS aims, as stipulated in the NSFAS Act 56 of 1999, is to support access and success in higher education institutions and training for students from poor socio-economic backgrounds and those from working-class families (Republic of South Africa, 1999). In the case of the TVET sector, the provision of NSFAS funding has improved access to institutions of higher however it comes with challenges about the condition of needs these students have while they are studying. The NSFAS funds disbursement timeframe is a concern for TVET college students because it takes three to four months to receive their allowances. Some participants mentioned this concern because during the months that they did not receive the allowances, they mentioned that they struggled with rental money, food, and other basic needs. This delay in allowances was a challenge for the participants who were not receiving financial support from their families. Some of the participants said the following:

“It is difficult to rely on the NSFAS allowance. I say this because the allowance is received every four months; however, the expenses like food and rent are needed

monthly. At times, the landlords do not want to hear anything and want their rent money. Friends do assist with food. It is difficult when you are not receiving money from anywhere.” (Sicelo)

“The only money I receive is from NSFAS. I use that money to pay rent and buy food. Most times, I run out of money for food and rent. I get assistance from some lectures and the student support services (SSS), but it would have been better if NSFAS paid the allowances monthly.” (Lindelani)

“Every month I worry so much about how I will survive to the point that it affects how I perform on my school work. I do not have anyone supporting me. Sometimes friends assist with food.” (Banele)

One of the participants shared an experience of a financial conversion factor with a positive impact. She expressed the experiences in the following manner:

“My grandfather had to sell two goats to give me money to come and look for studying space in this college. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to get educated. I wish to complete my hospitality qualifications and start my own catering business.” (Nokwanda)

The livestock available in homes had a symbolic role of being resources that be converted into positive financial conversion factors, therefore assisting the students towards having money to live the life they value.

The participants enrolled at the college without financial support reported having challenges with the NSFAS allowance payment timeframe. Students noted that NSFAS did not pay the monthly allowances on time. However, this inconvenience impacts the students main living costs, such as rent and food needed monthly. The participants reported having conflicts with landlords due to the inability to pay rent on time and, at times, not being able to pay it in full. The participants found themselves victimised by the landlords and additionally experienced stress.

“NSFAS does not send us the allowances monthly, and the landlord is always victimising me by wanting his rent money, especially when he is drunk. When I receive the accommodation allowance of three months I pay rent for all the months I missed. However, I find it difficult to pay for the coming month due to needing food and clothes.”
(Siboniso)

“I wish that the college could assist us in one way or the other because it is difficult to raise the rental amount before NSFAS pays. Maybe the Student Support Service(SSS), together with the college management, can come to some agreement with the landlords because the stress I go through when the landlord needs her money is unbearable. Sometimes I hide from her, and I can not even cope with my studies.”
(Andile)

The students expressed that they expect the Student Support Services (SSS) department within the college to assist them with making positive changes at the policy level regarding the NSFAS allowance payment timeframe. Students have this expectation from this office because they believe this office is the one that deals with issues about their well-being. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2020), having an efficient SSS department within the institution of higher education that offers holistic support services to students will increase the chance of a student completing their qualifications. The support includes assisting the student with making the best programme choice, access to financial aid, accommodation of students with disabilities, effective orientation of the college, and academic support (DHET, 2020, p.5).

Theme 2: Social conversion factors

Several participants mentioned that having friends assisted the students with adjusting to the new higher education environment. Buote *et al.* (2007) state that friends can fulfil several essential functions for students in the tertiary institution environment. Friends provide a sense of belonging, give emotional support, offer advice and counsel, and can also serve as role models. “Friends can be a source of enjoyment and fun which assist in helping the students balance out the stressors that come with

academic life" (Buote *et al.*, p.686). Other participants shared their friendship experiences as follows:

"The friends that I have are good to me, and they offer support when I am stressed about my home situation and financial issues. They also assist me with schoolwork."
(Buhle)

"At home, I do not get along with my mother most of the time as she thinks I have money to give her all the time. I mostly talk to my friends, and they can calm me down and offer me advice on how to deal with the situation. The friends I have now are way better than the ones I had when I first came to the college, as the ones I had before liked going out at night to drink." (Philani)

"I think I have good friends, they joke a lot, and I laugh a lot when I am with them. Making me forget about the situation at home. They come from better families than mine, and they can assist me with food even though I struggle a lot with paying rent."
(Glory)

"We go out at night with my friends to have a nice time, and we also remind each other that we came here to study. All other things are supposed to come after. So there is a balance between enjoyment and schoolwork." (Nana)

Being loved and being able to love other people who are friends is another capability which may result in a functioning of having friends as a support system and source of life satisfaction. For these students, the good relationships they have with their friends can be a conversion factor providing them with an environment in which students can adapt better to their lived experiences, particularly challenges.

Apart from the issues of feeling insecure in their private accommodation, the participants brought forward the challenge of living with their landlords and accommodating the landlord's lifestyles. Issues reported by the participants included staying with tenants that are not students, landlords and tenants' abuse of alcohol and drugs, and different rent payment dates. The participants report the following experiences:

“Where we stay, there is a backroom and the main house. The landlord stays in the main house with his family, and tenants rent the three backrooms. There are five of us sharing a room as students, and the two other rooms are rented by people who are not students. They are unemployed, and y are always playing loud music, making it difficult to e study. To study, I must wake up in the middle of the night or arrive early on campus to utilize the library.” (Nobuhle)

“We share the house with other people work in the textile industrial area. They do not understand that we are students, and they make noise in the evenings, making it difficult to study on a daily basis. The landlord does not intervene with this challenge. I want another place to rent, but am not finding accommodation close enough for me to walk to campus.” (Zama)

“Our landlord is a nice person, but he becomes a different person when he is drunk. He would drink with his friends, but later, they would fight when they had too much to drink. At times their fights would be violent, and this scares me very much.” (Bonisile)

“Our landlord is young, and he is not employed. Next door to where we are renting, they sell alcohol and the area is always noisy and has lots of people around. Our landlord also buys alcohol from there. When he needs money to buy alcohol he would ask for rent money on any day before rent is due. He would get verbally abusive when I do not pay.” (Lindelani)

“We know that every month end, disagreements will lead to physical fights in our yards. The people involved are the landlord's brother and his friends withwhom he normally drinks. This environment is disturbing, and I fear they will kill each other one day. Another thing is that the landlord's brother got the keys to our room, and sometimes we find our food not there. No, he does not ask permission to use the food. Every time the campus closes for holidays, I leave with all my valuables because I fear that when I come back, I will not find my belongings.” (Kagiso)

Ghani and Sulaiman (2016) note that in the ecological sense, the issue of student housing functions as means of interaction between the student and their academic

environments. Hence, it is essential to discuss the environmental conversion factors in terms of how the participants interact with them.

Theme 3: Environmental conversion factors

The participants reported that they felt relatively safe when they were on the campus. The CPD campus hired visible security guards, who patrol randomly during the day. The participants reported a different scenario when outside the campus. Others reported being mugged and having their belongings stolen; some feared being robbed. Two study participants reported experiencing house robberies, and one was almost raped. Their experiences were narrated as follows:

“As a student not originally from this area, I feel vulnerable and as though I am a target for thieves. On campus, I feel a bit safer, but as soon I step outside the campus gate, I fear that I can be mugged anytime on my way to and from school.” (Andile)

“I walk about 3 kilometres to and from the campus. Our classes finish late around 18h15 and in winter it is dark. I have been mugged once, and the thieves took my cellphone, money, and books. I reported the matter to the campus and received counselling. Unfortunately, I still walk the same route but do so with a group of other students.” (Siphumelele)

“The Report 191 classes finish at 6:15 pm, and it is already dark in winter. My two friends and I were robbed of our cellphones, and we are still traumatised by that event. Sometimes we do not attend the last period, so we can leave campus at 5:00 pm. We miss the last period, it affects our marks.” (Zama)

“I got mugged during the day. The thieves took my cellphone, and I got a slap on the face and stabbed in my hand. I hope that the college can offer us transport to the campus from our accommodation. It is scary to stay in this place, but we do not have any option.” (Bonisile)

The two participants who experienced house robbery reported their experiences in the following way:

“There are two guys (belong in a gang called amaroto) who came into our yard and pushed our door open. There were four of us females in the room. They demanded our cellphones and money. Luckily, one of the neighbours heard us crying and came to help us. The two guys ran away with our cellphones and laptops. We have asked our landlord to put steel gates by the door. I feel unsafe, and whenever I go home, I take all my valuable items.” (Samukelisiwe)

“I was with my roommate when a guy came to our room around 6:00pm pretending to sell a cellphone. We stay in the yard with only students. On that day, all the other students staying in the yard with us were on campus attending classes, and others were attending sports. They wanted us to take off our clothes. Luckily, they were disturbed by the sound of the gate opening. They ran away, and we think they jumped through the back fence. They almost raped us that day.” (Nobuhle)

Category 3: Agency

The participants reported having implemented some actions to try and resolve some of the challenges. Some participants reported that they had formed WhatsApp study groups where they shared information without travelling to campus due to fear of their safety by walking to and from the campus.

“In our class, we have formed a WhatsApp group where our class members share information from class, study tips, the assessment or exam scoop, and all necessary information to be shared with the class. This group helps limit the trips to and from campus.” (Andile)

“The WhatsApp group formed by our class is very useful because that is where we get information regarding our assessments, changes on matters of our class, and information sharing on study skills. The lecturers are not involved in the group.” (Glory)

The participants shared that amid the challenges they faced, they felt they needed to play an active role in solving some of their challenges and navigating towards their goals. Some participants share that they have a challenge with varying study times in

their rooms and housemates, and some mentioned that their housemates play loud music, making it difficult for them to study. The responses regarding the participants resolving the challenge are as follows:

“It is difficult to study while everyone is awake and making noise. I normally sleep early with everyone and wake up in the middle of the night to study for assessments or catch up with my studies. This strategy helps a bit.” (Melusi)

“The accommodation is shared with six other people who are not students and can be inconsiderate that students need to study. It helps me to wake up around 2:00 am when it is quiet to study or sometimes wake up very early in the morning. This strategy has helped a lot, but it is not easy in winter due to the cold during the night.” (Andile)

Some participants mentioned other ways of dealing with the study disturbances, including utilising the campus library to study. They would arrive at the library before their classes commenced.

“The environment where I live does not have a quiet space to study. I have decided to arrive on campus early to study in the library. That has been helping me to prepare for all my assessments.” (Nobuhle)

“I have afternoon classes. I can arrive on campus two hours before my classes start. I do this to deal with the challenge of not being able to study in the place where we reside due to the landlord’s and his visiting friends’ noise. Spending at least an hour a day in the library helps as I meet with my classmates and assist each other with academics.” (Zama)

“Towards writing each assessment, we form study groups and meet in the library study area. We have group discussions, and we use past exam papers to study. This way of studying would not be possible if I was studying where I stay because of the noise disturbances that we experience.” (Buhle)

Some of the study participants utilise the academic support programmes offered by the campus through the SSS office, specifically the peer tutoring programme.

According to Grubbs and Boes (2009), a peer tutoring programme is one where there is a one-on-one or a small group whereby high achievers assist low achievers. In the case of Majuba TVET College, students who pass well on the identified subjects help those needing tutoring. The programme is voluntary, and the lessons take place outside the student's formal learning time. Two of the participants reported that they made a choice to join the programme and said the following:

“I got invited into the program by my friend. The programme has helped me so much in understanding the content in class. My last semester grades were not good, and I attended the programme to improve my them. I have already seen improvements in my grades for tests onetwo. Our tutor is friendly, and she takes her time to explain the content.” (Nokwanda)

“The learning environment here at the college is different from high school environment. Yes, you are motivated to do your school work, but if you do not cooperate, you are on your own. Realising that I could not study well where I stay, I had to participate in the peer tutoring programme to improve my grades. I attend the programme on the weekend, and I have seen an improvement in my grades.” (Kagiso)

The peer tutoring programme assisted one participant in earning an income as a peer tutor. He reported that his money allowed him to afford more food and clothes, primarily when NSFAS delayed their allowances. The students get a chance to earn income to assist with their needs. Some participants mentioned that finding part-time jobs helped with dealing with a lack of funds for food, rent, and clothes. Two of the participants responded with the following responses:

“I do not get financial support from anyone at home as I am the eldest of children. My grandmother took care of us through her pension and selling of livestock. She passed away in 2020, and our parents passed away a long time ago. I survive by finding jobs as a waiter or bartender. I would not have had that opportunity if I had remained at home in the rural area of [name of place withheld].” (Buhle)

“To sustain my needs, I assist three lecturers with cleaning their homes once a week. They each give me R150. This money helps me so much with food and other needs. Sometimes I send some money home to my sick mother.” (Sicelo)

There was a participant who mentioned that due to classes coming out late especially in winter, they have to walk to where they stay in the dark. This makes them feel vulnerable to being mugged. The participant have formed a group with other students who are going in the same direction as that decrease the sense of feeling unsafe.

“I really wish that class times can be changed because when it is dark the 3 kilometres feels really far. I have experienced a robbery while walking from school to where I stay and it was really traumatic. Yes, I received counselling but that experinece scared me. We formed a group with other students going the same direction but still we do not feel completely safe. This even sometimes affects the concentration in the classroom.” (Siphumelele)

Some participants mentioned having an attitude of resilience as an important quality they needed to overlook and overcome some of the challenges they encountered. The participants said they had to try to have a positive attitude and use other resources and support available. They noted these resources and support to be the emotional support provided by some lecturers, access to the student support sevices (SSS) office, access to a free clinic on campus, access to a free psychologist offered by an organisation called Higher Health, access to free Wi-Fi on campus, and the availability of friends.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the study findings according to the CA tenets. For the participants, the issues of access to Majuba TVET College and funding by NSFAS gave a multi-layer capability. Firstly, it is the capability to access education and have a prospect of earning a qualification from the institution of higher learning. Secondly, it is the perspective to potentially get employed, earn a living, and improve the socioeconomic situation in their homes. Thirdly, the opportunity to receive funding from NSFAS in a form of a bursary and not worry about paying the funds back. Lastly,

students have the capability to meet new people and expand their social networks through the relationships they form while at Majuba TVET College. Some of these relationships open doors to capabilities to earn extra income through being peer tutors and getting other part-time jobs.

Poverty is a significant conversion factor as it is a constant feature in the lives of the majority of the study participants. It also plays in the type of accommodation they choose and the conditions under which they live. Experiencing crime in the area contributes as a negative conversion factor, as some participants experienced crime in their place of residence and others travelling to and from the campus. There were no participants who mentioned that the distance they travel to and from campus have a negative impact on their academic success. However, one participant mentioned that the late finishing time of the classes makes them vulnerable to being victims of crimes.

The positive conversion factors present include students living together and doing the same course; therefore, they can assist each other in their studies and the availability of a library on campus. However, it needs a student to have a higher level of agency because students should voluntarily utilise the library. The private student accommodation industry and the Majuba TVET College seem to work in isolation. The students are negatively affected as the accommodations they rent are not properly and formally regulated in terms of the conditions and the cost known to the college and DHET. The students will need to be assisted and supported in this regard to reduce the number of conversion factors affecting their well-being. The next chapter will present the study's conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the dissertation by providing a summary of findings in relation to the research questions, objectives, and aim formulated in Chapter 1. The chapter further suggests recommendations and conclusions with limitations.

6.2 Summary of research findings

The study assessed academic success among Majuba Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) College (Centre for People Development [CPD] campus) students living in off-campus private accommodations. The students' experiences were gathered and guided by three research questions framed within the capability approach. On the tenets of the capability framework, the focus was on capabilities, conversion factors, and agency.

Research question 1: What opportunities do students living off-campus have?

Access to Money

The study findings showed that the student population came from varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Some of the students indicated that being accepted to study at Majuba TVET College was an opportunity to develop and advance themselves by getting a qualification that might increase their chances of getting decent employment. Access to a higher education institution allowed them an opportunity to be funded by NSFAS so they can have access to money. NSFAS allowances in the TVET sector only cover accommodation, transport, and personal care. NSFAS funded 15 of the 20 participants and received monthly accommodation allowances. The allowances were paid directly to students in the form of cash vouchers. The findings revealed that students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds resorted to cheaper accommodation so they would also use accommodation allowance to buy food and clothes. Some students sometime used some of the accommodation allowance money to support their families at home. These students had assumed a breadwinner role to their families even though they needed of financial care themselves. Students who received financial support from their families and also recipients of NSFAS funding had more money and therefore had better off-campus

private accommodation options. Students with both NSFAS funding and receiving financial support at home often chose accommodation where they would stay alone.

Access to money emerged as an important positive conversion factor for the students as those from families that could not financially support them depended on the NSFAS allowance for other needs. Some students could make extra income for themselves by offering hairdressing services, finding part-time employment from local businesses, and offering peer tutoring services on campus. Since students had to work part-time jobs along with being students, these methods of earning extra income affected their academic success.

Independence and privacy

The study findings revealed that students on campus came from areas outside Newcastle. An opportunity to study away from home gave them a sense of independence and liberty of how they spent their time. Most participants expressed that they enjoyed their freedom; however, they also expressed that enjoying this freedom in a disorganised manner can negatively affect their study time. The students generally came from homes with four or more family members sharing the living space. They experience a sense of privacy as there was limited interference from their families about the types of friends they would keep, financial spending behaviour, and general social behaviour. This privacy gave them a sense of independence, and they shared that there were improvements in their social skills.

Networking and exposure

All the participants enjoyed meeting and socialising with new people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and having different personalities and values. The students found friends and expressed that having friends provided them with not only a sense of belonging but also social and emotional support helped them to adapt better to the new academic and social environment. Some of the relationships that students formed in college exposed them to opportunities that had the potential to have a financial impact. At the time of data collection, two study participants were peer tutors, and three other participants worked as enrolment marshals. The money they earned from peer tutoring and marshal assistant helped them cover their needs. These

are opportunities that students expressed that they would not have known had they stayed home.

Research question 2: What are the conversion factors that affect students living off-campus?

Economic conversion factors

The NSFAS funding was a positive conversion factor because through their funding, the students could have their tuition, rental, and transport fees covered. According to the NSFAS (2022), the university funding categories are divided into five categories: learning material, living allowance, personal care, accommodation, and travel. However, only three types of allowances are available for TVET college students: personal care allowance, accommodation allowance, and travel allowance. TVET colleges do not provide students with learning material and living expenses allowances. In the TVET colleges, the funding by NSFAS is a bursary, and student do not need to pay the money back once they are employed. NSFAS does not disperse the funds monthly. Although NSFAS funding is a positive conversion factor, its allowance distribution time frame is a negative conversion factor. This factor posed challenges of inconvenience it caused for students who relied on it to cover their basic monthly expenses, such as food, transport, rent, and clothes. The stress associated with having unmet basic needs bothered participants who were not receiving financial support from home. Some students had to find other means, such as hairdressing and part-time employment, to earn money to sustain them while waiting for the NSFAS allowance. Participants expressed that the above was a challenge because they would not find time to study and meet with other students for group study sessions.

The students that NSFAS did not fund due to failing the required number of subjects for the continuation of funding found it challenging to find ways of earning money. As a result, they would be in conflict with their landlords over rental money. They reported psychological stress about the issue of missing monthly rent payments.

Social conversion factors

The students of Majuba TVET College resided in the residential area surrounding the campus. At the time of the study, the college did not have on-campus and off-campus

residences for students. As a result, students have to find accommodation within the surrounding community. This accommodation setup calls for students to integrate themselves within the community's social culture. The landlords economically benefit from this setup; however, the accommodation they provide to students was not regulated by any formal body, including the college. Some study participants reported that the treatment they received from the landlords and the community was unpleasant and made them feel that they were outsiders.

Landlords often mixed student tenants with employed tenants, and others unemployed. The lifestyle of the landlords and tenants in the residential area was not conducive for students to study as there would be loud music, uncontrolled visits from friends, and drug abuse. Students resorted to waking up in the middle of the night to catch up with their studies, therefore, getting little rest. Study participants that were affected by the issue of drug abuse in their off-campus accommodations reported having witnessed incidences of violence and feeling traumatized.

Most participants expressed that having social relationships with other students who were doing a similar course helped them with their studies in particular

Environmental conversion factors

Safety was the main issue identified by the participants as the negative conversion factor. All participants reported that they did not feel safe in the community and their places of residence. They reported that the only place they felt safe was on campus due to the presence of security guards. The participants reported that as people who were not originally from the community, they felt vulnerable to muggings, house robberies, and rape. Clothes belonging to students were reported stolen from the washing line on days when students decided to wash their laundry. Two study participants expressed having experienced crime. The last class ends at 06:15 pm from Monday to Friday, and students found that this late class predisposed them to be targeted by thieves on their way to their places of residence however there was no link to distanced travelled by the students to being exposed to crime. A community forum was established to improve community safety. However, some students were accused of committing crimes in the area, thus being victimised. The students voiced out that

the physical conditions of some of the rooms they occupied were not in a good state. Some students slept in rooms with leaking roofs, and their beds would get wet when it would rain. The electrical connections were illegally connected. Students had fear that with the load the electricity in the yard carries, it could one day burst and hurt them. One participant mentioned that where she resided, there was considerable crack and holes in the wall. On cold winter nights, she found it challenging to study.

Research question 3: How does off-campus student accommodation influence the academic success of the Majuba TVET College students?

Overall challenges affecting students staying off-campus

Students mentioned that the poor infrastructure in their places of residence affected their quality of life. Some said they were residing in rooms with poor electrical connections, roof leakages, and holes on the walls. Some students rented shacks with corrugated iron sheets, which became very cold during the winter and very hot during the summer. The extreme temperatures made it difficult for students to initiate study routines in their places of residence.

Participants who shared a room with more than three or more roommates reported difficulty in studying. This challenge was informed by varying study times, study styles, and the different lifestyles the students had. They reported having stayed with roommates who abused drugs and alcohol. These roommates would play loud music and had friends coming over, making studying difficult, and reprimanding these students resulted in conflict.

Some of the landlords had unauthorised access to student rooms. The students' food and other belongings would be taken without their permission. Some participants reported that during school holidays, other people would sleep in their rooms and used their blankets while they were at home. They did not feel their privacy was respected and valued even though they still paid full rent as requested by the landlords. Students would take their belongings home when they left during the college holidays. Some students reported that the landlords sometimes demanded rent money before the agreed-upon payment date, and students were verbally abused if they could not pay.

This verbal abuse affected them emotionally, and it would be difficult to study on the days of those incidents.

Participants noted that student unrests caused disruptions during teaching and learning times. There were usually two groups of students affected by student unrest. The first group was of the students causing and involved in the unrest to bring about the desired change. The second group was those who were not interested in participating in the unrests but wanted to access campus so they could continue studying. The unrests denied students access to campus and thus prevented them from accessing resources like the campus library, classes, and access to peer tutors. Students lose contact time with lecturers and may add unnecessary when students need to catch up on their studies.

Agency

There are students with a high and a low level of agency. Those with a low level of agency will accept their challenges and have no willpower to work towards changing them. However, those with a high level of agency acknowledge their challenges and choose not to respond passively to these challenges but instead put in the work to make changes that will improve their circumstances.

Most participants exercised a high level of agency. They responded that they acted on their desire to access an institution of higher learning despite poor socioeconomic situations in their homes. For example, some students left their homes to study at Majuba TVET College but did not have a plan on how to pay their monthly living expenses. They had hopes that the qualifications they would obtain at Majuba TVET college would be instrumental in accessing employment opportunities, therefore, be able to change their home circumstances. Some participants came from good socioeconomic backgrounds; however, they utilised the agency to avoid career paths their parents had chosen for them. They are making an active decision toward determining their future.

To mitigate the challenges that students experienced in their private off-campus accommodations, the students are implementing some strategies that will allow them

to get more study time. Students would arrive early on campus to study in the library. Since the campus library closes at 4:00pm in the afternoon, students could only use it before classes and during free periods. Students also formed physical and WhatsApp study groups to help each other study. The college had a peer tutoring program in which the college hired students who got good marks to be tutors. The program was voluntary and took place on weekends. Students who attended the program displayed a high level of agency as they attended the program voluntarily and during their spare time.

Students shared rooms with housemates, landlords, and roommates that made noise and played loud music. As a result, this made it difficult to study. In this instance, students would wait for everyone to sleep and utilise the time between 12:00am to 4:00am to study. Students reported utilising the office of Student Support Services (SSS).

6.3 Theoretical contribution of the study

The capability approach was beneficial to the study as it provided a framework that organised the study information and help to analyse the findings. The approach contributed towards understanding the interplay between students' living conditions in their private off-campus residences and the extent to which their academic success was affected. Using the CA concepts, the study identified opportunities available to students and matched those with what they could achieve through them. For example, the students of Majuba TVET College viewed access to the institution as a capability as they utilise financial support from NSFAS and home to afford the off-campus private accommodation. The conditions in which they live in the off-campus private accommodation came with some conversion factors. However, their exercise of a high level of agency assists in mitigating the negative conversion factors to minimise the effects on their academics. Applying the CA concepts to the study displayed how the students can acknowledge their challenges but continue to form alliances to provide solutions to some of the challenges they encounter. For example, students who cannot study where they reside resolve their challenges by creating study groups on the WhatsApp communication platform and physically meeting to assist each other with

their studies. They are determined to reach a functioning level and find different ways to resolve challenges instead of letting the challenges define their results.

6.4 Empirical contribution of the study

For students of Majuba TVET College, access to the higher learning institution is influential because it assists them in gaining qualifications, therefore, developing human capabilities to enter the economic market. Another opportunity that opens for students is the ability to earn income through utilising their skills, part-time employment, and peer tutoring opportunities. Accessing the institution of higher learning is a foundation for other capabilities that students can access to live a life they value. The environmental context where students live does affect the quality of academic life that students lead; however, the students are being active agents towards coming up with other ways to mitigate the challenges they face. The study shows that students' academic success is not only affected by the dynamics within the classroom and the institution of higher learning, but other factors like the living conditions where the students reside are interplay. Therefore, the design and implementation of student support services that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) provides must be considered carefully because the support needs to extend student accommodation issues. This implementation can be done by changing policies and practices that involve student accommodation issues. The institution of higher learning can consider building student residences, and there needs to be a multi-stakeholder approach to dealing with students' accommodation issues. Surprisingly, there is inequality in the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). NSFAS funding provided by NSFAS between students in the TVET sector and those in the university space differ.

6.5 Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight that students experience several challenges in Majuba TVET college without on-campus and off-campus student residences or accredited accommodations. The following recommendations need to improve the residential experiences of students staying off-campus.

There is a need for policies between DHET, NSFAS, and the college to align with off-campus student accommodation accreditation or regulation. According to a report by DHET (2011), TVET college students' accommodation norms and standards are not specified. Therefore, the quality and conditions of the available student accommodation rely on the landlord's discretion and the housing market's supply and demand. Policies should specify the standards that will apply to TVET sectors considering their unique challenges. Majuba TVET College and DHET need to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach to the student accommodation problem. Stakeholders such as the landlords, Student Representative Council (SRC), various TVET colleges, NSFAS, District and Local municipalities, Department of Human Settlement (DHS), Department of Community Safety and Liaison (DCSL), and other relevant stakeholders should be involved in deliberating, advising, and ensuring the safety of students. One way to address the challenge would be to create a database of all off-campus accredited accommodations. Such a step would help formalise the relationship between the college and the landlords.

The TVET institution will need to work with NSFAS to address with NSFAS to address the issue of releasing student allowances early in the year or monthly. A possible option is that, upon confirming that a student has qualified for funding, Majuba TVET College can enter into an agreement with NSFAS to give the students an advance loan which will then be taken back by the college when NSFAS pays the allowance funds. NSFAS will pay the funds directly into the college's account. Students must receive their allowances early in the year or every month. In that way, they will get to pay rent on time and plan better with the allowances available to them. The current status quo in the TVET sector is that students are enrolled, and the accommodation and transport allowances are paid into their selves in two to four months after enrolment. There are two challenges with the current disbursement timeframes. Firstly, the students who do not receive financial support from home struggle to cover their basic needs like rent and food while waiting for NSFAS to pay, causing stress and conflicts with the landlords. The second challenge is that once funds are released, the students receive large amounts of money with limited financial planning. Previous experiences have shown that students tend to mismanage and misspend these funds. This mismanagement of funds is not an NSFAS challenge. In this regard students will need to be capacitated in financial literacy.

The youth interested in entering and studying in the TVET sector should be encouraged to study around their hometowns. The colleges in the areas can do this through their marketing strategies. This step would be helpful, especially for youth from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Those students will stay at home and therefore have no rental accommodation cost.

The colleges will need to work with the landlord to discuss and resolve issues about the conditions of the rented private accommodations. This partnership can be achieved through the office of the SSS office; however, there is a need for an additional wing within the department to only deal with issues from students that are associated with student residences. Working with DHS, the college should have a database of all the accommodations where the students reside and implement inspections of all the accommodations using the norms and standards document. This resolution would assist in making the landlords mindful and accountable for ensuring that the residences where students reside are favourable to study. A long-term recommendation is that the college build student residences and the costs be included in the student's tuition account.

6.6 Conclusion

The study assessed academic success among off-campus students at Majuba TVET College (CPD campus) and revealed some challenges that the students in the TVET sector will need to navigate to succeed academically. It used the CA approach to explore challenges and analyse students' strategies to navigate them.

The findings reveal that the students can access study opportunities. However, conditions that ensure success should be in place. The study has shown that there are conversion factors that may prove to affect the student's academic success. The conversion factors can be economical, social, environmental, and personal. For example, the socioeconomic background plays a role in the type of accommodation they live in. Students from a better socioeconomic background experience less stress associated with paying rent monthly, access to food, and all other basic needs; therefore, they could focus better in college. They have better alternatives when it comes to choosing accommodation. They are more likely to avoid accommodation

where they share a room with others and, therefore, can determine their study times without disturbances. Students must have a high level of agency to navigate the type of negative conversion factors they face.

REFERENCES

- Adetiba, T., 2019. *Massification of Higher Education in South Africa, The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. s.l., University of Zululand.
- Ali, A. et al., 2013. Effects of different sleeping patterns on academic performance in medical school students. *Natural Science*, Vol.5(11), pp. 1193-1198.
- Amajuba District Municipality, 2020. *Profile and Analysis: District Development Model*, Newcastle: Amajuba District Municipality.
- Amole, D. (2011). A Gender Analysis of Attitudes to Students' Residences in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Environment-Behaviour Studies*, 2 (5), 1-12.
- Amsterdam, C., 2010. *School Infrastructure in South Africa: Views and experiences of educators and learners*, Amsterdam: s.n.
- Atieno, O. P., 2019. An Analysis of Strengths and limitations of Qualitative Research Paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, Volume 13, pp. 13-18.
- Battle, J., and Lewis, M., 2004, The Increasing Significance of Class: The Relative Effects of Race and Socioeconomic Status on Academic Achievement. *Journal of Poverty*, 6(2), pp. 21-35.
- Biggs, J., 2011. *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does*, United Kingdom: McGraw-hill education.
- Blomstrand, S., 2020. *Health Housing- A Residential Project for Students*. s.l.:s.n.
- Botha, F., Snowball, J., de Klerk, V. & Radloff, S., 2013. *Determinants of Student Satisfaction with Campus Residence Life at a South African University*, South Africa: Economic Research Southern Africa.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V., 2019. Reflection on reflective thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), pp. 589-597.
- Bryman, A., 2008. *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., 2012. *Social Research Methods*. 4th ed. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Buote, V., Pancer, M. & Adams, G., 2007. *The Importance of Friends Friendship and Adjustment Among 1st-Year University Students*, s.l.: ResearchGate.
- Calitz, T., 2016. *A Capabilities approach to student experiences of pedagogy, power, and well-being at a South African University*, Bloemfontein: University of Free State.

- Cappy, C. L., 2016. Shifting the Future? Teachers as Agents of Social Change in South African Secondary Schools. *Education as Change*, 20 (3).
- Clandinin, J. & Cornelly, A., 2018. Social Justice Practice: A Narrative Inquiry Perspective. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 13(2), pp. 133-143.
- Creswell, J., 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Edition ed. California: SAGE Publications.
- Cuthbertson, P. et al., 2004. A comparative study of the course-related family and financial problems of mature nursing students in Scotland and Australia. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(5), pp. 373-381.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011. *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011. *REPORT ON THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE FOR The Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013. *WHITE PAPER FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Building and Expanded, Effective and Intergrated Post-School System*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015. *The Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities*, Pretoria: s.n.
- DHET, 2012. *Green Paper for Post School Education and Training*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- DHET, 2020. *Technical and Vocational Education and Training College's 2020 Student Support Services Annual Plan*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- DHET, 2022. *Funding and Expenditure Trends in Post School Education and Training*, Pretoria: DHET.
- Dieltiens, V., 2020/21. *Annual Report*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Du Plooy Cillier, F., Davis, F. & Bezuidenhout, C., 2014. *Research Matters*. Cape Town : Juta Company Ltd.
- Du Toit-Brits, C. & Roodt, C., 2017. Teaching-Learning factors contributing to students dropout in TVET Colleges. *University of Portchefstroom*, 57(2), pp. 627-648.
- Duckworth, A., 2012. What No Child Left Behind Leaves Behind: The Roles of IQ and Self-Control in Predicting Standardized Achievement Test Scores and Report Card Grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Volume 104, pp. 439-451.
- FET Summit Task Team 2, 2010. *Unpublished Report to the Futher Education and Training Summit*, s.l.: Task Team 2: The Programme Mix for FET Colleges.

- Florence, M.D., Asbridge, M. and Veugelers, P.J., 2008. Diet quality and academic performance. *Journal of school health*, 78(4), pp.209-215.
- Frankel, J. & Wallen, N., 2018. *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. Tenth Edition ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Freitas, F. A. & Leonard, L., 2011. Maslow's Hierachy of Needs and Student Academic Success. *Teaching and Learning in Nursin*, Volume 6, pp. 9-13.
- Fusch, P.I. and Ness, L.R., 2015. Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The qualitative report*, 20(9), pp.1408-1416.
- Ghani, Z. A. & Sulaiman, N., 2016. *Theoretical Underpinning for Understanding Student Housing*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319306851>
[Accessed 13 May 2019].
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. and Chadwick, B., 2008. Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British dental journal*, 204(6), p.291.
- Gopal, N., 2018. Safety in Student Residences Matter. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, pp. 172-188.
- Grubbs, N. & Boes, S., 2009. The Effects of Peer Tutoring Program. *GSCA Journal*, 16(1), pp. 21-31.
- Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J., 2001. *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. California: Sage.
- Hattie, J. & Anderman, E., 2013. *International Guide to Student Achievement*. s.l.:Routledge.
- Hulme, D., 2007. *The making of the millennium development goals: human development meets results-based management in an imperfect world*, s.l.: Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper.
- Hutton, D. M. & Dixon, R., 2016. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and its Integration into General Educationb at the Univeesity Level. *Caribbean Curriculum*, Volume 24, pp. 100-126.
- Inyang, M. N., Ejue, F. U. & Agwadu, D. K., 2018. Urban Housing Problems and Learning Among Off - Campus Students of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(5), p. 16.
- Kahari, I., 2010. *An exploratory study of first year residence students' perceptions regarding safety and security at the University of Cape Town*, Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Kaur, A., 2013. Maslows Hierarchy of Needs Theory: Applications and Criticism. *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies*, 3(10), pp. 1061-1064.
- Kennett, D. & Reed, M., 2011. The Importance of Directly Asking Students their Reason for Attending Higher Education. *Issues in Educational Research*, 1(21), p. 11.

- Kimhur, B., 2019. *How to Apply the Capability Approach to Housing Policy? Concepts, Theories and Challenges*, The Netherlands: Delft University of Technology.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. & Whitt, E., 2007. *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*. Washington: Jossey-Bass.
- Mahlatsi, M., 2022. *'Studentification' of Towns is Hurting Working Class Families, Small Businesses and even Students Themselves*, s.l.: Daily Maverick.
- Mail & Guardian, 2012. *mg.co.za*. [Online]
Available at: <http://mg.co.za>
[Accessed 24 april 2022].
- Maina, J. J. & Aji, J. Y., 2017. Influence of Accommodation on the Academic Performance of Architecture Student. *Built Environment Journal*, 14(2), p. 15.
- Makhaye, M., 2017. *www.safespaces.org.za*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.safespaces.org.za/understand/entry/crime-in-institutions-of-higher-learning>
[Accessed 24 March 2019].
- Maree, K., 2016. *First Steps in Research*. Second Edition ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Marshall, C. & Rossmann, G., 2011. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 5th ed ed. CA: Sage Publications.
- Mbara, T.C. & Celliers, C., 2013, 'Travel patterns and challenges experienced by University of Johannesburg off-campus students', *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management* 7(1).
Available <http://www.dx.doi.org/10.4102/jtscm.v7i1.114> [Accessed 23 March 2022]
- McBride, T. & Papier, J., 2018. Systematizing Student Support Services in TVET Colleges: Progressing from Policy. *Handbook of Vocational Education and Training: Developments in the Changing World of Work*, pp. 1-15..
- McGrath, S., 2011. Vocational and Educational Training Development. A policy in need theory?. *International Journal of Education Development*, Volume 2, pp. 623-631.
- McLeod, S., 2018. *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
[Accessed 10 July 2022].
- Merriam, S. B. & Tiddell, E. J., 2016. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Michubu, M. J., 2013. *Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Student's Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Igembe South District, Kenya*. [Online]
Available at: <http://erespiratory.uonbi.ac.ke>
[Accessed 29 August 2022].
- Mkwanzani, F., 2013. *Challenges for Vulnerable Young People in Accessing Higher Education: A Case Study of Orange Farm Informal Settlement, South Africa*, Bloemfontein: University of Free State.

- Moneva, J., Pestano, R. & Vertulfo, R., 2020. Parental Financial Support and Students Motivation in Learning. *Issues on Social Sciences*, 8(1), p. 9.
- Morgan, Morgan, D. & McDowell, L., 2010. *Patterns of Residence: Cost and Options in Student Housing*, s.l.: Guilford.
- Mouton, J., 2007. Qualitative Field Research. *Journal of Public Administration*, 42(6), pp. 441-457.
- Mtshali, J. M., 2020. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College Students' Experiences of the Relationship between Private Off-campus Residences and Academic Performance: A Case of Majuba TVET College.
- Nambiar, S., 2013. Capabilities, Conversion Factors and Institutions. *Progress in Development Studies*, 13(3), pp. 221-230.
- National Student Financial Aid Scheme, 2022. *Annual Performance Plan for the Fiscal Year 2021/2022*, Cape Town: NSFAS.
- New24, 2017. <https://www.news24.com/MyNews24/sa-students-faces-accommodation-crisis-at-universities-20170713>. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.news24.com/MyNews24/sa-students-faces-accommodation-crisis-at-universities-20170713>
[Accessed 12th June 2019].
- Ngwato, S. E., 2020. *Factors which Contribute to Poor Academic Achievement in TVET Colleges: A Case Study*, Pretoria: Univeristy of South Africa.
- Nimako, S.G. & Bondinuba, F.K., 2013, An Empirical Evaluation of Student Accommodation Quality in Higher Education', *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 1(22), 164-177. Available <http://www.researchgate.net> [Accessed 11 April 2022]
- Nigel , M., Fox, N. & Hunn , A., 2002). *Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care*, s.l.: Trent Focus Group.
- Noguera, P., 2003. Noguera, P.A., The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban education*, 38(4), pp. 431-459.
- NSFAS, 1999. *National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act 56 of 1999*, Pretoria: Office of the Presidency.
- NSFAS, 2022. *NSFAS Eligibility Criteria and Conditions for Financial Aid*, s.l.: NSFAS.
- Ntinda, K., 2020. Narrative Research. In: *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*. New York: Springer, pp. 1-12.
- Nyasulu, Z. Z. Z., n.d. Mental Health Status of School Going Adolescents on Antiretroviral Treatment in Amajuba District.

Obeng-Odoom, F., 2012. Far Away from Home: The Housing Questions an International Student in Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(2), pp. 201-206.

Oxford Learning, 2017. *Oxford Learning*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.oxfordlearning.com>
[Accessed 25 April 2019].

Palinkas, L. A. et al., 2016. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *US National Library of Medicine*, 42(5), p. 20.

Powell, L. & Hall, G., 2014. *Quantitative Overview of South African Technical Colleges*, Johannesburg: College Collaboration Fund, National Business Initiative.

Radebe, K., 2013. *www.moneyweb.co.za*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.moneyweb.co.za/archive/the-pitfalls-of-private-student-accommodation/>
[Accessed 23 June 2017].

Rajapakse, 2016. Importance of Soft Skills in Improving Employability of Graduates of National University in Sri Lanka- A Literature Search. *EPRA International Journal of Research & Development*, 1(9), p. 17.

Rasool, H. & Mahembe, E., 2014. *FET colleges for South Africa*, Pretoria: SA:HR Development Council.

Richardson, M., Abraham, C. & Bond, R., 2012. Psychological correlates of university students' academic performance: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*, 138(2), pp. 353-387.

Robeynes, I., 2005. The Capability Approach: a Theoretical Survey. *Journal of Human Development*, 1(6), pp. 93-117.

Robeynes, I., 2003. *The Capability Approach: The Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam.

Robeynes, I., 2017. *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: The Capability Approach Re-Examined*. Cambridge:UK: Open Book Publishers.

Ross, P. & Zaidi, N. B., 2019. Limited by our Limitations. *Perspective on Medical Education*, 8(4), pp. 261-264.

Rowley, J. & Slack, F., 2004. *Conducting a Literature Review*. Gwynedd, University of Wales.

Russell, H., Privalko, I., McGinity, F. & Enright, S., 2021. *Monitoring Adequate Housing in Ireland*, dublin: Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

Sara, M. & Amelia, L., 2018. *How to Obtain Informed Consent for Research*, s.l.: PubMed Central.

Schlarb, A. A., Friedrich, A. & Merle, C., 2017. Sleep Problems in University Students-an intervention. *Faculty of Psychology and Sports*, Volume 13, p. 12.

- Schvaneveldt, M. , B. , L., 2001. *Academic Goals, Achievement, and Age at First Sexual Intercourse: Longitudinal, Bidirectional influences*, USA: Department of General Education, Eastern Idaho Technical College.
- Sekaran, U., 2013. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sen, A. & Martha, N., 1991. *Capability and Well-being*. United Kingdom: Orford: Clarendon Press.
- Showkat, N. & Parveem, H., 2017. *In-depth Interview*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319162160>
[Accessed 06 November 2022].
- Simons, H., 2009. *Case Study Research in Practice*. 1st ed. London: SAGE Publications.
- Skefu, N. L., 2018. Impact Assessment for Lesotho Highlands Water Project and Sustainable Livelihoods: A Case Study of Community Around Katse Dam. *Skefu, N.L., 2018. Impact assessment for Lesotho highlands water project and sustainable livelihoods: a case* Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State, p. 85.
- Smets, P. & van Lindert, P., 2016. Sustainable Housing and Urban Poor. *International Journal for Urban Sustainable Development*, 8(1), pp. 1-9.
- Spaull, N., 2014. *Education Quality in South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa: An Economic Approach*, Cape Town: University of Stellenbosch.
- Staten, S. D., 2016. *Relationship Between Living Environment and First Year Students Academic Achievement and Persistence*, s.l.: University of Louisville's Institutional Respiratory.
- STATISTICS: South Africa, 2004. *Poverty Trends in South Africa: An Examination of Absolute Poverty between 2006 and 2011*, Pretoria: STATISTICS: South Africa.
- Stats South Africa, 2014. *Poverty Trend in South Africa: An Examination of Absolute Poverty between 2006 to 2011*, Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Strydom, M. W., 2011. University Access for Social Justice: A Capabilities Perspectives. *South African Journal of Education*, Volume 31, pp. 407-418.
- Taylor, K., 2017. *Poverty's Long-Lasting Effects on Students' Education And Success*, s.l.: s.n.
- The Maurice Webb Race Relations Unit: University of KwaZulu Natal, 2016. *An Impact Assessment of Teacher and Principal Training Programmes Offered by the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education*, Durban: Education Training and Development Practice Sector Education and Training Authority.
- Training, D. o. H. E. a., 2015. *The Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Residence Public Universities*, Pretoria: Department of Higher Education and Training.
- Travis, T., 2015, Defining and Measuring Academic Success. Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation, 20(25), Available <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=20&n=5> [Accessed 15 April 2018]

University of Collage London, n.d. *Crimes against students: emerging lessons for reducing student victimisation*. [Online]

Available at: [Development and Practice Report 21](#)

[Accessed 20 May 2019].

Van de Voordt, T. J., 2002. *Ways to Study- Descriptive Research*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236007566>

[Accessed 25 March 2019].

van Niekerk, C. & Gopal, N., 2018. *Safety in Student Recidences Matters*, Durban: Univerity of KwaZulu Natal.

Ved, N., 2015. *The Journey from the Millenium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals*, s.l.: Hein Online.

Verhaest, D., 2018. Does Student Work Really Affect Educational Outcomes? A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 00(0), pp. 1-26.

Visagie, j., 2013. *Who are the Middle Class in South Africa? Does it Matter*, Eastern Cape: Human Sciences Research Council.

Walker, M., 2005. *Higher Education Pedagogies: A Capabilities Approach*. England: Open University Press.

White Paper 6, 2001. *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, Pretoria: Department of Education.

Williams, P., 2017. Student Agency for Powerful Learning. *Knowledge Quest: Powerful to the Pupil: Student Agency in the School Library*, 45(4), p. 15.

Wilson-Strydom, M., 2011. University Access for Social Justice. *South African Journal of Education*, Volume 31, pp. 407-418.

Xulu-Gama, N., 2019. The Role of Student Housing in Student Success: An Ethnographic Account. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 7(2), pp. 15-25.

Yin, R., 2017. *Case Study Research Design and Methods*. Sixth Edition ed. s.l.:Applied Social Research Methods Series.

York, T., Gibson, C. & Rankin, S., 2015. Defining and Measuring Academic Success. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 20(5), p. 20.

Zotorvie, J. S., 2018. Student's Accommodation and Academic Perfomance: A Case Study of HO University, Ghana. *European Scientific Journal*, 13(13).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical approval letter



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

28-Jun-2022

Dear Ms Sizangani Sokhela

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Assessing academic success among off-campus students: A case study of Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College, Centre for People's Development Campus, South Africa

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/0370/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

**Dr Adri
du
Plessis**
Digitally signed by Dr
Adri du Plessis
Date:
2022.06.29
09:56:26
+02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa


P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



Verifying all signatures

Appendix B: Gatekeeper Letter (permission letter to conduct research at Amajuba College)

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIBESITHI YA
FREISTATA



[REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Mr. Mlotshwa (Principal), Majuba TVET College

I am Sizangani Pinkie Imaan Sokhela , a student registered for the Masters in Development Studies at the University of Free State.

As part of my programme, I wish to conduct a research study CPD Campus students. I am writing the letter to request permission to interview students registered at the college.

DATE

08/05/2022

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Assessing academic success among off-campus students: A case study of Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College, Centre for People's Development Campus, South Africa.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Sizangani Pinkie Imaan Sokhela 2016344935 060 875 5333

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Economic and Management Sciences
Centre for Development Support

STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Dr Faith Mkwanzani (UFS staff member)
mkwananziwf@ufs.ac.za


WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This research aims to assess the academic success of students who live off-campus at CPD Campus, Majuba TVET College.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

Myself, Imaan Sokhela, an employee of the Department of Higher Education and Training under Majuba TVET College. I am a Student Development Practitioner working under the Student Support Services within the Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College.

205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
P.O. Box/Parkus 205, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika. T: 051 270151 401 0444. www.ufs.ac.za



HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

I am in the process of obtaining ethical clearance, and permission from the college to conduct the research is part of the ethical clearance process.

Approval number: *Not available yet*

WHY ARE YOUR INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION/COMPANY INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

I chose students at Majuba TVET College as a study group as they are a group that I am passionate about and would like to contribute to studies that aim to improve their quality of life. The finding of the study will contribute towards expanding the body of knowledge. The students/ participants for the study will be recruited through the advert and will come to take part in the study voluntarily. The required number of participants is 20 students.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The participants will be students who are over the age of 18. The students will need to be residing in the rented off-campus residence. Semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group will be utilized to collect data from the participants. A voice recording device will be used to record both the focus group and the individual interviews. Permission to use a tape recorder will be requested from the study participants. The use of a tape-recording device will assist the researcher in having an opportunity to go over the material so that no valuable information is left out. The individual interview will last a maximum of 30 minutes per participant and the focus group will last for an hour.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The study will capture the experiences of students residing off-campus and their experiences can be used to inform future decisions around improving the residences of students that are residing in off-campus rented residences. The participants taking part in the study will be kept confidential to avoid possible victimization in case they share sensitive information regarding the conditions they live in.

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISKS TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

None that the researcher has identified.

WILL THE INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The names of the participants will not be recorded anywhere and the participants will be given pseudonyms that do not link them to their real identity. Only the researcher and the transcriber will have access to the information. It will also be explained to the participants that the supervisor will have access to the publication overseeing the work of the researcher. The participants will be informed that the findings may be used for journal articles and conference presentations, and this will be done without revealing their identity. As a researcher, I will ensure that the information shared within the focus groups stays in the focus group but implement the confidentiality form which will be signed by all members that take part in the focus groups. However, the focus group members will be encouraged not to share highly sensitive information that will put their lives in danger. The participants can cancel their involvement in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your participant responses and data will be stored by the researcher for five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the home of the researcher where only the researcher will have access. Electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer.

WILL THERE BE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

None

HOW WILL THE INSTITUTION / ORGANISATION / COMPANY BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Miss Imaan Sokhela on 0608 875 5333 or email on imaansokhela1@gmail.com. The findings will be accessible from March 2023. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr. Faith Mkwanzani at mkwanzaniwf@ufs.ac.za.

Yours sincerely



Sizangani Pinkie Imaan Sokhela



Appendix C: Informed consent form

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

Date of the research project

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Assessing academic success among off-campus students: A case study at Majuba Technical, Vocational Educational and Training College, Centre for People's Development Campus, South Africa.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Sizangani Pinkie Imaan Sokhela 2016344935 060 875 5333

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

*Economic and Management Sciences
Centre for Development Support*

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

*Dr Faith Mkhwananzi (UFS staff member)
faithm~~khwananzi~~@gmail.com*

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This research aims to assess the academic success of students that are living off-campus at CPD Campus, Majuba College.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Imaan Sokhela and employed by the Department of Higher Education and Training under Majuba TVET College. I am a Student Development Practitioner working under the Student Support Services within the college.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

Yes.

Approval number: *UFS-HSD2022/0370/22*

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

I chose students as a study group as they are a group that I am passionate about and would like to contribute to studies that aim to improve their quality of life. The students/ participants for the study will be recruited through the advert and will come to take part in the study voluntarily. The required number of participants is 20 students.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The participants will be students who are over the age of 18. The students will need to be residing in the rented off-campus residence. Semi-structured individual interviews and a focus group will be utilized to collect data from the participants. A tape recording device will be used to record both the focus group and the individual interviews. Permission to use a tape recorder will be requested from the study participants. The use of a tape-recording device will assist the researcher in having an opportunity to go over the material so that no valuable information is left out. The individual interview will last a maximum of 30 minutes per participant and the focus group will last for an hour.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

All the students who participate in the study are doing so voluntarily. The study will target students that are over the age of 18 years. The students that are over the age of 18 years will sign their consent forms. The consent forms will be available in both English and isiZulu. The researcher will use both the previously mentioned language in their simplest form so that the content of the consent forms will be understandable. All consent forms will be stipulating the nature of the study. Those participating in the study will be informed that they are free to withdraw or stop participation in the study at any time.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The study will be capturing the experiences of students residing off-campus and their experiences can be used to inform future decisions around improving the residences of students that are residing in off-campus rented residences. The participants taking part in the study will be kept confidential to avoid possible victimization in case they share sensitive information regarding the conditions they live in.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

None.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

The name of the participants will not be recorded anywhere and the participants will be given pseudonyms that do not link them to their real identity. Only the researcher and the transcriber will have access to the information. It will also be explained to the participants that the supervisor will have access to the publication overseeing the work of the researcher. The participants will be informed that the findings may be used for journal articles and conference presentations, and this will be done without revealing their identity. As a researcher, I will try my best to ensure that the information shared within the focus groups stays in the focus group but implement the confidentiality form which will be signed by all members that take part in the focus groups. However, the focus group members

will be encouraged not to share highly sensitive information that will put their lives in danger. The participants can cancel their involvement in the study at any time.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the home of the researcher where only the researcher will have access. Electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

None.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Miss Imaan Sokhela on 0608 875 5333 or email on imaansokhela1@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for <insert time frame>. Please do not use home telephone numbers. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact [Dr. Faith Mkhwananzi](mailto:Dr.Faith.Mkhwananzi@gmail.com) at faithmkhwananzi@gmail.com.

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

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, the undersigned,

_____ (participant's full names to be included), (the "Participant")

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the

_____ (the "Study") in relation to

and which Study is being conducted by

(insert the name of the researcher), (the "Researcher").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that–

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the *tape recorder*.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview schedule

Individual interview questions

The following individual interview questions are designed to assist the researcher to understand the off-campus living experiences of students at Majuba College and the extent to which they affect academic success. Your cooperation and participation will be appreciated. I guarantee that the information will be confidential and shall be used solely for the purpose of this study.

Section A: Personal Information (please circle the applicable option)

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Age

under 18 years

19 years and above

3. Years of staying in off campus residence

Below 12 months

1 - 2 years

3 years and above

4. Distance from home area

1 – 100kms

101 -200kms

201-300kms

400kms and above

5. How many students occupy the premises of your residency?

1

2

3

More than 3 (please specify number

6. How many students occupy your room of residence?

1

2

3

More than 3 (please specify number

7. Indicate the level in which you are studying

NCV (level 2, Level 3 or Level 4)

Nated (N4, N5 or N6)

8. Which institutional program are you studying? Please indicate below.

.....

Section B: Open-ended questions

Research Question	Interview Question	Capability Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What opportunities do students living off-campus have? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has it been like for you to live away from home? 2. What has been the memorable experience about living away from home? 3. What kind of services do you get at your private accommodation? (Follow on questions; do you have access to <u>wifi</u>? Do you pay electricity and water? <u>Etc</u>) 4. What do you think are the advantages/ opportunities enjoyed by a student staying off-campus compared to a student staying on campus? 5. How do those advantages/ opportunities help you succeed academically? 6. How do you think the access to this Higher Learning Institution will benefit your life? 	<p>Available and valued capabilities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the conversion factors that affect students that are living off-campus 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell me about your family background? 2. Who is paying for your college fees? 3. Please describe the type of accommodation that you reside in. (e.g., commune house, hostel, renting a room, renting from relatives) 4. What are the challenges that you are experiencing as a student that reside off-campus? 	<p>Conversion factors</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. How do those challenges affect your academic performance? 6. Do you feel safe in the area where you stay? Please explain 7. What do you think should be done to resolve these challenges? By whom? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does off-campus student accommodation influence the academic success of the Majuba TVET College students. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how you have been performing academically since you have been residing in the private residence? 2. Do you think your academic life is influenced in anyway by you living in the specific private residence? Please explain. 3. Given a chance, would you prefer living in an on-campus residence? If so, please justify. 4. Do you experience any disturbances in your room of residence when studying? If so, please explain. 5. In your opinion, is the private residential environment promoting an environment to live in and to study in? please explain. 6. What facilities are lacking at your private residence that you think will help you achieve academic success? 	Conversion factors
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you done to try and resolve the challenges that you encounter in your private residence? 	Agency

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Are there any ideas, if any, that you have implemented to mitigate the challenges that are affecting you to academically succeed? 3. Do you think there is anything students can do to increase their chances of succeeding with their studies? Please explain 	
--	--	--

Thank you for your participation.

