

**Institutional commitments, integration and student persistence in the NCV Safety in
Society at a TVET College in the Western Cape**

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Abstract

Student dropout, certification and retention rate has played a pivotal role for academic institutions globally. There are various factors that affect student persistence which inevitably leads to a student's failure to graduate. These factors may also result in voluntary withdrawal from institutions which could impact on the status and funding of tertiary institutions. To deal with such critical issues, there is a need to understand the reasons for the decline in student retention and the factors that influence goals and student departure. The aim of the current study was to explore the factors that may or may not contribute to persistence, which eventually has an influence on the retention rate.

In the current qualitative study, Tinto's longitudinal model was comprehensively explored. Therefore, the current study was located within Tinto's longitudinal model of student departure. The researcher was prompted to explore the factors that influence student goals, institutional commitments, social and academic integration and persistence. The South African government expected that the role of the TVET colleges would become the cornerstone of the skills development landscape. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013b), it was estimated that the growth in the sector would escalate as follows: the projection of 345 000 students in 2010, 630 000 students in 2013. The total projection for 2030 was that 2.5 million students would be certified (DHET, 2013b). Unfortunately, the 2030 projection has been adversely affected by the poorly performing institution and the high drop-out rate. (DHET, 2013b) Therefore, the setting for the research was a Technical Vocational College in Cape Town which offers the National Certificate Vocational NCV. The single-institutional study linking academic integration, goal influencers, institutional commitments social and academic integration and persistence was based in a college in Cape Town. Thus the study has an overarching research question and three sub-questions. The college was selected conveniently and the researcher purposively selected the participants. A total of twenty participants (20) were interviewed after providing assent and consent. The qualitative design utilized in the current study allowed the researcher to identify themes. Therefore, thematic analysis was employed in the data analysis section. The researcher is currently an insider in this sector. The unique experience and academic background of the researcher has afforded the opportunity to ethically gain access to past results in the TVET, specifically, in a NCV programme at a Cape Town College.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master in Adult Education and Global Change, University of the Western Cape. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Henry Hermanus Jansen

Signed: 

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

In terms of the *FET Act 98 of 1998* (RSA) the South African Further Education and Training (FET) college sector was established in 2002. In the same year, “152 technical colleges were merged into 50 larger multi-campus institutions and renamed further education and training colleges” (Department of Education and Training [DHET], 2013b, p. 12) across the nine provinces in South Africa. In 2013, the government renamed the FET Colleges as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The main objective of the DHET was to make TVET “attractive institutions of choice for school-leavers” (DHET, 2013b, p. xii). Statistics show that the number of students rose from “345 000 in 2010 to an estimated 650 000 in 2013” (DHET, 2013b, p. xii) with a projected increase of 2.5 million by 2030 (DHET, 2013b). The new TVET curriculum according to Terblanche (2017) “potentially offers multiple entry and exit points and diversity of learning programmes and qualifications to meet the varied needs of students in different fields and at different stages of their lives” (p. 3).

The injustices of the past perpetuated by the apartheid legacy shaped the skills development landscape of the educational system in South Africa. Provinces inherited a TVET system, which was both challenging in terms of infrastructure and bureaucracy (McGrath, 1998). The rebuilding of the TVET colleges was thus very important to relate “them to international competitions and policy formulation” (McGrath, 1998, p. 503). Terblanche (2017) states that “College leaders of historically white and black narrowly focused on the interest of the race group linked to their respective colleges” (p. 1) which led to curricula development which were not responsive to diversity. The restructuring of the TVET system was thus important to create a feeling of inclusiveness for all citizens in South Africa which “reflect the values and principles” of the Rainbow Nation (Terblanche, 2017, p. 1). Terblanche (2017) accentuated that “[T]he purpose and mission of South African TVET are to respond to the human resources needs of the country for personal, social, civic and economic development” (p. 2). Therefore, Terblanche (2017) emphasised that a “successful TVET system has to provide diversified programme offerings that promote the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required by South Africans as individuals and citizens” (p. 2). Currently the TVET colleges offer different “mainstream programmes through Nated (N) 191 programmes (N1-N6) and the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes” (Human Resource Development Council for South Africa [HRDC], 2014, p. 6). In addition, TVET colleges offer learnership and skills programmes which are driven by the various SETAs (HRDC, 2014).

National Certificate Vocational (NCV)

The NCV programme was introduced in 2007 in the TVET colleges in order to address the priority skills deficit in the South African economy (HRDC, 2014). According to Gewer (as cited in HRDC, 2014), “the rationale behind the curriculum was to provide school leavers with the necessary foundation to enter into the workplace and be easily trained into specialised mid-level occupations” (p. 7). Hence, the “practical component of study may take place in the workplace or in a simulated environment in the TVET college” (HRDC, 2014, p. 7).

The curriculum comprises of three compulsory subjects, namely, Language, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and Life Orientation and four core subjects (compulsory) of which one subject is an elective (HRDC, 2014). The NCV programme was developed to offer young learners who have successfully completed Grade 9 “an alternative pathway to intermediate occupations” (HRDC, 2014, p. 9). According to HRDC (2014) the NCV thus has a “dual role-as a parallel, and vocational orientated, qualification to the NSC for those who leave school at Grade 9, and as a post-secondary qualification” (p. 9). In 2009, the Safety and Society stream was introduced in the NCV programme.

Statistics for NCV Safety in Society

Although the student enrolment had increased from 2013 to 2016, Table 1 shows that a continual average completion rate of just more than 40 % was achieved for 2013, 2014 and 2016. This means less than half of the students enrolled could not complete their studies successfully. More than 100 students per year either failed to write the final examination or did not qualify to write the final examination. Only a third of the students in 2013 were successful in the final examination.

Table 1

Number of students who registered, wrote and completed NCV Level 4 Safety in Society 2013-2016

Year	Total Registered	Total Wrote	Total Completed	% Completed
2013	921	789	388	42.1
2014	1003	845	336	33,5
2015	1282	1142	529	41.3
2016	1374	1210	579	42.1

Note: From DHET Statistics on post-school education. (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). Pretoria:

DHET

Although these numbers in Table 1, show remarkable increases in student registrations over the years, low completion rates remain an enormous challenge for TVET colleges. However, the completion rate of more than 40% for three years may be attributed to the “educational conditions in which we place students rather than the attributes of students themselves” (Tinto, 2009, p. 2). According to Tinto (2009) “four conditions stand out as supportive of student success, namely expectations, support, feedback and involvement” (p. 3). This means that students who are “more likely to persist and graduate in settings that hold high and clear expectations for achievement” (Tinto, 2009, p. 3). Tinto (2009) alerts that “more than a few students enter the university insufficiently prepared” (p. 3) and therefore need academic and social support.

Rationale

Completion rates prompted me to investigate student persistence in the NCV Safety in Society programme at a TVET college in the Western Cape. Understanding student persistence in this programme could be instructive to address challenges related to low completion rates across the NCV programmes as well as to policymakers in the TVET sector.

Research Problem

Student persistence could be influenced by particular factors such as pre-entry attributes, student goals, institutional commitments and social and academic integration. A lack of understanding the factors influencing student persistence can undermine the latter. Therefore knowledge and understanding about these factors can enable administrators, educators, and student leaders to design policies and practices that foreground concerns about student persistence.

Research Aims

1. To investigate the relationships between student goals institutional commitments and social and academic integration and persistence;
2. To investigate the relationships between institutional commitments and social and academic integration; and
3. To generate new theoretical insights about student persistence in TVET colleges.

Research Questions

Main research question

What are the relationships between student goals, institutional commitments and social and academic integration and persistence?

Sub-questions

How do student goals contribute to persistence?

How do institutional commitments contribute to student persistence?

Do TVET college students in the NCV Safety in Society programme demonstrate persistence?

Limitations

Although my study has reached its aim, there were some limitations which could not be avoided. The research was conducted only on a small number of participants in the exit Level 4 NCV Safety in Society programme. In order to generalise the findings, a broader study of exit Level 4 students in the various NCV programmes should be conducted.

Overview of the Sections

In Section 2, I discuss the conceptual framework which frames this study.

In Section 3, I discuss the Research Methodology and Design.

In Section 4, I present the data analysis.

In Section 5, I provide a summary of the research study, findings, recommendations and a conclusion.

SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I present my conceptual framework which is comprised of the following components: pre-entry attributes, goals/commitments, institutional experiences, integration, institutional departure/student dropout, and student persistence/retention.

Conceptual Framework

According to Bitzer and Troskie-De Bruin (2004), Tinto's 1993 model of departure provides useful insights into factors contributing to learning success. A longitudinal model of departure has been described by Tinto (1993), (as cited in Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004) not as a descriptive model, but an explanatory one for students' departure from institutions. This model of departure is also a "process of interactions between an individual student with given attributes, skills, financial resources, prior educational experiences and dispositions" (Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004, p. 121).

Diane Grayson provided a clear indication on why the shift in thinking has changed from student attrition to student retention. She explained in detail her encounter with the well-known author Vincent Tinto on his visit to South Africa, and why the focus has shifted from inputs to outputs and student success (Grayson, 2014). Student departure or drop out is not unique to higher education institutions, and is a common problem at regional and national levels. Although Tinto's (2006) research focuses mainly on university persistence, he and other scholars used his models in research on community colleges (Tinto, 2006). It is in these "community colleges" settings that Barnett (2011) contends "validation may be more important for success and persistence" (p. 196). Barnett (2011) defines "validation as the interaction with students, initiated by faculty and others in the campus community, that engender feelings of self-worth and a belief in the students' ability to succeed" (p. 196). Barnett (2011) draws on Rendon and states that "although Rendon offered validation as an alternative to integration, it may also be viewed as a precondition for integration" (p. 196). In other words, institutions may validate students based on "their personal goals, showing an appreciation of their personal and cultural history" (Barnett, 2011, p. 197) or by assisting students outside of class hours. Institutions may vary in the way in which they experience student departure, due to various factors, but as Tinto explains, "leaving is not the mirror image of staying" (Tinto, 2006, p. 6). Therefore, Tinto's (2006) statement contends that "Knowing why students leave does not tell us, at least directly, why students persist. ... it does not tell institutions ... what they can do to help students stay and succeed" (p. 6).

Tinto (2006) elaborates on the reasons why the Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure is explanatory, rather than descriptive. He argues that the model sought the interaction of different individuals in an educational institution within the social context of the institution and the communities that they are comprised of, and sought the reasons why individuals of differing characteristics withdraw from such institutions. Another area of focus of the Tinto (1993) model is policy relevance, which officials may use as a guide for institutional retention.

However, other authors disagree with Tinto's Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure. Although academic integration is central to the theme of student persistence, according to Barnett (2011), not all scholars agree. The critique prompts new insights in the Longitudinal Model, and according to Rendon (1994, 2002) and Barnett (2011) the non-existence and omission of certain elements such as validation, non-traditional and community colleges' settings for student persistence in Tinto's approach or model. Barnett (2011) herself offers precondition as an alternative for validation, as an element for student persistence. Barnett (2011) also suggests that "faculty-student interactions influence academic integration and that academic integration influences students' intent to persist" (p. 215).

Pre-entry attributes

Family background

Parents who are actively involved in their children's education, and who put a high value on academic achievement, expect them to do well academically and often obtain higher levels of competency from them (Urdu, Solek & Schoenfelder, 2007). The expectancies and value of the parents are projected into the motivation of the student's intrinsic and extrinsic goals. Sometimes these expectancies are related to obligations dependant or independent of the students. This means that some students feel obligated to follow the advice of family members in cases where they are dependent (Urdu, Solek & Schoenfelder, 2007). According to McLoyd (as cited in Phinney, Dennis & Osorio, 2006) "social class and related variables such as parental education, occupation, and income are associated with college attendance and are typically confounded in ethnicity" (p. 349) which plays a role in respect of college attendance. McLoyd (as cited in Phinney et al., 2006) states that "ethnic minority youth" (p. 349) are more inclined to "have parents who do not have higher education" (p. 349). These students are "less likely to attend college and face more challenges" (Phinney et al., 2006, p. 349) and therefore less inclined to persist. However, Phinney et al. (2006) maintain that students who experienced the

financial struggles of their parents “may wish to gain education that will allow them to get a good job and help the family financially” (p. 349), and thus persist in their studies.

Prior schooling

Tinto (2006) claims that although high school experiences influence student persistence, “such knowledge is less useful to institutional officials because they often have little immediate control over student prior experiences or private lives” (p. 6). The transition stage from high school to college is a process in which students must separate themselves from their past. According to Tinto (2006), during the transition between high school and college, students may find themselves in a highly anomic situation. According to Milem and Berger (1997), Tinto (1993) refers to such a transition stage as the “old and the new” (p. 389), which meant that students found themselves in the absence of familiar social norms and values. According to Tinto (1997), new students still have to learn how to conduct themselves at college. Although students may have met their academic demands at high school, it is possible that these students struggle to meet the social and intellectual skills required for college (Tinto, 1997). According to Elkins, Braxton and James (2000), students may “require some personal transformation and [possible] rejection of the norms of past communities” (p. 253). This means that students who strive to persist may find it difficult because of the attitude of communities they originate from towards the value of college education.

Another factor that influences the transition stage from high school is that of the college of choice which is central to the achievement of valued career goals (Tinto, 2006). Tinto argues that this results in students anticipating their socialisation by moving toward perceived institutional goals prior to actual admission (Tinto, 2006). However, according to Tinto (2006), this is not widespread, but prevalent among institutions, which are directly tied to a specific career (e.g. military academies). However, when referring to the “stages of passage in student college careers”, (Tinto, 1987, p. 94), Tinto asserts that highly structured educational settings (e.g. military academies) are always clearly marked by ceremonies and symbolism; these ceremonial rites, he asserts, are no longer commonplace in higher education. This however is in contrast with the college in the research study, which offers a policing programme.

Moreover, students may find themselves in the position of rejecting the values of their high school friends and family towards remaining at their chosen college (Elkin et al., 2000). Individuals who come from families, communities and schools whose norms and behaviours

are different to those of the college they attend might face difficulties, according to Tinto (1997).

However, Tinto (1997) states that students' intentions toward enrolling for a certain programme depend on their motivation. This means students' motivation shapes their behaviour, which affects their academic performance and social regulation to college life, which may lead to persistence (Kuh, 1999). According to Murtaugh, Burns, and Schuster (1999) though "pre-college characteristics do not explain all the variation in attrition rates of students" (p. 356); however, students will stay at an institution where they feel a sense of community among students and also where they are actively involved in the institution. It is therefore of utmost importance, according to Tracy-Mumford (as cited in Comings, 2007), that colleges develop a strategic plan for persistence that include recruitment methods as a priority of the plan. According to her, there should be "enough information for potential students to make an informed decision" (Comings, 2007, p. 29) regarding the programme in which they intend to enrol. Another aspect in her strategic plan of persistence includes "intake and orientation procedures should help students understand the program" (Comings. 2007, p. 29) for which they intend to enrol. Comings (2007) also notes that Tracy-Mumford advocates counselling services or student support which should identify "students at risk" at an early stage, which may be coupled with a "system for contact and follow-up" (p. 29) that helps students who are having difficulties.

Therefore, Tinto (2006) proposes that faculty need to move away from student retention and rather put the emphasis on student education, which will enhance student persistence. Tinto (2006), however, warns institutions about the mere surrendering of 'lip service' when it came to student retention and claims that the faculty should enhance the importance of student goals with a reward system.

Goals / Commitments (T1)

Student Goals

I will not go into detail about the productivism concept, as explained by Powell and McGrath (2014), who emphasise the "aptitudes and attitudes required for work"(p. 214), which learners require when they enrol at TVET colleges. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the "goal of completing college is a necessary condition", but "it is not a sufficient condition" (p. 3). According to Powell and McGrath (2014), productivism "has left little room for the role of education and training plays in preparing young people for the challenges and opportunities

that they will face in their communities and their workplaces” (p. 214). Some events may occur during their stay at the college that might influence this goal. According to Tinto (2017), these events may influence students’ motivation and intensity to reach their goals. According to Tinto (2017), the lack of clarity in the student’s intention can undermine goal completion. Some students may be affected weakly and while others may be affected strongly and even the slightest event may sway their desire to persist in completing their goal. Some students may experience peer pressure in the use of drugs or alcohol and this may influence their academic results and goal, and they eventually dropout (Tinto, 2017).

“Differences in character and intensity”, according to Tinto (2017), inversely affect students with “different goals and motivations” (p. 256). For Tinto (2017), self- efficacy and a sense of belonging play a pivotal role in students achieving their goal. Therefore, Tinto (2017) emphasises that “a strong sense of self-efficacy promotes goal attainment” (p. 257) and that students would tend to “engage more readily in their tasks” (p. 257) and persist longer at them even if they encounter serious challenges. Nonetheless, students with high self-efficacy may also struggle with the high demands of college life that might “weaken their self-efficacy” (Tinto, 2017, p. 257). In terms of a sense of belonging, Tinto (2017) stresses the importance of community building in order to persist. Tinto (2017) emphasises how important it is that students value their participation in the newly formed community. Hurtado and Pontjuan, and Stebleton et al. (as cited in Tinto, 2017, p. 258) aver that this sense of belonging, which is “shaped by the broader campus climate ... derive from their daily interactions with other students, faculty, staff and administrators”(p. 258) of the college. Therefore “students who perceive themselves as belonging are more likely to persist” (Tinto, 2017, p. 258). Another element of focus in the Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure that I find intriguing is institutional commitment (Tinto, 2017), which strongly connects to my interest in this study.

Institutional commitment and lecturer support

Students are assets of an institution and for this reason, educational and training institutions cannot be operational without learners/students. Recruitment and retention of students are therefore of utmost importance for educational and training institutions. It is my opinion that institutions must commit themselves to client-orientated services to increase student persistence at their institutions. Braxton, Bray and Berger (2000) state that “The greater their level of subsequent institutional commitment, the greater the likelihood the students will persist in college” (p. 216).

Institutions should therefore be aware of the fact that “People enter institutions of higher education with a great variety of interests, skills, values and commitments to the goals of the higher education” (Tinto, 1982, p. 696). One should also be aware that not all students are equally equipped in terms of social and academic integration (Tinto, 1982). Institutions therefore need to encourage a sense of belonging among students because they come to see themselves as members of a community (Tinto, 2017). In terms of academic and social support, it is important for institutions to provide adequate support, especially for first-year students. Without support, students may “lose their motivation to persist and subsequently dropout” (Tinto, 2017, p. 260). It is therefore of utmost importance for institutions to have “early-warning systems that alert faculty and staff to student struggles” and to implement “early interventions” (Tinto, 2017, p. 260) to prevent student dropout.

Comings (2007) refers to mandatory students, as their participation and their goals are often those of the agency they will represent. Institutional commitments such as counselling during intake and orientation are aimed at improving students’ lives, which could eventually lead to student persistence (Comings, 2007). However, not all institutions have student persistence high on their priority list. Despite the fact that faculty are willing to proclaim the importance of retention, they typically do not see it as their respective jobs, although it is an educational issue (Tinto, 2006). Tinto (2006) further stresses the importance of action and ways to enhance student persistence by the faculty. The mere fact that faculty proclaim retention as priority does not mean that they invest in a reward system such as “promotions and tenure systems” for staff and institutional demands (Tinto, 2006, p. 9). Tinto asserts that there are various reasons why students move from institution to institution. One of the reasons is intellectual and social integration, which excludes informal interaction with peers and staff (Tinto, 1982).

However, Tinto (1982) proclaims that such factors could be countered if institutions adopt a policy which encourages staff and student interaction. Such interaction would include live-in centres and informal teas and dinners (Tinto, 1982). Tinto (1993) also cautions against the “absence of student-faculty interactions and/or unrewarding interactions outside the classroom may lead to academic boredom and thus to” (p. 118) dropout.

Institutional Experiences

Classroom learning

Students have to integrate as soon as reasonably possible to overcome any obstacles that might influence their persistence in their respective programme. In a study conducted by Tinto (1997)

at Seattle Central Community College, and its Coordinated Studies Programs, he found “underlying forces that link classroom experiences to persistence” (p. 609). These underlying forces have been identified as: “Building Supportive peer Groups, Shared Learning-Bridging the Academic-Social Divide, and Gaining a Voice in the Construction of Knowledge” (Tinto, 1997, p. 609). On the other hand, Tinto (1997) cautions us against the assumption that learning leads to persistence “though learning is in general positively associated with persistence” (p. 616), it does not “guarantee persistence” (p. 616).

In the case of students in Safety in Society, they have to work together in order to complete physical exercises or problems using policing techniques. This means the social and academic integration by means of teamwork is somehow “forced” upon them in terms of instructions. The “educational activity structure of the curriculum and classroom” (Tinto, 1997, p. 615) affords and somehow forces students the opportunity of social and academic integration (Tinto, 1997). Kraska and Kappeler (1997) note that militarism is an ideology to solve problems and can be described as a “set of beliefs, values and assumptions that stress the use of force and threat of violence as the most appropriate means to solve problems” (p. 1). Therefore, police militarisation is a “process whereby civilian police increasingly draw from, and pattern themselves around the tenets of militarism” (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997, p. 1). As exercise drills are part of the curriculum and classroom activities, students are forced to work together in order to execute the exercise.

Peer learning

According to Tinto (1997), “The more students are involved, academically and socially, in shared learning experiences that link them as learners with their peers” (p. 615) the higher the likelihood that their learning becomes more internalised which may eventually lead to persistence. “In this way, students” develop and “experience a form of interdisciplinary learning”, which means that “the learning of the group depends” (Tinto, 1997, p. 602) on individual learning.

In the study at Seattle Central Community College, Tinto (1997), found evidence on student persistence that had an impact on learning communities and argued that these underlying forces link classroom experiences to persistence. According to Tinto (1997), one of the underlying forces has been identified as the building of supportive peer groups, which strongly focus on participation during the students first year of study. These peer groups provide them with “small knowable groups of fellow students” (Tinto 1997, p. 609). According to Tinto (1997),

meeting people “is a major preoccupation of student life” (p. 609). It is thus very important to form peer groups as a supportive structure for shared - rather than isolated - learning experiences for students, right through their academic stay (Tinto, 1997). Tinto (1997) recommends such peer grouping as a “major pre-occupation of student life, especially among younger students” (p. 609) at an institution. Therefore, participation in the newly formed learning community for entry-level students is important in making the transition from high school to college (Tinto, 1997).

Another element of the underlying force includes “Shared Learning-Bridging the academic-social divide (Tinto, 1997, 610) which according to Tinto (1997), not only creates new fellowship, but also help to “bridge the academic-social divide that typically plagues student life” (p. 610). Tinto (1997) makes it clear that although students struggle to choose between social and academic life, the forming of “learning communities helped students draw these two worlds together” (p. 610).

It is during the “supportive [networking] of peers that academic engagement” (Tinto, 1997, 610), which happens inside and outside the classroom, arises, as students tend to spend more time with their peers outside the classroom on academic matters when they socially integrated. These learning communities often lead to engagements “beyond the classroom in informal meeting and study groups” (Tinto, 1997, 611). Lastly, Tinto (1997) described the final element as “gaining a voice in the construction of knowledge” (p. 611). It is with the last element that students are required to find their way in constructing their own identity in their learning process. “Students take ownership over the learning process” (Tinto, 1997, p. 611) and, in the final stage, some students experience a richer and more empowering learning phase in their educational quest (Tinto, 1997).

Personal normative integration

Student social and academic integration

The college environment is divided into two components, which Tinto (1997) calls academic and social systems. According to Tinto (1997), student involvement in the various components of the college, especially academic life, leads to a greater acquisition of knowledge and skill. Drawing from Tinto (1993), Barnett (2011) defines academic integration “as a sense of competent membership” (p. 218). According to Tinto (1997), academic integration has entirely to do with formal education and the classroom and laboratories of the institution, while social integration has to do with the “daily life and personal needs ... of the students” (Tinto, 1993,

p. 106). It is within these daily life situations that students have to find a way to cope with college life in order to persist. These new social relationships create interactions among students and between members of the staff and students. The daily personal contacts, formal and informal, which Tinto (1997) describes as the only vehicles by which incorporation takes place, are thus very important for student integration. According to Tinto (1997), these social relationships are not only important for integration, but also for forming a community of learning.

It is in these communities of learning that students find themselves harvesting value in their attempt to learn and be successful. However, the mere fact that a student has integrated socially does not mean that the student might persist. It might be that a student could not establish competent membership in the academic domain of the college and therefore leaves the college (Tinto, 1997). The opposite may also be true, that the student may perform adequately in his or her academic studies, but still leave the college (Tinto, 1997). Barnett (2011) elaborates on competent membership and states that for Tinto (1997) it implies that students possess both knowledge and skills, as well as a sense of belonging at a college. According to Barnett (2011), “numerous scholars (including Braxton & Hirschy, 2005; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Kreamer, 1997; Tinto 1997)” (p. 199) have found it difficult to define and measure academic integration and therefore describe the term from various angles. Some measure integration by academic performance or rates, while others by membership in scholastic honour societies. Although the maintenance of adequate grades is important for persistence, social membership is not a requirement for persistence (Tinto, 1997). However, the formal and informal academic world is linked to the social systems and, according to Tinto (1997), remains an important interplay. Therefore, experience in academic and social life have distinct impacts upon integration and persistence (Tinto, 1997). This means that there are collaborative experiences between the social and academic life of the students at college.

Academic Integration

According to Astin (1984), student involvement refers to the “amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). The academic experience has entirely to do with the formal educational structure of the students and involves staff members and educators (Tinto, 1997). It is thus important for students to be academically integrated in terms of meeting adequate grades (Tinto, 1997). Failure to attain minimum grades may lead to academic dismissal (Tinto, 1997). Therefore, meeting minimum grades does not mean that students will persist in their college life (Tinto, 1997). Drawing from

Tinto (1975) Scott (2009) postulates that the formal component in academic integration is “linked to these forms of departure, which arise from substantial incongruence, or mismatch, between the skills and abilities of the individual and the level of demand placed on the individual by the academic system at the college “(p. 31). A student may also experience academic difficulty, which reflects a situation in which the demands of the academic system are too excessive (Tinto, 1997).

Other factors, such as academic boredom and voluntary withdrawal, also play a pivotal role if the academic system is not challenging enough (Tinto, 1997). Though students may possess the necessary skills, “students may find themselves in a situation where they fail to become involved in the intellectual life of the college (Tinto, 1997). These actions may have been caused by lack of commitment of students to the institution, or to the goal of education to meet the academic demand (Tinto, 1997). Consequently, “one of the challenges of development education is not only helping students acquire needed academic skills but also reshaping their belief” (Tinto, 2017, p. 257). Subsequently, “students’ belief in their ability to succeed in college is not just an academic issue”, but may “also reflect their ability to manage larger” (Tinto, 2017, p. 257) challenges. Although the ability and belief to succeed are imperative for students’ persistence, these factors do not guarantee persistence. Students have “to see themselves as a member of the community of the faculty, staff and other students who value their participation, that they matter and belong (Bean & Eaton, 2000; Berger & Milem, 1999; Kuh, Kinzi, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Stebleton, Soria, Huesman, & Torres, 2014; Strayhorn, 2008; Tovar, 2013)” Tinto (2017, p. 258). This shows the importance of the educational institution in the reinforcement of students’ beliefs and their sense of belonging through student academic integration.

Social Integration

Based on the Durkheim’s theory of suicide, Tinto (1975) developed an understanding of student dropout in higher education. Tinto (1975) draws on Durkheim and states that “According to Durkheim (1961) suicide is more likely to occur when individuals are insufficiently integrated into ... society” (p. 91). Consequently, the lack of or insufficient personal interaction plays a pivotal role in meeting the demands of other members of the collective (Tinto, 1975). Social integration, according to Tinto (1975), is part of a student system, which goes hand in hand with the academic integration of the student’s college life. Therefore, the lack of commitment by students to social integration will lead to low

commitment to the academic integration and eventually result in student dropout (Tinto, 1975). However, students have to find a balance between academic integration and social integration; the excessive emphasis on either system or domain may result in detracting of the academic and social systems (Tinto, 1975). Though student integration plays a crucial role in both social and academic integration, there is no need to achieve both to be successful. This means that, though students achieve adequate grades academically, they may still drop out because of insufficient social integration (and vice versa) (Tinto, 1975). Tinto (1975) refers to Durkheim's suicide model as "insufficient to explain the distribution of suicide within society among of differing individuals" (p. 92-93). He therefore noted additional factors relating to individual characteristics, especially psychological attributes (Tinto, 1975). Tinto (1975) therefore emphasises the importance of seeking the explanation of "the longitudinal process of interaction", stating that one needs to build "individual characteristics and dispositions relevant to educational persistence" (p. 93). For scholars like Christie and Dinham, and Pascarella and Chapman (as cited in Braxton & McClendon, 2001) "Research demonstrates that living on campus facilitates the social integration of first year students" (p. 60). Braxton and McClendon (2001) advocate that social environments be created for the students who live off-campus at tertiary institutions. They argue that these "social environments should strive to emulate the social environment" (p. 60) of students who live on campus.

Institutional departure/ student dropout

Student departure or student dropout is not unique to particular kinds of higher institutions and is rather a common problem to institutions internationally (Tinto, 2006). Although research has focused mainly on student persistence in universities, Tinto (2006) also refers to and addresses student persistence at community colleges. Institutions may vary in the way in which they experience student departure (due to various factors), but as Tinto (2006) explains, "leaving is not the mirror image of staying" (p. 6). Tinto (2006) claims that being aware of the reasons that students leave their learning institutions does not directly tell us that students persist. According to Cabrera, Nora and Castañeda (1993), "Tinto's theory attributes attrition to the lack of congruency between students and institutions" (p. 124). They conclude that Tinto's theory stresses that there is a link between "the student's motivation and academic ability and the institution's academic and social characteristics" which "help shape two underlying commitments: commitment to an educational goal and commitment to remain with the institution" (Cabrera et al., 1993, p. 124).

Tinto (1987) argues that societal theories of departure stressed the importance of external forces in the process of persistence and he refers to various theories, including the field of anthropology, where he cites the work of Van Gennep in *Rites of Passage*. He further elaborated on how these rites of passage have influenced student persistence in the framework of a community (Tinto, 1987).

Elkins, Braxton and James (2000) aver that Tinto (1987) received criticism and that “Tierney (1992), in particular, asserted that Van Gennep’s rites of passage cannot be extended to the movement of an individual from one culture to another” (p. 253). According to Elkins et al. (2000), Tierney argues that “the rites of passage are for the dominant majority students and not for the minority students” (Elkins et al., 2000, p. 253). Other scholars, such as Braxton, Shaw Sullivan and Johnson (1997), in addition to Elkins et al. (2000) also critique Tinto’s theory for the lack of “empirical internal consistency and that the theory is only supported in certain settings” (p. 253). Elkins et al. (2000) state that Tinto (1993) maintains that “Van Gennep held the notion of rites of passage could be extended” (p. 253), which means that individuals can move from one place to another. They argue that “an individual leaves one community to establish membership in another” (Elkins et al., 2006, pp. 253-254), and therefore “the notion of rites of passage could be extended to situations involving the movement of individuals from one culture to another” (Elkins et al., 2000, p. 254). Tinto (1987) also argues in detail about what he calls stages or phases of association of the individual with other members of the institution and what he refers to as stages of separation, transition and incorporation. According to Kampson (2009) who draws from Elkins et al. (2000), a student’s separation occurs at college due to various factors, which include “gender, race, academic aptitude, academic achievements, family socioeconomic background, and parent educational levels” (p. 126).

Tinto (1987) highlighted these stages and described each stage according to the factors, which influence student persistence.

Student persistence and retention

Scholars, for the purpose of academia, have found it difficult to establish a common definition for student retention. The challenge in formulating the definition is because retention was developed for university settings (Wild & Ebberts, 2002). “The first studies of undergraduate retention appeared” in the 1930’s, however it was only in the 1970s that the “dawn of theory in the study field of student retention” took shape. (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011, p. 2). As an alternative, scholars developed and described retention in terms of programme

completion (Walleri, 1981; Wild & Ebbers, 2002). According to Wild and Ebbers (2002), retention can be described as students persisting in their studies.

According to Comings's (2007) definition, persistence can be described as a "continuous learning process that lasts until an adult student meets his or her educational goals, and persistence could start through self-study before the first episode of participation in a program. Persistence ends when the student decides to stop learning" (p. 24).

Wild and Ebbers (2002) define persistence in community colleges as a persistence rate which considers goals. According to Crawford (as cited in Wild & Ebbers, 2002), persistence is defined as "maintenance of continued enrollment for two or more semesters" (p. 506).

Tinto (2006) asserts that student retention was seen as a "reflection of individual attributes, skills and motivation" and that, when students decided to leave the institutions, they were seen as "less motivated, and less willing to defer the benefits that college graduation was believed to bestow" (p. 2).

However, this view changed over the years as a broader view was needed to understand the relationship between the institutions and the individuals (Tinto, 2006). Tinto (2006) articulates that early studies of "retention lacked complexity and detail" (p. 3); he has grounded his arguments in the fact that early works on student persistence were "drawn from quantitative studies of largely residential universities and students of majority backgrounds" (Tinto, 2006, p. 3). This resulted in student experiences at "other types of institutions, two- and four-year, and of students of different genders, race, ethnicity, income, and orientation" (Tinto, 2006, p. 3), not being seen as influences on student persistence. During studies of persistence in non-residential settings, Tinto, Russo and Kadel (1994) discovered that the involvement of students in classrooms was important to sustained student retention.

Commitments according to Tinto (2006), appear to lead to persistence; but what is persistence or how do students intend to persist? Bandura, Graham, Fredericks, Byers-Winston, Hunter and Handelsman (as cited in Tinto, 2017) described persistence as "one manifestation of motivation" (p. 255), which, according to Tinto is the "outcome of the interaction among student goals, self-efficacy, a sense of belonging and perceived worth or relevance of the curriculum" (p. 255).

In a study by Nora (1987) into determinants of retention among Chicano College students, she explained that administrators responsible for "design and implement programs, policies and procedures" (p. 31) must take the various factors into account which influence retention rates.

Nora (1987) inferred that the “implementation of instructional techniques, programs or policies and retention” (p. 32) by community colleges “to reduce attrition has not been systematic” and “based on theoretical framework” (p. 32). She also stated that student retention rates are influenced by the individual degree of social and academic integration.

Community Colleges

Though Tinto’s (1993) model focuses on “four-year residential institutions”, his principle about “the importance of admission counselling for student retention is not irrelevant to other types of institutions of higher education” (Roman, 2007, p. 22). Marcia Roman (2007) draws on Wattenbarger and Albertson when she states that “community colleges are uniquely American in their genesis and are founded on democratic traditions” (p. 19). Traditionally, two-year enrolment institutions have evolved and are “preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions, vocational education, contract education for local employers, remediation of basic skills and even community services” (Roman, 2007, p. 19). These “community colleges now serve as a major component in the higher education system in the United States (Dougherty, 1987; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005)” (Roman, 2007, p. 19). The majority of these colleges “attract high proportions of low-income, first-generation college students and students of color, those typically underserved by higher education (American Association of Community Colleges, 2005)” (Roman, 2007, p. 19). Community college students, according to Roman (2007) who cite Bean and Metzner, “are often described as non-traditional as compared to traditional college students who attend a residential college full-time immediately after high school graduation” (p. 20). The TVET colleges in South Africa are not two-year enrolment institutions as the community colleges in the United States (US); however, not all TVET colleges are residential. The TVET colleges in South Africa are mainly public commuter institutions. Community colleges in the United States provide a pathway into higher education institutions. This bears a similarity with TVET colleges instances when students create a pathway into higher education. Integration at such TVET colleges could be similar to community colleges and has an influence on the retention rate. Tinto himself questions the mechanisms that encourage social integration at these community colleges. It is for the reason of similarities that my research focussed on a TVET college in South Africa

Summary

According to Tinto (1982), his model was developed to explain certain (but not all) facets of dropout behaviour that may occur. The major focus of his investigation was primarily

concerned with differences within academic institutions, as dropout as a result of academic failure, and dropout as a result of voluntary withdrawal, are different factors (Tinto, 1982). The major focus of his model was to understand how institutions were partially responsible for student attrition (Tinto, 1982). Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure identified two major factors that influenced student integration into college that may eventually These factors enable students to develop a sense of belonging and motivation, which leads to persistence.

SECTION 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this section, I discuss my research design and methodology I outline my research approach, research method and research instrument. I describe my research site, sample and sampling strategies. I conclude with a discussion of the research ethics that I considered during the course of my investigations.

Research approach

As I decided to investigate participants own ideas, this research approach permitted me to have an enhanced understanding of the participants' (Bryman, 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) refer to natural settings in which the research takes place so that participants' perspectives, which mean their understanding, descriptions, labels and meaning can be understood (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

According to Bryman (2015), one of the disadvantages of qualitative research may include the subjectivity of the research. Thus, the interview may be influenced by the personal relationship between myself, as researcher and the students as participants (Bryman, 2015). Another disadvantage, according to Bryman (2015), is the problem of generalisation in which the scope of the findings is restricted, and it could be interpreted that the sample is not a true reflection of the population.

Research site

The research site is a TVET College in the Western Cape. I selected this site as it was my place of employment, and I experienced first-hand the issues investigated in this study. All 91 were active students in my class and volunteered and gave consent after they were informed of the study and understood the protocol of the study. This meant that, because there was a lecturer-student relationship in the research study, I ensured that ethical issues such as voluntary participation were made clear, and assured students that their grades would not be affected if they were not willing to participate (Babbie, 1989). Students were assured that I was a researcher and not a lecturer.

Research method: Semi-structured interview

I used semi structured interviews as these have certain advantages (Bryman, 2015). The semi-structured interviews are less structured, which make them more flexible (Bryman, 2015). The

semi-structured interviews enabled me to obtain rich and detailed responses from participants (Bryman, 2015). The semi-structured interviews allowed me to skip questions and continue with additional questions (Bryman, 2015). In the process, I was able to obtain rich and detailed answers and, if necessary, the participants could be cautiously redirected if going off the topic (Bryman, 2015). All interviews were conducted in English, and I used an electronic recording device to record the interviews. I conducted the semi-structured interviews at the college during lunch breaks and after hours.

Research instrument: Interview guide

For the semi-structured interviews, I used an interview guide as my research instrument. The advantage of an interview guide is that it allows the researcher to decide the sequence of the questions and wording during the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Another advantage of the interview guide is its flexibility (Bryman, 2015). The flexibility allowed me opportunities for follow-up questions that were not included in the guide (Bryman, 2015).

Further advantages of the interview guide is that it allowed me to probe questions about experiences, opinions, feelings, knowledge and background of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Selection of research participants

Sample description

The 20 participants were selected from 91 final year Level 4 students in the NCV Safety in Society programme. The advantage of such a group size is that it is manageable in terms of retrieving quality data, and, as Warren (as cited in Bryman, 2015) suggests, for the purpose of publishing qualitative studies the “minimum requirements for the number of participants which is between 20 and 30 participants” (p. 425) must be met.

Sampling strategies

I used purposeful sampling (also called purposive sampling) to select particular elements in terms of diversity and socio-economic status from a population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The advantage of this sampling strategy allowed me to investigate an issue without generalising all responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This sampling method was less costly and time consuming (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The disadvantage of such a

strategy is that it may have caused a weakness of error due to experimenter or subject bias, arising from learner-lecturer relationships in the classroom (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Data reduction strategies

I used a thematic analysis approach to analyse the data (Bryman, 2015). Thematic analysis means that central themes and sub-themes can be extracted from the data, which is then presented in a matrix (Bryman, 2015). I specifically looked for phrases, words or occurrences with the same phenomena in the data. This could only be achieved through the thorough study of the data. These repetitions were used as themes. My qualitative data analysis was a process in which I could synthesise and make meaning of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) and this process helped me to put the data into categories and patterns which were then coded (Bryman, 2015; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

Drawing from Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004), Onguko (2012) states that “coding consists of reading through material and identifying where themes of a particular interest are illustrated by data (p. 107). I recorded a definition of the code words by means of open coding. Open coding allowed me to identify numerous concepts relevant to my research (Babbie, 1989).

Theme descriptions, similarities and differences, and transitions were considered (Bryman, 2015). I explored the different and similar views of the interviewees. Special attention was given to the transcription of the interviews because Bryman (2015) cautions that the possibility of a listening mistake could occur during the audio- recording. This data were used as empirical data evidence.

Research ethics

McMillan and Schumacher (2014) stated the importance of valid cost in collecting evidence from humans as a study. They emphasised that the cost “may include injury and psychological difficulties such as anxiety, shame, loss of self-esteem and affronts to human dignity, or they may involve legal infringement on human rights” (McMillan & Schumacher 2014, p. 129). In terms of privacy and empowerment, the “mission of social science is to enable community life to transform itself” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 363). It was therefore my aim to create platforms for “multiple voices, to enhance moral discernment and promote social transformation (Christians, 2000, p. 145)” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 363).

In order for me to conduct the research, I obtained consent to conduct the research by submitting a letter to the TVET College at which I am employed. (see Appendix B). In terms of ethical issues, reflexivity in qualitative research is important. In other words, the researchers must have the interpersonal skills in order to build trust and maintain a good relationship with participants and, most importantly, not be judgemental and be respectful towards the norms of the situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This meant that, although there was a lecturer-student relationship in the research study, I ensured that ethical issues such as voluntary participation were made clear; students might have felt that their grades could be affected if they were not willing to participate (Babbie, 1989).

I gave participants the assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and explained the intended use of the data. An information letter was provided to the participants to explain the terms of their participation (see Appendix C). During the process, I assured participants that their identities would not be identifiable in print (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). To this end I used pseudonyms to conceal participants' real names. As the majority of the college students live in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, I was very careful in considering the vulnerability of the participants. Special care not to harm participants in a psychological way was taken into consideration, which meant that I guarded against questions that may have led to discomfort (Babbie, 1989). An approach to fairness was followed in terms of thinking, actions, and personal morality during the interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). I provided each participant with a consent form, which they had to sign before the interview could commence (see Appendix D).

SECTION 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Safety in Society Programme

In 2009, the TVET College started a pilot project in the NCV programme with Safety in Society in the Western Cape. The NCV Safety in Society programme is designed to train students for law enforcement in the police, traffic and the military sectors. These stakeholders signed a memorandum of agreement with various colleges that offer the programme.

In addition to the academic requirements for enrolment into TVET colleges, some of the requirements that were stipulated in the agreement between the colleges and the stakeholders are that students, who wish to enrol for the programme, have to be medically fit, have no visible tattoos and must be able to complete a fitness test. The fitness test comprised of being able to run a distance of 2,4 km within a certain time – males under 12 minutes and females under 14 minutes. Students had to be able to carry a 60 kg punching bag over a distance of 30 metres without dropping the bag or collapsing; and they had to be able to do shuttle runs of more than 30 in a set period of bleeps. Before entering into the programme, the students needed to submit a medical form in which a medical practitioner indicated the medical fitness of the student to do exercises. Another requirement is that the student needed to submit to a drug test to indicate that he/she is free of any dependent substance. Though the research site where I am currently employed enforces such requirements, I cannot with certainty say that other Safety and Society programmes at other institutions are doing the same.

Although the stakeholders signed the memorandum of agreement, there was no guarantee that the stakeholders would automatically employ students who completed their studies. In the case of the NCV Safety in Society programme, most students are motivated to enrol because it enables them to develop skills and capabilities for employment in law enforcement agencies. Personal experience over the years has shown that the majority of students, who registered for the NCV Safety in Society programme, live in disadvantaged communities, where their high school experiences were influenced negatively by socio-economic circumstances. They either dropped out of high school or were unable to further their studies due to financial constraints. Because the NCV Safety in Society programme is a vocational stream, one may assume that the students are more interested in the extrinsic benefits, which include income, occupation and further education. As part of the recruitment process, students need to motivate, in writing, the reason for their enrolment in the programme, and it is evident from the NCV Safety in Society programme that the majority of students enrol with the goal of finding employment in the law

enforcement sector. For most students in the NCV Safety in Society programme, the intentions are to find employment but not all students are clear about their reasons for attending the college. As the NCV Safety in Society programme is a semi-military based programme, students undergo all aspects of semi-military training, except firearm competency. It is important that students are committed to the additional requirements, such as the physical and mental demands of the programme. Based on the semi-military structure curriculum of the Safety in Society programme, students need to develop a sense of teamwork in conflict situations, problem solving, physical training or military operational drill exercises.

Presentation of the data

This section analyses the data, which I gathered from interviewing 20 participants. Interpretations and links to the literature are made where relevant. The data are discussed with reference to the main question that is: “Do TVET college students in the NCV Safety in Society programme demonstrate persistence?” Three research sub-questions for the study were formulated:

How do student goals contribute to persistence?

How do institutional commitments contribute to student persistence?

Do TVET college students in the NCV Safety in Society programme demonstrate persistence?

This data were thematically analysed to get rich and detailed information.

Approach to thematic data analysis

My qualitative data analysis was a process in which I was able to “synthesize and make meaning from the data” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 395). This process helped me to put the data into categories and patterns, which were then used for coding (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Bryman, 2015). Drawing from Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2004), Onguko (2012) states that “coding consists of reading through material and identifying where themes of a particular interest are illustrated by data (p. 107). I recorded the definition of code words by means of open coding. Open coding allowed me to identify numerous concepts relevant to my research (Babbie, 1989). Although there are various manual methods of breaking down the data into meaningful pieces, such as the cut- and-paste, colour marking or cut out paper method, I made use of themes in the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

All participants' perspectives were thematically analysed by means of framework thematic analysis (Bryman, 2015). Thematic analysis means that “central themes and subthemes which are then represented in a matrix” (Bryman, 2015, p. 455). I specifically looked for phrases, words or occurrences with the same phenomena in the data. This was achieved through the thorough study of the data. These repetitions were used as themes. Other theme descriptions such as similarities and differences, and transitions, were also considered. The disadvantages of such a method could have emerged during the transcription of the data, such as a listening error may have occurred during the transcription. (Bryman, 2015). This data has been used as empirical data evidence. Verbatim responses were used to present rich, textural data. Where appropriate, interpretations were made per theme.

As English is the second language of 18 of the participants, I retained the grammatical inaccuracies of their interviews. This is in line with Bloomberg and Volpe's (2012) findings that the “confidence of readers are built by accurately relating the reality of the persons being studied” (p. 164).

Student goals

Profile of Participants

Participants' reasons for enrolling into the Safety in Society Programme	
South African Police Service	<p>Luvyo is a 24-year-old black male, with no dependants, who joined the programme to fight crime. He wants to join the South African Police Service.</p> <p>Asanda is a 26-year-old black female with no dependants. She has only passed Grade 11 in 2012. She enrolled in the Safety in Society programme to become a police officer.</p> <p>Anna is a 22-year-old black female with one dependant. She has Grade 12 and enrolled straight after school in the programme to become a police officer.</p> <p>John is a 25-year-old single, coloured male with no dependants. He has passed Grade 11 at high school. He</p>

	<p>joined the Safety in Society programme after being unemployed for three years. He wants to build on his father's legacy to become a police officer.</p>
Traffic Services	<p>Landie is a 19-year-old coloured female with no dependants. She decided to leave school after Grade 9 and further her studies in the Safety in Society programme. She wants to become a traffic officer.</p>
Law Enforcement	<p>Lucas is a 22-year-old single, coloured male with no dependants. He matriculated in 2012 and only enrolled in 2015 in the programme. He decided on his own to study the programme and wants to be a law enforcement officer.</p> <p>Peter is a 25-year-old black male who wants to join the law enforcement.</p>
South African National Defence Force	<p>Steven is a 26-year-old coloured male with no dependants. He has passed an ABET Level 4. He is passionate about the South African National Defence Force and enrolled because of his passion for a uniform.</p>
Improving of results	<p>Deon is a 25-year-old single, coloured male with no dependants. His highest grade passed was Grade 11 and he enrolled for the Safety in Society programme to further his studies and join the Fire and Rescue Department.</p> <p>Pam is a 23-year-old black female and wanted to improve her marks for matric. Her first choice was to study nursing, but she ended up doing Safety in Society.</p>
Personal circumstances	<p>Tokwe is a 25-year-old black female with no dependants who enrolled in the programme three years after the completion of her matric certificate. She wants to improve her</p>

	<p>circumstances because she is staying in an informal settlement in Khayelitsha.</p> <p>Felisha is a 25-year-old black female with one dependant and has only passed Grade 11 in 2010. She enrolled in the programme because of personal circumstances such as drugs and fighting in her community and does not wish to see herself in such situations.</p> <p>Andre is a 21-year-old single male with no dependants. He passed Grade 12 in 2013 and worked before enrolling in the programme. His driving force is to be successful and earn money to provide for his family.</p> <p>Cathy is a 25-year-old coloured female with one dependant. She only had Grade 11 when she enrolled in the programme. She wanted to improve her studies and be a role model for her daughter.</p> <p>Renesha is a 22-year-old single, coloured female who only had Grade 11 when she enrolled in the Safety in Society programme. She found other courses boring and wanted something challenging. Her main reason for studying is to get money and be independent</p>
<p>Other reasons: Further studies, family and community work</p>	<p>Wesiwe is a 24-year-old black female with one dependant. She had moved from one college to another in her second year. She is currently working as a facilitator at a centre for Equal Education in Khayelitsha and has a part-time job over weekends at McDonalds. Her future endeavours include studying Law at UWC, UNISA or NMU, after completion of the Safety in Society programme.</p> <p>Sarah is a 21-year-old married female with no dependants. She enrolled in the programme two years after her</p>

	<p>completion of her Matric Certificate. She wants to be involved in the community.</p> <p>Mark is a 24-year-old single, coloured male with no dependants. He resigned from his work after seeing students with the Safety in Society uniform. He experienced some personal issues during the training, but persisted because he has seen the programme as his last option.</p> <p>Sheila is a 23-year-old single, coloured female with no dependants and works part-time as a waitress. She wanted to be a law enforcement officer, but the course has changed her mind. She wishes to further her studies in Criminal Law.</p> <p>Xasando is a 22-year-old black female and is the first person in her family to study at college. She only decided at the open day of the college to study the programme.</p>
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Family influences

The data revealed that participants had different views on why they enrolled for the NCV Safety in Society programme. Family members and friends influenced Peter, Renesha, Felisha, Landie, Cathy, Andre and Steven to study:

Sjoe!...To satisfy my mom first by studying because it is a big issue... you must first please my mother (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Yes, I think it would be my father... I am the second youngest and he wanted us to study. I already took a year from that's why I study (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

My cousin's brother. He was fat like me so he convince me to come and join safety because they are doing exercise so I wanted to be like him, but that why (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

My aunty, Sir (Landie, Interview, June 15, 2017).

My friend's sister she told me about it so I decide to apply (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

My aunty influence me because I was working and did not know what to do. I did not wanted to do Safety in Society because I argued with my aunty to do Safety in Society, but I eventually came around and applied for Safety in Society (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

I was not sure if I wanted to do this, but my mother wants me to go to the army and I thought ok maybe this will convince me actually do it now I am convinced (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

The data confirmed Tinto's (2007) suggestion that students' reasons for enrolling in a post-school institution depend on their motivation which is influenced by family members.

Student goals

Further studies

The data revealed that Wesuwe was the only one who was not interested in joining any law enforcement agency. She enrolled to get experience in the law subjects and wished to study law at a university after completion of the Safety in Society programme. Tinto (2006) advocates the importance of students' intent to persist, and that it must be reinforced, built and maintained.

As I stated I am not looking for a career in law enforcement, I am looking forward to study further and do my LLB next year which I already starting applying at NMU and UWC. And UNISA said I must apply after June (Wesuwe, Interview, June 15, 2017).

The data reflected a change of goal for Sheila. Her initial idea was to join the South African Police Service, though she had subsequently changed her mind due to the training she received in the Safety in Society programme. This changing of a goal is what Tinto (2006) describes as the differences in character and intensity, which will affect students with different goals and motivations inversely:

My initial idea was to go to a law enforcement agency whether it would be SAPS or Law Enforcement; any law enforcement agency basically for the purpose of earning money and have a proper career, while at the college and going through the whole process. I have changed my mind and want to further my studies and want to continue with criminal law. I want to do my degree in Criminology (Sheila, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Completion of matric

The data revealed that most of the participants were clear about their reasons for enrolling in the programme, and according to Tinto (2017), a lack of clarity in student intention can undermine the goal of completion. Data showed that Renesha, Steven, Cathy and John wanted to finish their matric because of personal circumstances. Therefore, Tinto (2017) stresses the importance that a “strong sense of self-efficacy, promotes goal attainment” (p. 257) and helps students to engage more readily in their tasks and persist longer, even if they encounter serious challenges:

It will make a big difference, because then I will have matric and will be able to stand on my feet (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

I wanted to start to get my Grade 12 and wanted to go to the army (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Then finish my matric (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

The only person is myself; basically I wasn't happy with the situation I was in and then I was working. I was at home for three years and then I decided no, I need my matric certificate, and I had to do something to get my certificate. I heard about this programme and then I enrolled (John, Interview, June 15, 2017).

The only thing is my matric (Sheila, Interview, June 12, 2017)

Attracted to uniform

The data revealed an interesting dimension — that of participants who were attracted to the uniform of the Safety in Society programme. This correlates to Tracy-Mumford's (as cited in Comings, 2007) argument that “enough information for potential students to make an informed decision” (p. 29), should be given and that the campuses strategic plan must include “intake and orientation procedures, [which] should help students understand the programme” (p. 29). Peter, Pam and Steven had based their decision to study the Safety in Society programme on the interest of wearing a uniform:

I came here on opening day to see what is going on; then I fell in love with the uniform (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

I saw somebody at the station, wearing the uniform, and ask her what she was doing because I was still looking for school. So, she told me about safety; so, I told myself I should go and give it a try (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Well, the thing is I like the physical part of it and I like seeing new things and doing new things change... I like the army because I like the uniform (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Escaping socio-economic circumstances

The data revealed significant evidence that participants wanting to join the law enforcement agencies were influenced by socio-economic factors. These participants were thus motivated motivated to “engage more readily in a task, expend more effort, and persist longer in the completion of that task and [did] o so even when they encounter[ed] difficulties” (Tinto, 2017, p. 257). The data showed that Lucas, Renesha, Felisha, Luvyo, Landie, Xasando, Pam, Andre and Tokwe were all driven by the socio-economic circumstances they wanted to escape from:

To give my family a better life; to show them that I want to make something of my life (Lucas, Interview, June 13, 2017).

Probably, because I come from a poor community... we can make a difference (Renesha Interview, June 13, 2017).

Sir, like in my location the only thing we do is the young people, we are using drugs and fighting (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

To get a better job because on 2012, I was working as a domestic worker and it was hard for me... I am still young for doing that. I was trying to help my mother (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

To better your level of living by means of financial meaning of lifestyle (Luvyo, Interview, September 14, 2017).

To stay on you own, to have your belongings and not to depend on others... (Landie, Interview, June 15, 2017).

A huge different, sir, cause you know it will change circumstances in my family (Xasando, Interview, June 12, 2017).

To become a better person and be independent, provide for yourself and help others, maybe a family or something, because I still have a brother behind me

so I want to help him maybe when he want to go to college or university (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Honestly, I want money, want a good life, want to be independent because my mother is not working and they are divorced. There is always a problem to ask him for money; that's why I want to study because I want to have my own thing. (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

She did not want to me to work for R600.00 a week and she always belief in me because I grew up with my grandmother and grandfather (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017)

Firstly, because to provide you with a better life. And obviously for your kids as well when you want to provide for them that you create opportunities for them you did not have when you grew up. When you have such, you want to have nice clothes, but you didn't but you could not because of financial problems, so you don't want you children to feel the same way as you grew up. So we actually wanted to provide them with a stable life and not also cause my father was also absent during my childhood; so I don't want that for them (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

It will make a difference. Firstly, my family, I am the second one to graduate and I'm gonna get a better job than my mother because I was raise by a single mother; and I can help my family because my sister is the only one who working (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Work Opportunities

Students' reasons for enrolling in a certain programme depend on their motivation (Tinto, 2017). The data revealed that most students' motivations for why they enrolled in the Safety in Society course were clear. Either they enrolled for a specific law enforcement agency or they were motivated by family or personal circumstances. On the question of "Why the participants choose to study the NCV Safety in Society programme", the participants indicated that they intended to apply at various law enforcement agencies. Sarah, Landie, Peter and Pam indicated that they were all interested in the South African Police Service.

South African Police Officers

I will have a NCV Safety and Society certificate, and it will make me get into the police services easier because I have dealt with the subject relating (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Because I wanted to be a police officer (Landie, Interview, June 15, 2017).

To become a police officer, sir. I must be the one telling people what they must do and what is wrong and how they must follow order. I must be the one who is doing order; that's how I know people (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

...there is a lack of police some of them are corrupt, so I want to become a better police woman who is not corrupt (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Because I like the programme and the programme change you. It make you become a better person, and it makes the children kiddies young people in the community look up to you. And I want to change the community by police official (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Traffic law enforcement officers

Asanda, Tokwe and Landie were interested in being traffic officers.

I think I may make a difference in this country because now as I using the road I see sometimes how they work the traffic officer how the work, so I think I may be part of them (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Ooh...I would like a job in traffic (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Because I asked her because I want to be a traffic officer and then she told me about this programme and what they are busy with so I said I would like to be here. That why I came to the open day and I took the form and I registered myself (Landie, Interview, June, 20, 2017).

City of Cape Town law enforcement officers

Lucas, Andre, Xasando, Asanda, Renesha and John indicated that they wanted to join the City of Cape Town law enforcement. Pam, however, indicated that her plan was to become a social worker or become a nurse, but her marks were too low and so she settled for a course in Safety in Society to become a law enforcement officer.

To give me more knowledge about the world out there, sir. I want to become a law enforcement officer; that's why (Lucas, Interview, June 13, 2017).

To gain so experience cause I heard that it is about law enforcement things as I wanted to become a law enforcement sometimes because what I wanted to do was nursing or social work to became a social worker, but my marks did not allow me to do the nursing and also social worker. So I told my mother that I must do something before to uplift my marks (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Law enforcement obviously to make and have a lot of money to be honest I like the money obviously to when I see how former colleagues that was here at Level 4 how good the look in their uniform that inspired me... (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

I think I may make a difference in this country because now as I using the road I see sometimes how they work the traffic officer how the work, so I think I may be part of them (Xasando, Interview, June 12, 2017).

I am not sure honestly, I am not sure because I am not employable so my whole thing is I want to do forensics. So if I am going that route I have to apply by a law enforcement agency so I can do it through them, but if by next year if I feel that is not the way for me, I going to study (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

Because I want work for the law enforcement and the South African forces all those institutions (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

I do intend to apply for a job in law enforcement. At first, I was not so sure what to go for, maybe SAPS or law enforcement. I wanted to apply for the navy, but I was with my two applications that I send was unsuccessful, so I would say I would rather go to apply for law enforcement I think that would be best for me (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, sir, I would like to join the City of Cape Town Metro Police or Law enforcement or the SAPS (John, Interview, June 15, 2017).

The data revealed that some participants either had changed their mind or had joined the Safety in Society programme for reasons other than joining the law

enforcement services as officers. Deon, for example, preferred Fire and Rescue:

Not law enforcement, but fire and rescue (Deon, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Cathy indicated that she wanted to do administration duties in the police:

I want to do administration in police. I want to be an administration clerk (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Steven indicated that he wanted to join the South African National Defence Force:

I am just waiting for the June results where we start writing, then I am gonna sent to the army in Pretoria to apply there (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Felisha, who also wants to join the police service, felt that she would not make the Body Mass Index (BMI) fitness requirements of SAPS and would settle for anything that came her way:

Sir, no, the problem is I have to first lose weight and which is going to take a year, so I will take anything that comes (Felisha, Interview, June 27).

Training facilities and student persistence

The data showed that participants persisted despite the inadequate facilities available for physical training. Renesha, Lucas, Pam, Sarah, Cathy, John, Wesuwe, Mark, Luvuyo, Landie and Andre mentioned that only an obstacle course was available for physical training, and some of them felt that this was not enough, or inadequate, for physical training:

There are no facilities available for us as safety and society students because we have an obstacle course, but I don't think it is an adequate obstacle course... so, no, there is nothing available for us to keep us motivated and physically fit (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

I only know obstacle course and besides that nothing else (Peter, Interview, June 2017).

It is only the obstacle course on that (Lucas, Interview, June 13, 2017).

The obstacle course and jogging (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

There is an obstacle course (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

The only physical training are the obstacle course, for me it is not adequate enough (John, Interview, June 15, 2017).

There is an obstacle course, which we never used. They said we gonna have a gym, but I don't see it. Besides the blue wall, there is nothing else (Wesiwe, Interview, June 15, 2017).

There is the obstacle course (Mark, Interview, June 14, 2017).

It's only the obstacle course, which is not sufficient (Luvyo, Interview, September 14, 2017).

It's only the obstacle course (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017).

Currently there is only the obstacle course that is available to us, but there is no facilities that is really available to us except the obstacle course to manage our fitness. So I would say that we definitely to prove on the facilities here (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Deon and Steven indicated that there were no facilities for training.

Currently, here is no facilities we mainly do our physical part outside (Deon, Interview, June, 21, 2017).

No, there is not and there is facility efficient to help us physical training for us to go after college perhaps. So there is no gym Safety and Society (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Felisha and Pam did not know of any facilities.

No. So there are no facilities (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

I don't know (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Landie mentioned only the parade ground as a facility to do physical training.

Yes, sir, like the parade. We do our push-ups and all that (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017).

Tokwe referred to defence classes they were doing.

Oh...at least we have the defence classes that help us to get our self-fit and when we out of on the field when we finish the Level 4 (Tokwe, June 27, 2017).

Institutional commitments

Work experience and employment

Xasando, Steven, Felisha, Asanda, Sarah and Tokwe confirmed they were exposed to work experiences at different police station and courts:

Yes, because there are some applications forms sometimes appear at the police stations or neighbourhood watches. So there is sufficient evidence information that you can apply for that and it is made available by the college (Xasando, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Yes. At this moment, sir, Level 4, we are now in June month we are going to Bothasig to experience how to work with SAPS (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Yes, sir. (Felisha, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, sir. I can say so cause they always explaining us to where are we going to work and how they doing this there meaning the trainings and stuff (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, sir. For example, for our ISAT practical's, we have to go to a police station where we have to do research about what they daily basis are or that is basically like. We are there to almost, like how can I say, to be there for the day and see what they do and basically do the same stuff they do (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Yes. I have like for the policing outing we went on that was when we went to Muizenberg and now that I am going to Bothasig. Also going to do voluntary thing to see of this is inside and help as well for one of our tasks as well. Yes, it would because now you can learn you can see what they do at the station perhaps, and how can I say now, and what different categories you can put in and what how do they answer to complaints how do take a statement and all that stuff (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Yes, sir, programmes like law enforcement and SAPS. I don't know about traffic and SANDF because we never had something in more detail (Tokwe, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Institutional commitments and academic support

Lecturer's commitments

The data revealed that participants had different experiences of the commitments of lecturers in the Safety in Society programme. This corresponds with what several authors have highlighted about the importance of institutional commitments, which is that the greater the levels of institutional commitment and commitment to the goal of college graduation, the greater the likelihood that the individual will persist (Braxton et al., 1997; Tinto, 1997). According to the data, some participants noted that they had received significant support from some lecturers, which contributed to their persistence. It was evident from the data that Peter, Pam, Asanda, Renesha, Tokwe, Xasando, Felisha, Landie, Cathy, Andre, Sarah, Steven and Mark received adequate assistance from lecturers, which helped them to persist:

We get help to go to Mr Harris and Mr Jones; we have a problem with this can you please help me...those lecturers that you know you going to get help (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

It is because they always remind us of what we must do, always tell us how important is this course that we are doing, how we should react when you see extra classes. Yes, sir, I can say so. By giving us the best work, making sure that we submitted our assignments and do attend school every day and don't be late for classes (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Because if they see we are struggling they are always committed to helping you in getting much better in this field... (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

Yes, they are because they always advise us about the future and the careers (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yoh! they are so committed. (Xasando, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Certain lecturers go beyond by helping you with whatever you need help with whether is their subject of someone else's subject whether they have to stay up with late at night some lecturers do show committed (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

Yes, sir, Because if they see we are struggling they are always committed to helping you in getting much better in this field that you are studying and if you

feel you don't, you can make it you can also going to the lecturers and ask for advice and help (Deon, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Ooh....yes, sir, in Level 2, Mr Harris it was governance. Mr Harris was very helpful. He is very committed and helpful (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Yes, sir, Mr Lotz, he is doing a great job (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Yes, sir. Sir, there is law lecturer that he always tells us that you must not settle for 50% but must settle for 75% and up sir. It is a bit more and he helps a person to be not like 50 is enough, but 75 upwards that is and encouragement for you to do better (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017).

Yes, sir. By explaining and giving class being committed not always absent, always in class make time for you after college hours (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

I would say they are 100% committed to our success. They always motivate us, always tells us what we are doing wrong and trying to help us where we go wrong. And I would say they enjoy and have a passion for what they especially in the classroom. You can actually tell that they love working and lecturing with young students. I would say the love for what they do. That exactly motivate us also when you see the lecturers are also here motivated; they want us to be successful. So that helps a lot in our success (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, [Laughing] because they push us by being physically fit and with our academics they give us everything like exam papers, revision all that stuff (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Yes, they are because they tell us every time you must study, we must take notes and listen and give us extra question paper, so we must do and listen (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

What the lecturers show me, yes they are, when I was Level 3, I was layback with my studies. They do have a positive effect on me (Mark, Interview, June 14, 2017).

...our lecturers and they are very helpful when it comes to assisting us with during practical times and ISAT times (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Like Mr Lewis's case, he helps us; he come and we say we asked around do you guys understand this question so on... (Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

According to Pam, Deon, Asanda, Felisha, Tokwe and John, the lecturers were very committed to their physical training. The daily personal contacts, formal and informal, which Tinto (1997) describes as the only vehicles by which incorporation takes place, were thus very important for student integration:

When we are doing PT outside, they always join us, run with us and doing push-ups with us (Pam, Interview, June 12, 2017).

They understand each student physical needs and there physical capabilities so they don't make the exercise much more difficult... (Deon, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yoh! They are so committed (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, especially Mr Newman. Yes, sir. (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Yes, sir. Mr Lewis, he is doing a great job. (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

...committed at making the physical training manageable- they have history of what they do, and the physical background they coming from law enforcement... (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

They are committed because they are the ones who is showing us how to do the physical training, and they are supporting us towards the physical training (Deon, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, sir. They as you can see they make it more special. They very committed to it and when we can't do it they will do it first (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Honestly, yes, our lecturers come down on us a lot. They are hard on us. From a personal point of view I can understand where they coming from. They've been through where we are going; they know what is expected of us and I feel that you only hard and come hard on someone when you care about that person. So you won't do something malice or you want too (John, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Peter felt that at times he could cope with their training, but not all the time:

It depends under circumstances yourself in the programme. Sometimes it is not manageable; sometimes it is manageable, depending on your situation at that point of time (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Academic integration and student persistence

Classroom and peer learning

The data indicated that a majority of the participants learned through shared learning experiences. According to Tinto (1997), “the more students are involved, academically and socially, in shared learning experiences” (p. 615), the more likely their learning becomes more self-involved and may eventually lead to persistence. It is thus very important to create peer groups in the Safety in Society programme as a supportive structure for shared - rather than isolated - learning experiences for students, right through their academic stay (Tinto, 1997). Peter, Renesha, Lucas, Cathy, Landie, Andre, Asanda and Deon would meet over some weekends, and or when some of them were in need of assistance, which contributed to their persistence:

Yes, after school sometimes on a weekend we WhatsApp each other (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Yes, a lot of us gather at certain people houses and work on assignments and will form study time. No, it is at home (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

We come together on weekends at certain house, maybe this week it my house, then we, just for two hours or so, we discuss our work and try to do it together (Lucas, Interview, June 13, 2017).

Yes, I do. Like a few students I know that I study with and we like perhaps on a weekend (Steven, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Yes, sir. The time my mother got sick, then I got help from a Level 3 friend (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Yes, it is only me and friend Jacquilene, sir. We work together helping each other with assignments (Landie, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Not all the time, but when it comes to the ISAT...I usually meet up with colleague of mine and we go to his sister's house where there is free Wi-Fi so...(Andre, Interview, June 21, 2017).

Yes, mostly on weekends when we get together we discuss our work and...
(Deon, Interview, June, 21, 2017).

Asanda received assistance from a friend while she was in hospital:

I was in hospital last term. Then there was a friend of mine who managed to bring the work for me... (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

According to Tinto (2017), “students who perceive themselves as belonging are more likely to persist” (p. 258). It is during the supportive networking of peers that academic engagement arises, both inside and outside the classroom, because students tend to spend more time with their peers outside the classroom on academic matters when they integrate socially (Tinto, 1997).

Tokwe, John and Sheila shared the same sentiment when it came to teamwork. All of them preferred to do their tasks on their own. They were concerned about the participation of some students during their teamwork:

I don't like teamwork at school. I don't know about the workplace because sometimes you get students who do nothing for your group, and they don't participate, make no effort and come late and they disturb and you can't focus. But if you were alone and you doing that, you knew when you gonna submit (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Preferably, I would like to work on my own, not that I am not a team player. It's the fact I work faster than the next person, when it comes to assignment. I will share idea and brainstorm, but when it comes to the actual thing, I prefer to work alone (John, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Me, personally, no. I am one of those people who wanna do it by myself, because I feel no one is gonna do it like I do. I am a person who want to achieve the best. When we do group work, I just took the practical home and put your name on it. I am not gonna trust my life in your hands (Sheila, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Infrastructure and academic support

The data showed a lack of academic and infrastructure support from lecturers and support staff. Without support, students may “lose their motivation to persist and subsequently dropout” (Tinto, 2017, p. 260). It is therefore of utmost importance for institutions to have “early-

warning systems that alert ... staff to student struggles, and allow for early interventions” (Tinto, 2017, p. 260) to prevent student dropout. Xasando, Felisha, Renesha and Landie were concerned about the internet connection at the college, which they felt could be improved upon:

The information in the textbook we only have the textbook and not free internet. As we all know, that this is the other basic need at this college (Xasando, Interview, June 12, 2017).

No. I saying so because we were in the student centre. They told us no, the internet is not working, so we were able to submit you task law procedures and evidence (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Firstly, they can start by fixing the student centre they can get computers at work and internet access to student cause by the time we get home a lot of the libraries or internet cafes are close. So we don't have internet and can afford to go to this places. If the learning centre was open, we could have us that (Renesha, Interview, June 13, 2017).

The Wi-Fi at school and the computers. I think that will help (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017).

Pam and Wesiwe were concerned about the availability of the student centre and a library at the college:

I think libraries sir. If we can have a library where you can go and study in a quiet place because if you get home you get home late and the libraries are already close (Pam, Interviews, June 12, 2017).

There can also be a library, because we come here early and going home late, so our library is most of us are closing at 4 and 5 and it's closed when we going home and weekends there is limited time. And also the student centre we have, there is a lot of computers that are not working and we are a lot of students. So maybe a library and more computers in the student centres (Wesiwe, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Peter expressed his experience about lecturers' negative and insulting attitude, which may contribute to students' dropping out of the programme:

If they can, maybe, stop insulting and encourage and stop being negative energy. That is the worst thing because if a student is feeling appreciated it

always bring the better for her of him. But he always say negative stuff. It change the whole matter because everything what I did was taken for granted, that why you feel always insulted - calls this person this and this and change a person point of view of this whole programme (Peter, Interview, June 12, 2017).

Landie felt that the lecturers had to be lenient on the train issues (in terms of late coming):

Sir, I think, sir, that the lecturers should when take that train situation they should be a bit lenient for the students, For when the trains are late and not always turn it into a situation where the students is blamed because there is taxi violence. But he lectures is sometime lenient then they help us, sir. There is not actually a programme that the lecturers, but they know what they are doing, sir (Landie, Interview, June 20, 2017).

Steven, Cathy, Mark, Asanda, Luvyo and Sarah felt the lecturers could be more supportive:

I think maybe support like class, like for student that are struggling, maybe we also can benefit from that (Steven, Interview, June14, 2017).

By understanding us more, sir and not being negative and be supportive (Cathy, Interview, June 14, 2017).

They can actually become part of the Level 4's like that we say you must reach the students' level. Because if you up there, you don't know what the student going through at the moment and you can't be judgemental about that and have your own perception about that (Mark, Interview, June 14, 2017).

Firstly, from the college you get the bursaries. We learning for free; there is nothing that we pay. Secondly, the advisers that they giving to us and the support. Thirdly, they making sure that we do all as student achieve our goals (Asanda, Interview, June 21, 2017).

By providing more time with and making sure that they have more time with the students and WhatsApp and sent emails to them after hours (Luvyo, Interview, September, 14, 2017).

By giving us extra class after college hours (Sarah, Interview, June 15, 2017).

Felisha was concerned about the amount of work they received and the fact that they did not have any free periods during the day:

I think they can give us a free period where we can do our work because we only study period after period. So, we don't have that time to as students to do our work (Felisha, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Tokwe, Lucas and Deon expressed their concern about the lack of stakeholders involved in the programme, which may help them to develop a certain skill:

I can say, sir, the programme manager can maybe introduce people who don't have licence to do license. I don't have learner's licence and others have and that's why when they finish they immediately get to work. Other agency requires driver licence immediately, and now I don't have the funds, now I must wait. Maybe if the college and the Department of Education work together and see if we can train licence here because there is space here (Tokwe, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Like, they must organise us the various field that you are studying in. They must organise something with the stakeholders to show them what they are doing and that kind of stuff, sir (Lucas, Interview, June 13, 2017).

They can give us more hands on training about the outside world like more practical stuff not just focus on your academics (Deon, Interview, June 27, 2017).

Andre felt that the college had recruited the right people for the job and expressed his opinion that the lecturers knew what they were doing:

I would say they do a lot. They do make us feel that our success is important like I say they have good quality staff that knows what they doing as well as our fundamental lectures. They are really good at what they are doing, especially our current core-subject lecturers. They do have a history of their law enforcement background, so the college do recruit people with the same experience that we will gain in our law enforcement environment (Andre, Interview, June 15, 2017)

Summary

This section presented an analysis and interpretation of the data.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I present a summary of my research paper, findings, make recommendations and provide a conclusion.

Summary

The research question was prompted by an observation of low completion rates in a TVET College in the Western Cape, South Africa and, specifically, why the NCV Safety in Society programme had a relatively low student dropout rate.

The main question: what are the relationships between student goals, institutional commitments and social and academic integration and persistence, was divided into:

Sub-questions

How do student goals contribute to persistence?

How do institutional commitments contribute to student persistence?

Do TVET college students in the NCV Safety in Society programme demonstrate persistence?

I used a purposive sampling strategy and selected 20 participants for my study. All participants were resident in the Western Cape, South Africa and enrolled in the NCV Safety in Society programme) at a TVET college. The participants were Level 4 students at the college.

The research instrument that I used was an interview guide (see Appendix A). Semi-structured questions in the interview guide enabled me to facilitate follow-up questions on some responses. Using an electronic recoding device, the interviews were recorded. The recorded interviews were transcribed after which the data were coded.

Findings

In my findings I will address my main question, “What are the relationships between student goals, institutional commitments and social and academic integration and persistence?”. I will follow-up with further discussions of my three sub-questions.

What are the relationships between student goals, institutional commitments and social and academic integration and persistence?

The data revealed that the participants' enrolment in the NCV Safety in Society programme stemmed from different reasons. Most participants were clear about their goals for the programme and this had been enough motivation for them to persist. This motivation to persist is exactly what Tinto describes when he refers to persistence as "one manifestation of motivation", which is the "outcome of the interaction among student goals, self-efficacy, a sense of belonging and perceived worth or relevance of the curriculum" (Tinto, 2017, p. 255).

How do student goals contribute to persistence?

Student Goals

Though most of the participants were clear about their goals in terms of work, other participants were of the opinion that they first needed to obtain a NQF Level 4 NCV certificate to pursue their goal, which is a requirement for employment in the law enforcement agencies. Although Tinto claimed that pre-entry attributes, such as prior schooling, are less useful to administrators because of a lack of control over the circumstances, these factors play an important role in the recruitment of students for the Safety in Society programme. According to Tinto (2017), events such as motivation and intensity may influence students' goals. The majority of the participants persisted because the programme enabled them to develop skills and capabilities for employment in the law enforcement agencies of either the South African Police Service, City of Cape Town Law Enforcement, Traffic Service of Cape Town, the South African National Defence Force, or Fire and Rescue. These participants' persistence can be directly linked to extrinsic benefits such as occupation.

Two female participants persisted because of their desire to study further. One participant's vision was to obtain an LLB degree and indicated that she only enrolled to gain experience as a law student. The other female participant's intention was to become a law enforcement officer, but the Safety in Society programme had negatively influenced her decision to pursue a career in law enforcement. She explained that she had different expectations of the training in the South African Police Service than what the industry entailed as a law enforcement officer. Based on her vocational training, she therefore would prefer to further her studies and build a career as a criminologist. This confirms what Tinto (2017) says about self-efficacy and a sense of belonging playing a pivotal role in achieving goals.

Academic integration: Peer learning

Although two participants did not like teamwork because of their fear of failing or getting poor marks (as a result of non-participation of co-students), the majority of the participants engaged in peer learning after hours and over weekends and these gatherings contributed a lot to their success as students.

How do institutional commitments contribute to student persistence?

Institutional Commitment: Lecturers

The majority of the participants acknowledged that lecturers were very committed, helpful and supportive when it came to their academics in the classroom. Some participants felt that lecturers went beyond their duty to assist them in a personal crisis. However, not all participants agreed; some participants stated that some lecturers were negative, non-accommodative, applied favouritism and were not encouraging at times when students struggled. This is exactly what Tinto (2017) refers to when he states that without support, students may lose their motivation to persist and subsequently drop out of learning. Contrary to Tinto's argument, these students persisted despite the lack of support from these lecturers.

In terms of the physical training element of the programme, the majority of the participants agreed that lecturers were fully committed to get them physically fit for the requirements of the BMI of the South African Police Service and other law enforcement agencies. Some participants felt that the physical demands of the programme had scaled down towards their final year, and that some lecturers would not be able to do the physical exercises the programme offered.

In terms of the training facilities available, participants were concerned that the only facility available was the obstacle course and that it was not sufficient to get them physically fit. They also believed that it had not been used optimally. Other participants referred to the parade ground and defence classes as facilities to do their fitness training, which they also felt were not adequate. The lack of institutional commitments, however, seem to outweigh other institutional commitments, and for this reason, did not undermine their persistence.

Institutional commitment: Work exposure

Fewer than 10 participants indicated that they were exposed to some form of work experience, and a few expressed their concern about the lack of opportunities in finding work in the safety and security industry.

Do TVET college students in the NCV Safety in Society programme demonstrate persistence?

Access and Success

It is clear that for more than half of the participants reason for their persistence is their socio-economic circumstances. The participants were unyielding in their belief that the driving force behind their goals was to escape the socio-economic circumstances in their life. For most of these students in the Safety in Society Programme, as well as other NCV programmes, the only access to study is with the help of financial aid from the government.

Some participants indicated that their goal was to finish their matric (which is one of the requirements of the law enforcement agencies); the study showed that these participants' persistence had been influenced by the necessity to qualify to meet such requirements. These participants therefore, unwittingly, see the Safety in Society programme as a gateway to becoming employed and earning salaries. The socio-economic circumstances and early dropout from high school might be the driving force behind their persistence and success.

Barriers

Although language as a barrier was not part of the research, I discovered some students struggled to answer basic questions during my interview. This could be because for the majority of the students in the Safety in Society programme, English, the language of teaching and learning, is their second language. This language barrier may also negatively contribute to the academic performance of the student and may lead to student dropout.

Unexpected findings

The findings in the study generally revealed my expected outcomes and correlated with what the literature revealed about Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Persistence relating to student goals, institutional commitment and academic and social integration. However unexpected findings were:

1. There was a variation in the way the participants explained their exposure to work experiences in terms of institutional commitments. Some participants acknowledged the gaining of work experience and others were unaware of it.

2. Though the influence of negative attitudes from lecturers on participants was not part of my investigations, it was revealed during my study. This might have an influential role on student drop out.

New theoretical insights and perspectives

My study built on the critical perspective of the theoretical framework of Tinto's (1997) Longitudinal Model of Persistence. My conceptual framework encompassed the historical student departure of persistence and elements of Tinto's (1993) student model of persistence. These elements included student goals, institutional commitment and social and academic integration. My conceptual framework enabled me to develop the following theoretical insights:

1. Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure and persistence, in relation to the element of pre-entry attributes or prior schooling, is appropriate to explain and interpret and understand student persistence in terms of their goals; and
2. Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure and persistence, in relation to institutional, social, and academic integration, are indeed valid to explain, interpret and analyse mutual understanding, consensus and misunderstanding about student persistence.

Implications for further studies

The initial intention of this study was to investigate factors that influenced student persistence in terms of the pre-entry attributes, student goals, institutional commitment and social and academic integration at a TVET college. The research revealed that there were various reasons as to why students had enrolled for the course and why they persisted. However, there were considerably different viewpoints about student goals and institutional commitments and why students persisted. The question one could ask is are the reasons for student persistence not one and the same reasons why students drop out.

Recommendations

The aim of the study was to investigate factors, through the lens of Tinto's (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure, as to why the Safety in Society programme has a low rate of student drop out and why these students persist. Based on my research findings, I recommend the following:

1. Students goals: Although the majority of the students were clear about their intention as to why they enrolled for the Safety in Society programme in terms of their goals, administrators in the Safety in Society programme should be more aware of the implications of pre-entry attributes as a reason for students drop out in the programme.
2. In terms of the social and academic integration, the recruitment process must be emphasised more, especially in terms of the physicality of the programme. Video recordings of training should be readily available. New applicants should then have a better understanding of the requirements for the programme; this should improve the quality of physical training among students.
3. Current resources such as the obstacle course for physical training should be utilised optimally by lecturers and learners during training sessions. More emphasis on fitness for recruitment into the various law enforcement agencies should take place among exit Level 4 students.
4. Students' goals need to be nurtured and inspired by lecturers.
5. The majority of the students come from economic disadvantaged circumstances and therefore more support by means of sympathy and understanding should be portrayed by lecturers in helping students to reach their goals.
6. Students with language barriers should be identified and referred to student support services for extra classes in English to overcome such barriers.

Conclusion

My research study confirmed some generalised assumptions and generated a few unexpected findings. Tinto's (1997) theory of persistence confirms the assumption of student persistence relating to their respective goals, social and academic integration. These factors have a huge impact on institutional commitment, which may influence student dropout.

The influence of peer learning plays a pivotal role in the development of social and academic relationships in the formation of a college community. Although Tinto (1997) claims that high school experiences were less useful to institutional officials, the study revealed otherwise in terms of the students' goals.

The study revealed that there is a correlation between student persistence and student goals based on the majority of students' motivation as to why they enrolled in the programme. The unique structure of the Safety and Society curriculum enables students to experience on the job

training, which links with institutional commitment and social and academic integration in the Safety in Society programme.

The dropout rate in the NCV Safety in Society programme prompts a platform to pursue further study on the reasons why student's dropout in the programme at the college.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Profile:

1. Name: _____
2. Surname: _____
3. ____
4. Gender Male | Female | Other
5. Age 18-24 | 24-30 | 30-35
6. Race Black | White | Coloured | Other
7. Marital Status Married | Single
8. Dependants: 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-5 | None
9. Highest grade passed at school: _____
10. Year of last High School attended: _____

College attendance:

11. What is the name of the TVET College you are attending?
12. Which programme are you registered for?
13. In which year was your 1st enrolment in the programme?
14. What is your level of current registration?
15. Was there any person who influenced your decision to apply for this programme?

Student goals:

16. Why did you choose to study the NC (V) Safety and Society programme?
17. What are the most important reasons for studying?
18. What difference will the completion of this programme make in your life?
19. How do you manage your time in order to make time for your studies?
20. Does this allocation of time enable you to meet the Physical Training requirements for employment in Law Enforcement?

Institutional commitments, integration and student persistence:

If an applicant who considers applying for this programme asks you the following questions: how would you respond?

Institutional commitments and physical training:

21. When you applied to the College were you aware of the physical training demands for the Safety and Society programme?
22. Do you find the physical training demands of the programme difficult?
23. Are your lecturers committed to make the physical training more manageable?
24. What facilities are available for physical training and are these facilities sufficient?

Institutional commitments, work experience and employment:

25. Since you registered for this programme, were you provided with opportunities to gain work experience in Law Enforcement?
26. What was the most important work experience that you gained which should enable you to find employment in law enforcement?
27. Do you intend applying for a job in Law Enforcement?
28. Why are you particularly interested in a job in Law Enforcement?

Institutional commitments and academic support:

29. Do you think that the lecturers in the Safety and Society programme are committed to your success as a student?
30. In which ways do lecturers show their commitment to your success as a student?
31. If you sought help from your lecturer, what kind of assistance did you receive?

Academic integration and student persistence:

32. Do you meet informally with other students to work on assignments or projects?
33. Have you ever missed classes because of a personal crisis, and were helped by a student friend to 'catch up' with your academic work?
34. Have you ever missed classes because of a personal crisis, and were helped by a lecturer to 'catch up' with your academic work?
35. Do you think there is enough student support for students who struggle academically?
36. What other kinds of support can the College provide that would make you feel that lecturers and administrative staff make you feel that your success is important to them?

Letter to request permission from to conduct research

Appendix B

The Principal
Private Bag X1
Panorama
7506

Dear Mr

Request for permission to conduct research

I am currently enrolled for the Master Degree in Adult Learning and Global Change at the University of the Western Cape. As a requirement of this degree, I am must write a research paper.

I am currently a lecturer in the NC(V) Safety in Society programme and concerned about student attrition. My concern has prompted me to focus my research on the circumstances that affect students' studies positively and negatively. I am particularly interested in finding out how the College, and in particular the NC(V) Safety in Society programme create the circumstances which could improve facilities and services for students successful completion of their studies. Included are facilities and services for physical training; internships; learnerships, professional physical trainers; lecturer capability; and employability-related skills such as a driver's licence to operate a vehicle. I hope that my research findings would make a contribution to the ways in which the College, and the staff in the NC(V) Safety in Society programme could improve conditions for students.

In order to implement my research study, I hereby request permission to conduct an investigation into factors that influence student persistence in the Safety in Society programme at the College. I would like to interview 20 Level 4 students in the programme, using an interview guide. I will provide to all participants an 'Information Letter' which provides information about the research. I will also provide them with a Participant Consent Form which they will be required to sign before the interview.

I will treat the information gathered through my interviews with the strictest confidentiality. When I report my findings I will not disclose the personal information of the participants
I hope the request meets your approval.

Henry H Jansen



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Appendix C: Information Letter to Participants



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Information letter to participants

Appendix C

Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2649
Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2647
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za

Dear _____

My name is Henry Jansen, I am currently enrolled for a Masters degree in Adult learning and Global Change at the University of The Western Cape. As a part of this degree, I am conducting a research study.

As a lecturer at _____ TVET College I have observed that students like yourself, experience many challenges that affect your success. Through this research I am trying to identify the conditions that affect your studies positively and negatively. I am particularly interested in finding out how the College, and in particular the NC(V) Safety in Society programme create the conditions which could improve facilities and services for your successful completion of your studies. Included are facilities and services for physical training; internships; learnerships, professional physical trainers; lecturer capability and employability-related skills such as a driver's licence to operate a vehicle.

As a student in this programme, you could share valuable information. I would like to use the information that I obtain from you and other students to influence the College management and the staff in the NCV Safety in Society programme to improve facilities and services. For this reason I would like to request an interview with you at a time which is convenient for you. The interview is voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

I will provide you with an interview consent form and request that you sign it before I conduct the interview. I will treat the information you share with the strictest confidentiality. When I report my findings I will not disclose your personal information.

If you wish to contact me, I include the following details:

Student: Henry H. Jansen
Contact number: 0795207953
Email: heppawp@gmail.com
Tel: +27 (0) 21 9318238
University: University of the Western Cape

Should you wish to contact my academic supervisor, I provide the following contact details:

Supervisor: Professor Zelda Groener
Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za
Telephone: +27 (0) 21 9592801



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A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form



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Tel: +27 (0) 21 959 2649
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Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: vnomlomo@uwc.ac.za

Participant consent form

Appendix D

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to an interview. By signing this form you provide consent for your participation in the research study.

By signing this consent form, you agree that:

- You have read and understood the Information Letter and Participant Consent Form.
- You consent to be interviewed by the interviewer
- You agree that the interview can be recorded with an electronic recording device
- You understand that your words may be quoted and used in publication, reports and in webpages but your personal information will not be disclosed
- You understand that you can withdraw from the research study at any time and no questions will be asked

Please sign the form and return it to the researcher

Name of participant _____
Participant Signature _____
Place of interview _____
Date of interview _____
Researcher Signature _____



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